

# TTRA Asia-Pacific Chapter Inaugural e-Newsletter April 2016

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## President's welcome



This is the inaugural e-newsletter for Asia Pacific and is another milestone in the growing development of our Chapter coming as it does off our successful Chapter Conference in at Meiji University in Tokyo last December which saw our attendance boosted by about 50% on the 2014 Conference in Melbourne. Thanks to our hosts for laying on such a great session.

There were some great papers including our Keynotes on calculating ROI from Events from a combined Japanese and American team from Repucom, and thought provoking session on Social Licence to Operate (SL2O) from Jeff Dalley of New Zealand's Department of Conservation and a session on Contents Tourism. In the absence of our outgoing President Sue Beeton it was led by Phil Seaton Professor, Modern Japanese Studies Program and supported by Takayoshi Yamamura Professor in the Centre for Advanced Tourism Studies, Hokkaido University and Akiko Sugawa Shimada, Associate Professor in the Department of Education and Human Sciences at Yokohama National University. Contents Tourism has a big future and we are already looking at a session on this for our next Chapter Conference in Dubai.

It was exciting to announce our next Chapter conference venue: Middlesex University in Dubai. The conference will take place 2-4 December 2016 and the call for Papers will be out shortly. Keep your eye out for the email or check into our Linked in and Weibo feed for more details.

Talking of social media we saw a 10% increase in our LinkedIn page membership post the Conference which shows the value people saw in engaging with the Chapter. If you aren't on board feel free to join in. We're also always looking for lively content and discussions. We want to hear your voice.

Finally, I'd like to thank Aaron Tham for taking on the editorship of the newsletter and doing such a fantastic job. Feel free to share the newsletter with others – and also to email Aaron [mtham@usc.edu.au] with any research-based news items that might be relevant to Chapter members.

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advancing tourism research globally



# Over a decade in the making – Reflections from the Founding President

## A Personal Story by Sue Beeton



When I attended my first TTRA international conference in 2000, I was approached by a number of people regarding starting up an Asia-Pacific chapter. I was new to TTRA, but already impressed with the linkages and connections between academia, practitioners and DMOs. I returned home to Australia with much enthusiasm; however, I was soon brought down to earth. There were many who considered TTRA to be in direct competition with our major academic research Association in Australia, so my attempts at that time had the potential to be seen as in direct conflict with an organisation I was ultimately to become a board member of. I could see that there were distinct differences, primarily in relation to the mix of the TTRA membership, though it does take time to alter perceptions.

So, I kept my dreams to myself until our time came. After working with Irish colleagues from TTRA Europe on the first International conference to be held offshore in Dublin, I felt that I had found people with similar challenges to what I was facing in my region. Fostering these links and friendships has been crucial to the development of our chapter, along with my time on the TTRA International board. In fact, I joined the Board back in 2008 with an express desire to work towards establishing the Asia-Pacific chapter. Again, this was to take longer than expected, and it was not until my term on the board was drawing to an end that I decided the time was right – this was also confirmed by my friend and colleague Prof Perry Hobson in Malaysia, who also saw the need for such an association in our region.

And then the fun began! I had squirrelled away the names of people from our region who I had met over recent years who I felt showed some interest in and understanding of TTRA, and wrangled and badgered them into joining me on our first Board. I am pleased to say that they are all still with us apart from one who moved to Europe. We have also been able to attract new board members who our increase our range both geographically and professionally, while our conferences are proving to be great fun as well as excellent avenues to share and disseminate travel and tourism research. We certainly have a great range of destinations to choose from for our conferences with Malaysia, Japan, Australia and the UAE all being part of this adventure so far.

So 2012, over a decade after that initial dream, we established the TTRA Asia Pacific Chapter. A few more years on, I feel that we are at last in a position to move forward as a chapter and truly engage meaningfully with the academics, practitioners and DMOs in our vast region. I am looking forward to the next decade and sitting back while others turn our small chapter into a force for good!



*President of TTRA, Sheila Flanagan, congratulating Sue Beeton on the foundation of TTRA APac, June 2012*

# Summary of 2015 Conference

From 4-6 Dec 2015, Meiji University hosted the 2015 TTRA Asia Pacific Conference, entitled: 'So What? Understanding Travel and Tourism Research in the Asia Pacific Context.' Tourism is taking off across the Asia-Pacific region. Inbound visitors to Japan have more than doubled in the last decade to reach around 13.5 million, and we broke some records of our own at this Asia-Pacific Chapter meeting, which received 81 Abstract submissions and 76 attendees from 20 different countries. We were also pleased to welcome Jeffrey Eslinger, President of TTRA International, amongst an all-star cast of delegates that joined the event held at Meiji's Surugadai Campus in central Tokyo.

The conference began on Friday afternoon with a special panel on the role of 'Women in Contents Tourism.' At the Welcome Cocktail Function which followed, delegates were treated to a tasting session of local COEDO beer as CEO Shigeharu Asagiri explained in person about his craft beer originally brewed from sweet potatoes. Saturday morning kicked off with a special panel on 'National Parks in Asia Pacific,' with case studies from Malaysia, Vietnam and Japan. After coffee, the Concurrent Sessions began, followed by the AGM after lunch. At the Conference Dinner that evening a seasonal spirit was on display alongside the Santa hats as delegates danced to the beat of a local entourage performing a Bon Odori, a festival-like dance routine. On Sunday morning a keynote by sponsors Repucom CEO Andy Hata (also a Meiji Alumni!) provided a practitioner's insight into sports event marketing in Japan with a talk on 'Government, Tourism & Events.' This was followed by a special panel on 'Tourism Sustainability in the Pacific,' with case studies of socio-economic Monitoring in New Zealand and tourism and traditional culture in the Pacific Islands. After another local Bento Box lunch, the concurrent sessions – and counter-debate- continued until late on Sunday afternoon. Many thanks to all the sponsors, the organizing committee and everyone who helped make this event such a big success. See you in Dubai this December!

