

Society for Mathematical Biology Annual Meeting

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Sydney, Australia

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“It’s a very long way. People aren’t going to travel that far.” “The airfare is very expensive. It will be hard to get funding to go.” These were some of the concerns of SMB members as we set about organising the first SMB meeting to be held in Australia or New Zealand. In the end, many of these worries proved unfounded and there were almost 500 registered delegates at the conference from the USA, Canada, Europe, Japan, south east Asia, Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

The scientific committee, chaired by Mat Simpson, of Queensland University of Technology, chose an excellent and diverse set of plenary speakers who brought us everything from classic epidemiology, to integrating science and art, to finding out why acellular slime moulds should play a role in transport planning.

Contributed sessions and minisymposia were wide ranging and well-supported. The poster session on Monday evening was a particular highlight with posters throughout the heritage-listed Holme building at Sydney University. There was lots of lively discussion and everyone enjoyed the excellent food, although opinion was somewhat divided about the merits of the mural in the main poster hall.

The conference dinner was held at Luna Park, just under the north pylon of the Sydney Harbour Bridge with beautiful harbor views, excellent food and the opportunity to ride on the ferris wheel and the roller coaster.

The conference also included a women’s lunch and a welcome reception as well as the formal Annual General Meetings of both societies.

Many thanks are due to everyone who contributed to the conference organization, both those who were formally on the conference organizing committee and those who volunteered during the conference or worked in other capacities. Particular thanks go to Adelle Coster of the University of New South Wales and her team, who ran the conference website and registration system.

We hope that if you came to the conference and enjoyed being in Australia, that you will come back again, perhaps for a more extended visit and some collaborative work. If you weren’t able to come, remember that there is lots of good mathematical biology going on down under, and come and have a chat with us at SMB2019 in Montreal.