



**AITPM**  
Leadership in  
Traffic and Transport



**AITPM NATIONAL  
2023 CONFERENCE**

**MELBOURNE, 13-15 SEPTEMBER 2023**

## Our most successful conference yet

More than 600 delegates heard from inspiring industry experts and took part in future-shaping conversations at the biggest and best AITPM National Conference in September 2023.

AITPM CEO Kirsty Kelly said the Melbourne event had exceeded the expectations of all involved, including Board directors, public and private sector delegates, the 23 sponsors, 15 exhibitors, and the team of volunteer organisers.

"There was a really great energy with so many people coming together to talk about ideas around the pathway to a connected, modern Australia," Kirsty said.

In a clear indication of the growing diversity of the AITPM and the industry more broadly, more than 30 per cent of delegates were women and every state and the ACT was represented at the conference.

With its title of Pathways to a Connected Modern Australia, the conference focused on the themes of sustainability, placemaking, and connectivity. In total, delegates heard from 114 presenters and speakers, including nine keynotes, over the 30 hours of programming.

The opening day at the iconic MCG featured the increasingly popular Transport Modelling Workshop, the C-ITS workshop, and the welcome reception.

Wurundjeri Woman Stacie Piper's moving Welcome to Country on the following day at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre preceded discussions and presentations on how Australia's strong transport community could improve connectivity and accessibility, and better address the challenges created by the climate crisis.

Media covered some of the issues raised at the conference, including keynote speaker Professor Marco te Brommelstroet from the University of Amsterdam, who presented an entertaining address on the urgent need to rethink our cities.

The new AITPM President Liz McGregor said the conference demonstrated the collaborative and support nature of the transport industry in Australia.

*"The transport industry is a very small industry and overall, I find it to be collaborative and supportive," Liz said. "And that's same sort of value system you find at the AITPM conferences and events."*



Liz McGregor





## Day 1

### MCG – Transport Modelling Workshop and Connected Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS) Workshop

**Kicking off the first day of the national conference were the Transport Modelling Workshop and the inaugural Connected Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS) Workshop held at the iconic MCG.**

The Transport Modelling Workshop began the day in the MCC Dining Room hearing from international keynote speaker Bill Allen who shared highlights and key lessons from his 40 plus years of experience across all areas of travel modelling.



The transport modelling delegates undertook a live vote to determine the “National Issues of Significance” revealing that transport modellers are concerned most about Land Use Forecasting. A lively discussion between panellists Graham Currie, Elena Golovenko and Tim Bryant – with plenty of crowd input – was a highly interactive way to conclude the modelling workshop program.

Over in the MCC Long Room, CIT-S delegates heard from speakers and panellists who discussed the problems C-ITS can address, including success stories. Delegates then formed smaller working groups to create, and playback, use cases that applied CIT-S thinking to the current problems facing our local environment.

Record delegate numbers on day one also provided the backdrop for plenty of animated networking interactions throughout the day.

## Day 2

### Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre



**After the Welcome to Country, opening plenary, and morning keynote addresses, delegates separated to attend their chosen breakout sessions, which included:**

- » Pathways to Future Communities, which included a presentation on ways to integrate Planning with Country and linking outcomes and benefits for Aboriginal communities.
- » A Brighter, Cleaner Future, with discussions about decarbonising transport and creating a carbon neutral, ecologically restored and climate resistant Metro in Western Sydney Airport.
- » Understanding Equitable Transport, which looked at gender issues in public transport and reducing transport disadvantage in rural areas.



## Day 3

### Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

**One of the highlights of the final day was the standing-room only Young Professionals v Industry Experts Debate, with the topic of 'Private cars will always be king in Australia.'**

In the light-hearted debate, Jessica Tong, Will Finlay and Zoe O'Malley took on keynote speakers Bill Allen and Ingrid Burkett as well as Laura Procter, a SMEC Team Leader.

Given the light-hearted nature of the session, audience applause levels decided The Young Professionals were the winners – but the result was never really in doubt given that The Experts needed to argue in favour of private cars.

Breakout sessions on Day 3 included:

- » Modernising Australia's approach to car ownership, which looked at how dwelling types influenced car ownership.
- » The importance of micro mobility in a sustainable future, with several presentations discussed the increasing use of e-scooters and e-bikes.
- » Redefining road networks, with a presentation outlining the Smarter Roads investment by the Victorian Government to reduce road delays, respond to changed traffic patterns post-Covid, and better manage road congestion in response to population growth.