Post-script: the day after the conference, a small group of hardy adventurers braved the cold to visit the snow monkeys in mountainous Nagano-ken. On Monday they were treated to a ride over the roof of Japan, exploring Matsumoto Castle and passing through stepped paddy fields on the way to stay at a real Onsen hot spring, where Geisha entertainment was followed by Kaiseki-style dinner. Tuesday was an opportunity to meet the monkeys before catching a Shinkansen bullet train back to Tokyo.



# Looking ahead to the 2016 Conference

## **CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION WINS DUBAI THE HOSTING RIGHTS TO TTRA ASIA PACIFIC CHAPTER CONFERENCE 2016**

Following its highly successful conference at Meiji University in Tokyo last week, the Asia Pacific Chapter of the TTRA announced that Middlesex University Dubai would be the host for the 2016 Chapter Conference.

“The Dubai bid was extremely professional and gave the Chapter Board enormous confidence that Dubai can build on the success we’ve had in Kuala Lumpur, Melbourne and Tokyo” said APAC Chapter President Carolyn Childs. “Furthermore, its position as a global hub means that we can be confident that every delegate will be able to access the conference. We saw a 50% increase in delegates at the Tokyo Conference and can now expect to maintain this stellar growth rate.”

The conference will take place on 2-4 Dec 2016 and will seek to unite the tourism research agenda with Dubai’s strategic focus on creativity and innovation under the title “Pushing the Boundaries: Tourism Research driving innovation and creativity”. Themes and streams under consideration include sustainability, resilience and glocalism. The timing alongside the National Day of the United Arab Emirates will enable delegates to come early and experience this dynamic destination whilst ‘en fiesta’. The Emirates Airline Dubai Rugby Sevens is also scheduled for 1-3 Dec, and will provide extra appeal for sporting fans.

The call for papers has been released. You don’t have to be a TTRA member to speak, but special packages will be available to join. Outgoing Chapter President Sue Beeton who has managed the membership element for the Chapter noted that “we saw an increase in membership among delegates who attended the conference as they understood the value of tapping into this amazing community whose shared passion for evidence-based decision-making in tourism transcends the boundaries between academia, commercial research and practitioners.”

Further information regarding the conference will be made available at our chapter website: <http://www.ttra.com/chapters/apac-conference-2016/>

We look forward to seeing you in Dubai!

# Relevant travel and tourism material

Some key developments from the UNWTO/PATA tourism updates in Jan-Feb 2016:

- Climate change as an antecedent of future tourism operations
- 90% of natural disasters in the region are weather-related
- Tourism as a conduit of peace
- Accessible tourism as a marker of inclusive tourism practices
- Greater awareness and collaboration to address trafficking

For further reading, visit:

<http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/finalunwtopatatumupdatesisue4.pdf>

Academic papers:

Yeoman, I.S., & Beeton, S. (2014). The state of tourism futures research – An Asian Pacific ontological perspective. *Journal of Travel Research*, 53(6), 675-679.

Tolkach, D., Chon, K. K. S., & Xiao, H. (in press). Asia Pacific tourism trends: Is the future ours to see? *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*. doi: 10.1080/10941665.2015.1118395

# Selected forthcoming conferences

- World Medical Tourism & Global Healthcare Congress 3-5 Jun 2016, Boao, China (<http://chinamedicaltourismconference.com/>)
- EyeforTravel Asia Summit 15-16 Jun 2016, Singapore (<http://events.eyefortravel.com/travel-distribution-summit-asia/>)
- Asia Meeting & Incentive Travel Exchange 27 Jul 2016, Singapore (<http://www.questexevent.com/AMITE/2015/>)
- PATA Travel Mart 7-9 Sep 2016, Jakarta, Indonesia (<https://www.pata.org/portfolio/ptm-2016/>)
- Mice Asia Exhibition 21-22 Sep 2016, Singapore (<http://www.miceasiaexhibition.com/>)
- TBEX The Future of Travel Media '16 Asia Pacific, 13-16 Oct 2016, Manila, Philippines (<http://tbexcon.com/2016-asia/>)
- ITB Asia 19-21 Oct 2016, Singapore (<http://www.itb-asia.com/>)
- Global Eco Asia-Pacific Tourism Conference "Ecotourism: Fostering innovation – Sustaining excellence" 21-23 Nov 2016, Hobart, Australia (<http://www.globaleco.com.au/>)
- India International Travel & Tourism 11-13 Jan 2017, Mumbai, India (<http://www.tourismfair.asia/>)
- Asean Tourism Forum "Shaping our tourism journey together" 16-20 Jan 2017, Singapore (<https://atf2017.com/>)
- Routes Asia 19-21 Mar 2017, Okinawa, Japan (<http://www.routesonline.com/events/184/routes-asia-2017/>)
- 27<sup>th</sup> Council for Australasian Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE) Annual Conference 7-10 Feb 2017, Dunedin, New Zealand (<http://www.otago.ac.nz/cauthe2017/index.html>)