

IAPP Sydney, Australia held the 2019 Australian Leadership Conference

Greg Stone
July 12, 2019



Sydney, Australia -- On July 12, UPF and the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) held the 2019 Australian Leadership Conference on the theme, "Critical Challenges Facing Australia," in the Jubilee Room of the Parliament of New South Wales in Sydney. Around 100 guests attended, including parliamentarians from Australia, New Zealand, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Afghanistan, India and Nepal, as well as academics, civil society leaders, lawyers, religious leaders, authors, writers and social commentators. The special guest was the chairman of The Washington Times, Mr. Thomas McDevitt, who called for the strengthening of the U.S.–Asia Pacific alliance for peace and security.

The conference was hosted by Hon. Lou Amato, member of the Australian Legislative Council, who welcomed everyone to the parliament. In the opening session, after a traditional welcome to the country was given by indigenous elder Mrs. Pearl Wymarra, UPF-Asia-Pacific regional chair, Dr. Chung Sik Yong, gave the welcoming remarks. Dr. Yong shared with the participants the heart and vision of UPF's co-founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. IAPP-Asia-Pacific chair, Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, spoke about the UPF's and IAPP's activities worldwide. Participants were inspired to learn of the diverse and high-level activities taking place in every continent of the world. This was followed by a presentation by Mr. McDevitt about the history and work of The Washington Times and its global impact. At the end of the first session, three new Ambassadors for Peace were appointed.

The second session was entitled: "Values that Will Sustain our Future." The presenters were current and former members of Parliament: former Australian MP Hon. David Clarke, who was the moderator of the session; Hon. Amato; Hon. Vijay Jolly, an MP from India; Hon. Ross Robertson, an MP from New Zealand; and Hon. Tagini Makario, an MP from the Solomon Islands. Hon. Jolly serves as a member of the Standing Committee of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) and is a senior leader of India's ruling party, the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party). Each presenter spoke eloquently about the session theme. The deputy minister for administration and finance of Afghanistan was also a distinguished guest at the conference.

The third session was on the theme "Media Bias, Freedom and Responsibility." Chairman of The Washington Times Mr. Thomas McDevitt gave a presentation based on his many years of experience in the media arena. Mr. Patrick Byrne, president of the National Civic Council, spoke on the topic: "Resisting the Assault on Freedom of Speech, the Foundation of a Tolerant Democracy."



The fourth session was an eye opener as three Australian women spoke on the topic: "Australia's Changing Moral Compass." Prof. Margaret Somerville discussed progressive values versus traditional values and explained how Australia's moral compass has been, is and is likely to change in the future. Barrister and university lecturer Mrs. Sophie York explained the recent change in the definition of marriage, and Mrs. Wendy Francis, director of the Queensland and Northern Territory branches of the Australian Christian Lobby, spoke articulately about the growing legal battles religious people are having about expressing and practicing their religious beliefs.

The conference concluded with the fifth session, which included the inauguration of the Oceania chapter of the Youth and Students for Peace (YSP). The session was led by YSP International president, Dr. Robert Kittel. Special remarks were given by Hon. Alvick Maharaj, assistant minister of employment, productivity, industrial relations, youth and sports of Fiji. Mr. Min Zaw, a youth leader from Myanmar, gave an inspiring message as did Ms. Mica Camara, secretary-general of the YSP-Oceania. The regional director of UPF-Oceania, Rev. Yutaka Yamada, encouraged all the youth to aspire to great heights by developing and expanding the work of the YSP as quickly as possible.

Also in attendance were UPF-Australia president, Mr. John Adamedes, and chapter leaders Mr. John Bellavance and Mr. Steve Evans. Working together with UPF and the IAPP to organize the conference were leaders of the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an affiliated organization, and the YSP from New Zealand, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu, the Marshall Islands, and the entire Oceania region.