

HORIZONS PROGRAM PILOT

SUMMARY REPORT



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Melbourne Centre
for Cities

HORIZONS PROGRAM PILOT

SUMMARY REPORT

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Melbourne Centre
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From May to November 2022, the [Melbourne Centre for Cities](#), with support through a pilot grant from the University of Melbourne [Researcher Development Unit](#) (RDU) hosted Horizons - a pilot internationalisation program for graduate researchers - designed to support the internationalisation of researchers in a time of deep global disruptions and disconnections.

In May 2022 the Centre undertook to select a cohort of graduate researchers from across the University of Melbourne to share their research, knowledge and ideas on working internationally in the 'cities' domain across the university, irrespective of faculty or discipline of enrolment.

The Horizons program was run over a period of six months, and aimed to develop participants' career development imagination through peer-learning opportunities, mentoring from experienced academics, and engagement with internationally focused scholars and organisations.

Horizons also aimed to foster critical skills to inform the development of participants' own research internationally with a focus on:

- Expanding participants' understanding of the modes, possibilities and challenges of international engagement when conducting cities research;
- Reviewing the changing landscape of key international career development processes for graduate researchers (e.g. overseas fieldwork, conferencing, visiting, joint degrees/supervisions, international funding sources, international career opportunities beyond academia) and;
- Building an inclusive community of practice and exchange that goes beyond one-directional training and expands the support system available for cities researchers to 'think international'.

Conceived as a pilot program, the 2022 program focussed on the 'cities' domain, engaging researchers investigating issues across the wide spectrum of urban related matters; allowing the Melbourne Centre for Cities to test what could be a wider program of global citizenship and engagement offered cross-campus thereafter. The program also offered a unique opportunity to co-produce the set-up of the ongoing Melbourne Centre for Cities Doctoral Academy, planned to run from 2023, with the Horizons cohort, allowing direct input in the shaping of the Centre's approach to doctoral education by a current generation of University graduate students. The Doctoral Academy is now slated to kick-off formally in 2023, retaining the

'Horizons' theme, with additional opportunities for the current cohort represented in this document to support the next generation of Horizons scholars.

The program was closely aligned to the overlap between strategic priorities for the University's strategy Advancing Melbourne, and its 'global' and 'discovery' themes, working not only with the RDU but also tackling pressing agendas for the Chancellery International team.

Horizons also builds on existing Centre initiatives supported by Faculty of Arts, Architecture, Building and Planning, and Science, leveraging the Melbourne Centre for Cities' Centre early career development program for university researchers in these faculties and the more informal group of current doctoral associates engaging with the Centre's activities, reaching cohorts through established and cross-faculty channels.

This report provides an overview of the Horizons program pilot.

Section 1 introduces the 2022 cohort and showcases their research. Section 2 provides an overview of the program structure from selection criteria and modes of delivery through to timelines and session structure. Section 3 contains detailed program outputs summarising discussion, readings, and reflections from each session (including the final workshop). In section 4, the program's facilitators, Michele Acuto, David Bissell, Alexei Trundle, Dianty Ningrum and Jennifer Dam, provide their reflections on the 2022 Horizons pilot, and their hopes for future participants.

We believe the 2022 Horizons program has produced lasting resources that may benefit wider (non-city research-specific) programming. These resources, including a reference list of participant resources, application documents and program facilitation materials developed in the design and delivery of the Horizons pilot, together with a summary of participant feedback are annexed to this report.

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THE 2022 HORIZONS COHORT

The 2022 Horizons cohort comprised a diverse group of 13 PhD students from various faculties (see Figure 1) and at various stages of PhD progression (see Figure 2). Participants research also focused on diverse range of topics (refer Figure 3 for overview), which are summarised below.

