

## International Congress 2010 Healthy Parks Healthy People

The congress was attended by over 1100 delegates, 200 presenters and 200 volunteers and was a remarkable event. The attendees came from all over the world. Each day, following the Plenary Session there were fourteen sessions running at the same time and it was impossible for one person to cover the conference. Wednesday was a day for Experiential Tours and I attended the Art, Health and Nature Tour.

The message that pervaded the whole conference was that we need:

***green space in our lives;***  
***to engage our children to interact with nature;***  
***everyone to enjoy nature as part of our daily lives; and***  
***that parks aid improved health.***

### **Some thought provoking ideas were:**

free public transport in Melbourne before 7am;

*car free Sundays in the centre of cities;*

that England is going to plant 1.3million trees near hospitals over the next 3 years as there is evidence that Physical Activity, Well Being and Health Recovery are linked to green space;

*Health Parks for Seniors in Perth;*

Volunteers in Bromley UK;

*Nature based tourism in Australia e.g. the art of walking DVD*

Build cities around people, not cars;

*Health in the Workplace must come from the top;*

Green (outdoors) and Blue (water) Gyms

*America is going to plant more trees for health and to reduce the carbon footprint;*

North America uses 2 million plastic bottles every 5 minutes;

*Half of the population lives in cities and this will rise;*

September 18<sup>th</sup> 2010 is World Parks Day

### **New Innovations**

#### **Use of phones in our Parks**

James Kane introduced ***The Hidden Park*** which is alternative reality gaming. An I-phone is used which is no longer just a phone but a portable media device with GPS enabled features. The phone is used with children and parents and is to be played in the local park. Primary school children can search for Dragons and Fairies in the park. Parents build the games and in Australia there have been 162 parks added in ten months. Secondary children can collect letters and then make words as an on-line type of Scrabble. Gaming usually involves the 15 – 30 year old males. The use in National Parks is for information gathering, an example is Weed Management with photos of weeds being downloaded. Tasmania Parks has a programme for Bird identification *Bird in the Hand* for sale for under \$2. Mobile phones and gaming will sweep our parks very quickly as James Kane said ***it is here!***

## **Building Healthy Neighbourhoods**

**Andrew Partos** of Vic Urban presented Meridan a new development in south east Melbourne. Homes are built in a landscape of productive plants. Streets and median strips are lined with a selection of native and introduced fruit, nut and berry tree which include lemons, quandongs, pears, peaches, pomegranates, olives and avocados. Local parklands provide space for fruit trees and community gardens. Whilst a stormwater harvesting and irrigation system provides their watering needs, the plants are fertilised, pruned and harvested in accordance with a management plan. The site was 18.2ha with 250 lots, 150 separate dwellings and 750 people. This is the first time this has been done and it has produced \$39000 organic food in the first year. There have been two stages released and each stage was sold out in 24 hours.

## **Main Speakers**

**Aaron Bernstein M.D., M.P.H.** from Harvard Medical School and Physician in Medicine, Children's Hospital Boston.

***Sustaining Life: How Human Health Depends on Biodiversity***

**Dr William Bird** United Kingdom Strategic Health Advisor Natural England  
***Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds, Healthy Business***

**Les Carlisle** South Africa Group Conversation Manager - & Beyond  
***Nature Based Tourism: the unexpected benefits***

**Steve Coleman** Executive Director, Washington Parks and People and Chair, Parks for Life. The International Urban Parks and Green Space Alliance

***Parks for Life: The Power of the Urban Parks Movement***

**Professor Tim Flannery** Environmentalist and Australian of the Year Macquarie University

***The Climate Change impact on human and park health.***

**Kathleen Frith M.S.** Assistant Director, Centre for Health and Environment Harvard Medical School

***Healthy Ocean, Healthy Humans***

**Dr Howard Fumkin M.D., MPH, DrPH** Special Assistant to the Director for Climate Change and healthy U.S> Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

***Sustainability and Health: The Role of Nature Contact***

**Janet Holmen a Court AC** Chairman John Holland Group  
***Capturing the enthusiasm of childhood in protecting our parks.***

**Dr Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka** Uganda Founder and Chief executive Officer Conservation through Public Health

***Saving Africa's wildlife by improving the health of people.***

**Honourable Jeffrey G. Kennett AC** – Chairman Beyondblue: the national depression initiative  
***Beyondblue – Healthy Horizons***

**Richard Louv** Author and Chairman Children and Nature Network  
***Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder***

**Professor Rob Moodie** Chair of Global Health Nossal Institute of Global Health University of Melbourne  
***Preventative Health – Good for you, good for your country***

**Joe Ross** Chairperson Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme  
***Healthy Parks Healthy People; An Indigenous Perspective***

**Gil (Buillermo) Penalosa** Canada Executive Director 8-80 Cities  
***Great Places: Fostering healthier communities and happier residents***

**Stephan Bognar** U.S.A. Executive Director Maddox Jolie Pitt Foundation  
***Conservation, Park management and integrated rural development in Cambodia***

The next International Congress is being **held** in 2012 in London.