



Newsletter

PEOPLE CITIES NATURE

Special Conference Issue

RESEARCH LEAD MESSAGE

Professor Bruce Clarkson

Co-Chair for the SER 2023 Conference Committee



I first attended a SER conference in 2004 in Victoria, Canada and was very quickly hooked on the focus on ecological restoration and the attention given to filling the gap between restoration theory and practice. It also encouraged me to publish some initial thoughts on ecological restoration in Hamilton city, and to seek funding to address urban ecology in a more coordinated way across New Zealand. Over the last 20 years, through attending 4 further world conferences, I have observed the organisation progress to take a more interdisciplinary approach to ecological restoration and begin to recognise the crucial role that indigenous people have in restoring degraded environments. For me, SER crossed a threshold at the 10th World Conference in

Darwin with its focus on the connection between culture and nature expressed as “Nature and People as One: celebrating and restoring connection”. It was a privilege to participate in the conference and to see the People, Cities and Nature team contribute so strongly to this theme. There is, of course, much more to be done to realise the true potential of ecological restoration nationally and internationally. But we have been inspired to continue our efforts to bring nature back into New Zealand cities and ensure our research results are widely communicated. They are relevant internationally and demonstrate how we can successfully contribute to international efforts such as the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030).

HIGHLIGHTS

- Keynote by Sera Gibson
- Tom Bradshaw Medal
- Film Festival Honourable Mention



Film Festival Success

SER2023 featured a film festival inviting submissions on ecological restoration from an international community. Rachel Nepia, from People, Cities & Nature, filmed, produced and submitted a film titled 'Rourou: The shared baskets'. The film is about bringing together western science and traditional knowledge for better outcomes in ecological restoration. Rourou features interviews from members of the People, Cities & Nature team, including Wiremu Puke, Erana Walker and Bruce Clarkson, as well as interviews with Isaac Warbrick, a researcher in the Māori health space, and Dylin Bailey and Hawaikinui Rangiwai from Ngāti Tawhirikura Hapū. The film festival received 290 submissions, and Rourou was one of only 9 films to receive an award at the SER2023 conference in Darwin. Rachel Nepia is pictured (right) receiving the award for honourable mention in the student/restoration practitioner category. You can view this 5 min film online at peoplecitiesnature.co.nz/media.



Keynote by Sera Gibson

A true highlight of SER 2023 was the well-deserved spotlight that was given to indigenous-led restoration projects from around the world.

Sera Gibson was an invited Keynote Presenter at the SER2023 conference. Sera is Pou Whakahaere (Project Manager) at Taranaki Mounga, one of our PCaN partners. Their goal is to restore the ecological vitality of Taranaki Mounga in partnership with iwi, agencies and community.

In her keynote presentation, Sera guided us through the history of Taranaki from the arrival of Ngaa Uruwaka in 1200-1300 AD, through the damaging effects of colonisation leading to the eventual confiscation of the Maunga in 1865. Sera illustrated the journey from there of settling the legal personhood of the mountain, and restoring the health of the mountain with all the connections to local iwi and hapu that have been such an important part of the history of Taranaki. Her words inspired sadness for the past, but abiding hope for the future of Taranaki.

“As we work to restore Taranaki Maunga, we are doing it to ensure that our children are able to witness and enjoy the beauty and healing of our most remarkable and sacred natural areas...This is why we can only be successful if we do it together. We cannot underestimate the impact of engaging and educating our local communities, in particular our youth. By reconnecting them with their mountain, we offer them a sense of ownership and belonging, which in turn inspires them to protect these spaces for generations to come.”

To read the SER press release featuring Sera’s keynote follow this link: <https://www.ser.org/news/652824/Dive-rse-Case-Studies-Show-How-Ecological-Restoration-Empowers-Communities.htm?fbclid=IwAR3bKTdm-7EA5kJXRMPfjrviR1szhHWN9xW-->

Bradshaw Medal Awardees



The Tony Bradshaw award is named after the British ecologist and restoration pioneer, and honours scientific papers published in the journal 'Restoration Ecology' that significantly advance the field of restoration ecology. This year, members of our team, Craig Liddicoat and Martin Breed, were honoured to receive the Tony Bradshaw award for their contribution to restoration ecology, particularly in the emerging field of microbiota recovery.

The winning publication is: Lem, A.J., **Liddicoat, C.** (pictured right), Bissett, A., Cando-Dumancela, C., Gardner, M.G., Peddle, S.D., Watson, C.D. and **Breed, M.F.** (pictured left) (2022), Does revegetation cause soil microbiota recovery? Evidence from revisiting a revegetation chronosequence 6 years after initial sampling. *Restoration Ecology*, 30: e13635. <https://doi.org/10.1111/rec.13635>.

Yarning Circles

The theme of the SER2023 conference was 'Nature and people as one: celebrating and restoring connection'. In light of this theme, the conference organisers made a concerted effort to ensure representation of indigenous peoples and traditional knowledge. This led to the initiation of 'Yarning Circles' as an alternative to symposium-style presentations. Each Yarning Circle had a topic, and a discussion leader. A message stick was passed around the circle to allow comments, ideas and experiences to be shared by those holding the message stick. Wiremu Puke (right) represented PCaN at most of these Yarning Circles and championed the sharing of traditional Māori world views with a global audience. The yarning circles were very effective and will be continued at future conferences.



URBAN RESTORATION SYMPOSIUM

People, Cities & Nature organised an Urban Restoration Symposium that was featured in the first break-out session of SER2023. The symposium featured talks from members of the PCaN team, offering insight into current research and results from the programme. The symposium was chaired by Rachel Nepia and began with an overview of urban restoration research in New Zealand by Bruce Clarkson. Yolanda van Heezik followed, sharing insights on residential design for biodiversity, and Stephen Hartley represented the urban wildlife team, sharing results from years of monitoring Predator-Free Wellington. Craig Liddicoat presented (soon-to-be-published) research on the recovery of soil microbiomes along a restoration chronosequence, and Kiri Wallace demonstrated evidence for planning long-term forest management based on data of seedling survival under different environmental conditions along a restoration trajectory. Erana Walker discussed her research on kaitiakitanga in urban restoration, and finally, Hannah Rogers (PhD student), presented her research on tree ferns in urban restoration and the role of wheki in the establishment of epiphytes in urban restoration projects.

The symposium was well attended, with over 50 people from a global audience in attendance and was an excellent platform for sharing our research and connecting with urban restoration practitioners and researchers from around the world.

URBAN RESTORATION WORKSHOP

A workshop on urban restoration followed the symposium on the afternoon of the first day of SER2023. There was about 30 people in attendance from Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, China, USA, and Israel. With such a diverse, international cohort, we broke into groups and delved deeply into discussion on what we know, what we want to know, and case studies of urban restoration from around the world. The discussion was insightful and it was fascinating to hear about urban restoration work from such a wide range of countries. The results of the workshop discussion will be pulled into a workshop paper and prepared for publication.



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Darwin Highlights

Photos by Erana Walker, Hannah Rogers, & Craig Liddicoat

