

CAP Conferences WG Annual Report 2022-23

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Activities:

1) CAP conference 2022

The main activity in the year was the organisation of the 2022 Communicating Astronomy with the Public Conference. Originally planned for September 2020, the conference had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The CAP Conference was instead held in hybrid format from 12-16 September 2022, hosted by Macquarie University in Sydney, under the theme: communicating astronomy for a better world. There were 111 participants in-person in Sydney and a further 133 online, in total representing 43 countries.

The core of the activities of the Working Group members is to serve as members of the SOC and carefully plan the scientific programme of the conference. These tasks include the selection of the Keynote speakers, grants and abstract selection. The conference had five Keynote talks, 122 talks, 13 workshops, two panel discussions, and 48 posters. The Keynote speakers addressed a variety of topics, including “Strategies for effective communication” and “Aboriginal astronomy and Indigenous science in contemporary science communication”. Other talks focused on current challenges, new media and technologies, the role of astronomy in bridging cultures, inclusion, diversity and empathy, and more. Additionally, CAP 2022 also hosted two special sessions: one on planetariums and another discussing Indigenous astronomy and cultural relations with the sky.

Given the special circumstances of CAP 2022 the Working Group and the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (CAP Conferences are co-organised by IAU Commission C2 through the CAP Conference Working Group and the IAU Office for Astronomy Outreach (OAO)) also supported the virtual and local organisation, and together with volunteers, arranged various networking and social events for in-person and online participants. Those in Sydney could join a welcome reception, conference dinner, and excursions to local facilities of astronomical interest. Virtual participants engaged with each other as much as possible on Kumospace, which emulated the physical experience and atmosphere of being in a room with other conference attendees. Virtual participants also had the opportunity to participate in a number of events, including those that enabled virtual and in-person participants to interact directly.

The organisers provided eight travel and support grants and a record number of 44 registration fee waivers (both in-person and online). The IAU and the OAO contributed a total of 23,000 Euros to support participants, targeting those from disadvantaged contexts. For a full programme, conference details, and more, please visit the [CAP Conference 2022 website](#).

2) Since April 2022, the Working Group and the OAO are also focused on the organisation of the the next CAP conference in 2024, for which hosting bids are being evaluated as of March 2023. The organisers received 10 Letters of Intent from which 6 teams were invited to submit a full proposal. By the time of the deadline in February 2023, a total of 4 applications were submitted. The results of evaluation of the bids will be announced in April 2023.