Delegates can view the presentations here.

### 2023 Conference achievements



609 Attendees



114 Presenters, MC's and panellists



9 Keynote speakers



30 Hours of presentations & workshops



12 Workshop sessions



17 Networking and social events



23 Sponsors



7 Awards presented



15 Exhibitors



18 AITPM LinkedIn posts



24 Volunteers



1,322 Coffees served



## Our Emerging Professionals Award winners

**Congratulations to the seven AITPM members who received Young Professionals Awards at our gala event on Thursday 14 September.**

The audience at Zinc@FedSquare in central Melbourne heard the seven recipients have a range of interests but all share a passion for the industry.

The awards aim to provide networking opportunities and inspiration to winners to pursue or continue their career in the rewarding transport industry.

**Akanksha Balakumar, NSW – Graduate transport planner, WSP Australia**

Akanksha has a strong background in urban planning, and is passionate about transport planning, sustainable mobility, women's safety, and place-based design.

**Eli Alabaster, SA – Graduate civil engineer, Tonkin Engineering**

Eli comes from regional Mildura, Victoria, and is passionate about the improvement of local government procedures and asset management and has a particular interest in the upgrading of unsealed roads.

**James Ramm, Victoria – Traffic engineer, O'Brien Traffic**

James is passionate about working in areas that have direct and measurable impact. He has already worked on projects including pedestrian and cyclist safety analysis projects, road safety projects and traffic impact assessments.

**Lillian Boland, NSW regional – Transport planner, Albury City Council**

Lillian has a particular interest in how the built environment and transport networks influence liveability, especially in a regional context. Lillian manages the development and delivery of the Draft Albury Wodonga Integrated Transport Strategy.

**Nicholas Grice, Queensland – Graduate transport engineer, AECOM**

Nicholas is passionate about efficient and optimised solutions with a focus on electric transport operations, mobility as a service and the development of interactive tools and spreadsheets for solving complex problems.

**Rebecca Green, Tasmania – Transport engineer, GHD**

Rebecca has broad experience including traffic impact assessments and statements, traffic management plans, road safety audits and assessments, traffic modelling, intersection assessments, options assessments, and corridor studies.

**Dr Xiaolin Tang, WA – Graduate engineer, Aurecon**

Xiaolin obtained a bachelor's degree in transportation and a doctoral degree with research that focused on autonomous vehicles, shared mobility, discrete choice modelling and people's future travel behaviours. She is keen to learn more industrial skills to bring ideas to life.





## Transport modelling in the spotlight

**Since its inception in 2013, AITPM's Transport Modelling Network (TMN) has evolved from humble beginnings as a loose sub-group of AITPM members to becoming an integral part of the AITPM.**

The TMN is dedicated to cultivating and catering for the interests, knowledge and expertise of transport and land use modellers across Australia (and NZ through its alliance with the NZ Modellers User Group (NZMUGS)).

Today, the TMN is recognised as a major contributor to the success of the AITPM, the National Conference and the associated Online Conference Series.

At the 2023 National Conference, the Transport Modelling Workshop covering an extensive range of topics and outstanding speakers and panel sessions resulting in record breaking attendance and interest from the broader AITPM community.

The successful hosting of the Transport and Land Use Modelling stream, and the Transport Modelling and Knowledge Sharing Workshops, have featured leading Australia and International keynote speakers and provided a forum for public sector transport planners and modellers from across Australia.

As a result, the events reinforced the contribution of TMN to the AITPM community and transport industry and as an integral part of ensuring the sustainability of AITPM in an increasing contested market.

The TMN covers all aspects of transport and land use modelling and the opportunity for researchers, engineers, modellers and other practitioners from all sectors, including government, research, software development, data collection and analytics and consulting to interact, share knowledge and promote good practice within the modelling community and wider transport industry.

It also has an ongoing role providing guidance on good practice in Transport Modelling to the industry and government to ensure that decision-makers are always provided with advice that is soundly based, trustworthy and fit-for-purpose.

Many individuals have been involved in the establishment and ongoing evolution of the TMN including Dave Keenan, Peter Kartisidimas, Richard Isted, Nick Veitch, Steven Piotrowski, Andrew Leedham, Lindsay Oxlad, James Parrott and Simon Kinnear.



## Our keynote speakers

A Dutch academic known as the 'cycling professor' who played the ukulele and quoted John Lennon at the podium was just one of the inspiring keynote speakers at the conference.

**Professor Marco te Brömmelstroet**, Chair of Urban Mobility Futures at the University of Amsterdam, had already attracted **media attention** by the time he delivered his keynote presentation on day two of the conference. His thought-provoking questions challenged delegates to change their perspective and reinvent how they design and use towns and cities.

The day before, independent consultant **Bill Allen** presented the keynote at the Transport Modelling Workshop and spoke about the existing common modelling method, issues of four-step model and alternatives and key modelling takeaways.

The Victorian Minister for Roads and Road Safety, **Melissa Horne**, and **Paul Younis**, the Department Secretary at the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning (the official government sponsor) were opening keynotes at the MCEC on Thursday, along with **Alison Holloway**, Chief Executive Officer of SGS Economics and Planning.

Alison reflected on changes in the two decades since she attended her first AITPM conference, both in the industry and in Australia, outlining that the economy is now focused on population and knowledge-based services, with health, professional services, education, and accommodation and food services the top drivers.

Speaker **Phil Jones** has contributed to much UK Government thinking on walking and cycling and has chaired taskforces for the Welsh Government on establishing a default 20mph speed limit in built-up areas (which was introduced in September 2023), rather than 30mph. Phil's keynote encouraged planners to engage early, often, and thoroughly, build immunity to misinformation, and remove risk for decision makers.

Professor **Ingrid Burkett**, Director of the Griffith Centre for Systems Innovation at Griffith University, spoke about how efficient and integrated transport systems can help to address persistent disadvantage that shape lives generation after generation. She encouraged community ownership of data.

*"Citizens are innovators and have amazing ideas – we should collect those ideas, vote on them, and engage citizens to take them further," she said.*

**Derval Cummins**, the AECOM European Advisory Leader, Transportation, told the audience that significant inactivity among young people in Australia could be improved, as it has been in parts of Ireland, through a cycling to school program. She also labelled electric bikes as a game-changer for people of all ages.



Professor Marco te Brömmelstroet



Bill Allen



Phil Jones



Ingrid Burkett and Derval Cummins



## Sponsors and exhibitors: our valued industry partners

**Sponsorships and exhibitor participation reached an all-time high at the 2023 AITPM National Conference, bringing together the most comprehensive group of industry leaders, experts and innovators to date.**

A common theme among sponsors and exhibitors was the inherent value the relationship with AITPM has delivered in creating premium networking opportunities for the industry.

Austraffic CEO John Reid, who spoke at the conference about his 40-year relationship with AITPM as a member and sponsor, says the organisation has been an integral support during his career.

“In the early 1980s when I had a new business and started attending AITPM conferences, I was lucky enough to experience mentoring from the state manager of the largest traffic signalling company at the time,” John said. “I didn’t even realise it was happening. It wasn’t something we talked much about back then. But it was instrumental in helping me shape my own business’s culture and direction.”

John has also been a state and national president of AITPM – giving back to the industry that supported him – and now his industry traffic and transport data business employs more than 700 people.

Fellow sponsor and exhibitor Aimsun’s relationship with AITPM spans the best part of a decade. In addition to holding corporate membership, they are also one of AITPM’s three National Technical Partners. Aimsun provides digital mobility solutions, transforming big data into valuable mobility insights.

Australian Managing Director Ian McCarthy and Regional Head of Australia and NZ Dave Keenan were enthusiastic about the value of their relationship with AITPM. “There are so many ways to engage with our industry through AITPM events,” Ian said. “It’s not just through being a sponsor at the big national conference, but the micro events such as webinars and virtual conferences that make it easier for our employees to attend and present at.”

“For organisations like ours with smaller workforces, it means we can send individuals to targeted transport modelling events, for instance, that support their professional development, rather than trying get everyone in the team to a national conference.”

Dave Keenan, who has held roles on both the AITPM Victorian state branch committee and the national Transport Modelling Network committee, highlights the mutual benefit of both membership and sponsorship, especially for their small team of emerging professionals.

“We don’t have an in-house network for our younger professionals, so the AITPM emerging professional events are a fantastic opportunity for our younger team members to learn and expand their thought boundaries and bring it back to their roles at Aimsun.”

**23 sponsors and 15 exhibitors supported the 2023 National Conference**

[View our sponsors here](#)





Alison Holloway – CEO of SGS Economics and Planning



Kirsty Kelly – AITPM CEO



Liz McGregor – AITPM President

## The changing faces of AITPM

**It was the year 2000 when economic geographer Alison Holloway attended her first AITPM conference.**

Alison was working at a Sydney advisory firm at the time and felt the event would be an opportunity to network and take on new ideas. She enjoyed the conference but was disappointed by the lack of women and young professionals.

“Out of about 250 attendees, about 10% were women and there were probably even fewer young people,” she says. “It did prompt me to rethink if it was the right industry for me.”

Alison did decide to stay in the transport sector and is now CEO of SGS Economics and Planning. She was delighted to take to the podium as one of the keynote speakers at the conference – and equally pleased to see the composition of the conference had changed.

More than 30% of the delegates at the 2023 conference were women, along with many of the presenters and other speakers, as well of course, as AITPM leaders CEO Kirsty Kelly, AITPM President Liz McGregor, and various branch leaders.

While Liz, who took over as president this year, says the role is more about ‘giving back to the industry’, she does hope she can be a role model to younger women.

“This is especially relevant given the changes to the Board criteria,” Liz says. “I really hope that I can show that it’s possible for other women, especially with family commitments, to be on the board and be leaders.”

“As an organisation, we have big ambitions to take on a stronger advocacy role and to connect and collaborate with government and industry, and with universities, to ensure we have that pipeline of transport professionals coming through.”

Transport planner Vanina Varnier, a consultant with Aurecon, is vice-president of the AITPM Queensland branch and encourages young women entering the industry to know their own value.

“My advice would be to like yourself, charge ahead, and insert yourself into situations,” she says. “If you can, finding mentors who you can learn from and who may have even paved the way - a good mentor will stay with you for your career.”

### Breakdown of conference attendance by state





Mike Willson –  
Co-convener



Emily Coldbeck –  
Co-convener

## Behind the scenes

**Take 24 volunteers and several AITPM staff and combine with hundreds of emails, phone calls, meetings, and hours of research and what do you get?**

**One amazing conference!**

The hugely successful 2023 AITPM National Conference was the result of outstanding work from the conference organising committee and led by co-convener Mike Willson and Emily Coldbeck, who are both based in Melbourne.

From sourcing and arranging keynote speakers and sorting through presentations to booking venues and organising registration and catering companies, the time and effort put in by the volunteers – who all have day jobs as well – is extraordinary.

Director of Amber and civil engineer Mike, who is AITPM Victorian and Tasmanian branch president, decided to give back to the industry by volunteering after last year's Sydney conference.

"You make great connections and very good friends, but you also see the bigger, broader picture of the transport industry because you're interacting with people you would not normally meet," he says.

Co-convener Emily, who is an area manager with the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning, agrees, saying that industry support was the key to the success of the conference.

"It was an opportunity to give back to an industry that has given me a career," she says. "We need to come together to talk about the challenges we're facing and it was so fulfilling and exciting to see the conference come to life."

The 2024 conference will be held in Perth. Co-convener Fiona Goodbody is part of the Active Transport Branch with the WA Department of Transport.

"We're in that early rapid planning phase now – looking at potential themes and conference structure, as well as listening to AITPM members about what they are interested in sharing," Fiona says. "We're hoping to formalise that soon and put out a call for abstracts."

"Perth is a great city for conferences, and the venue is very central, and surrounded by great activities and places to visit."

"We're keen to hear from members with great ideas and anyone who'd be interested in volunteering their time. I warmly invite any AITPM members in Western Australia to be in touch."



The 2023 Victorian Conference Committee

## AITPM Emerging Professionals: Taking opportunities

**The feedback on AITPM's Emerging Professionals (EP) network, which has now existed for more than 10 years, is overwhelmingly positive.**

The network is for members aged up to 35 years and provides support for students interested in learning more about the industry, as well as those already in the sector.

Each AITPM state branch hosts several events every year, tailored specifically to the needs and interests of younger professionals. These events include career development sessions, technical forums, and tours of major transport projects.

Transport engineer Hans Gao, who is the chair of the Victorian Tasmanian Emerging Professionals Network, says EPs have a significant role to play in the future of the industry.

"We are the next generation and it's important we have the opportunity to learn from industry experts as fast as possible," he said.

Eli Alabaster, a graduate civil engineer who was the South Australian winner of the Emerging Professionals Award at the conference, said being part of the network was very valuable, especially as he was not from an eastern state.

"It's been great to be in Melbourne and have the chance to talk to so many other young professionals who have shared their experiences and what they think about the industry," Eli said.

"It is challenging as a graduate to get involved and talk to different people, especially those who have been working for as long as 40 years, but they have a lot of knowledge to give and it's really worth the effort."

[Find out more about the Emerging Professionals Network.](#)

## Diverse qualifications help to build our sector

**A diverse mix of professionals and practitioners make up AITPM, from transport and land use planners and traffic engineers to modellers, policy advisors and academic researchers.**



With AITPM members working in areas including all levels of government, academia, consultancy, and the private sector, the role of higher education is more important than ever.

AITPM Fellow and senior lecturer at the Monash Institute of Transport Studies, Associate Professor Alexa Delbosc, said the challenges faced in transport just five years ago are different to today's challenges.

"Given the complexity in the system and the demands on our skills, we need to be doing more than just working our models and delivering our plans," she said.

The conference celebrated the continued academic partnership between AITPM and Monash University, with the announcement of a new Master of Transport and Mobility Planning Degree, which will be available from 2024.

Associate Professor Delbosc said the partnership formalised the positive relationship between AITPM and the university.

"We were very excited to launch this at the conference – people tend to come to transport from many different backgrounds and this will provide the opportunity to really increase the breadth and depth of knowledge in transport."

The masters' degree will be particularly relevant to those who have entered the sector with other non-engineering honours degrees.

# Faces from our 2023 Conference



# A note from the Board



Hosting a large booth at the AITPM National Conference, the AITPM Board – led by incoming president Liz McGregor and supported by CEO Kirsty Kelly – were thrilled to meet with hundreds of members and industry stakeholders and seek their input on the Institute’s strategic direction and future plans.

With the Board’s strong focus on improving governance, and the proposed changes to its current structure, the 10 board members were on hand to respond to questions, and provide detail on the key changes to

- » size and composition of the Board
- » length of office, and
- » eligibility criteria

Booth visitors were able to pick up copies of the 2022/23 Year in Review, which showcased the efforts of the AITPM state branches in hosting more than 85 professional development and networking events over the year, and the numerous accomplishments, unfettered by COVID, that the Institute, its members, and hard-working volunteers, had achieved.

The AITPM Board of Directors would like to thank everyone involved in this year’s national conference for their contribution to the Institute’s most well attended and successful event to date.

## Achieving our vision in FY22-23



**Our first in-person national conference in three years**



**Growth in our mentoring and buddy programs**



**19% growth in membership**



**A new partnership approach**



**Greater collaboration with all levels of government**



**More value for our members**



**Strong volunteer culture**



**Revamped job advertising**

**86**

Events hosted

**150**

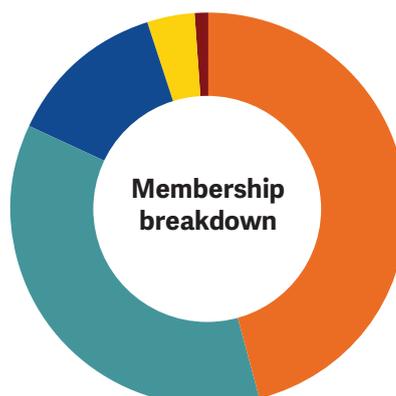
Volunteers

**6000**

Event attendances

**94**

Buddies and mentors



46% Private business

36% Government

13% Students and academics

4% Other

1% Vendors and suppliers

# Our 2023 conference sponsors



# National Industry Partners

## INDUSTRY PARTNERS



## INCLUSIVE MOBILITY PARTNER



## TECHNICAL PARTNERS



## FUTURE MOBILITY PARTNER



Thank you and see you in Perth next year!