Figure 1: Faculty

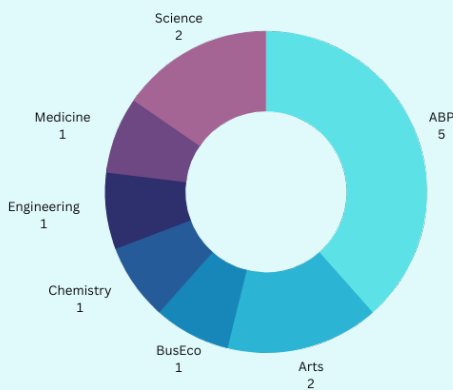


Figure 2: PhD Progression

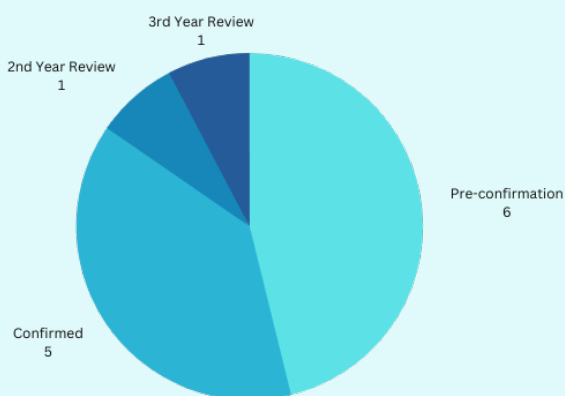


Figure 3: Research Area



Amber Howard

Faculty: Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences
PhD Progress: Confirmation

Research summary: Over the 21st century, young adults across high income economies have come up against increasing housing-related challenges. Ambers' research explores how young adults' housing trajectories have changed, why, and what outcomes this has, particularly for their health and wellbeing.



Amelia Leavesley

Faculty: Architecture, Building & Planning
PhD progress: Confirmation

Research summary: City action is considered critical to achieving the United Nations global sustainability frameworks. But what value do these frameworks provide to city governments? Amelia's research investigates how the process of 'localising' global frameworks influences sustainability action in secondary cities.



Angela Chen

Faculty: Business & Economics
PhD progress: 3rd Year review

Research summary: To provide insight into how to create a flourishing workplace, Angela's research seeks to understand how compassion and suffering manifest through the way HR Practices are implemented in organisations that are oriented toward capitalism.



Anna Edwards

Faculty: Architecture, Building & Planning
PhD progress: 2nd Year Review

Research summary: Anna's research explores the evolution of Australia's night time economy, with a particular focus on how night time labour market and socio-economic trends have evolved over time, and the government initiatives that influenced those trends.



Ian Rafael Ramirez

Faculty: Arts
PhD progress: Confirmation

Research summary: Ian's research examines the queer potentialities of the kanal (canal or gutter) — an embodied

practice of survival and refusal which urban queer subjects in Metro Manila, Philippines deploy.

Katherine Horsfall

Faculty: Science
PhD progress: 2nd Year Review

Research summary: To genuinely combat an extinction crisis, we need to fit a lot of biodiversity into the limited space in our cities and towns. I see a future in rehabilitating contaminated landscapes with species-rich, low-maintenance native wildflower meadows that are started from seed on waste subsoils generated by urban development.



compare to current carbon emissions targets.



Paul Hanley

Faculty: Science
PhD progress: 2nd Year Review

Research summary: Trees are vital for the health of cities and their urban residents, but they are often grown in harsh conditions with confined soil volumes and altered water access; at the same time cities generate huge amounts of stormwater that degrade waterways. Paul is exploring trade-offs in stormwater reduction and tree growth in passively irrigated street systems.



Lei Hou

Faculty: Arts
PhD progress: Confirmation

Research summary: With the growing of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Lei's research asks how do these populations reach accessible

and effective health services? As an important question for urban internationalization and social risk management in the context of achieving public health objectives and aligning with government guidelines – particularly during a pandemic where people are required to change the way they live.

Shiva Nouri

Faculty: Architecture, Building & Planning
PhD progress: Confirmation

Research summary: Shiva's research explores how social media is affecting migrant women's participation in urban public spaces of Melbourne within the context of today's blended virtual-physical spaces.



Loren Adams

Faculty: Architecture, Building & Planning
PhD progress: 2nd Year Review

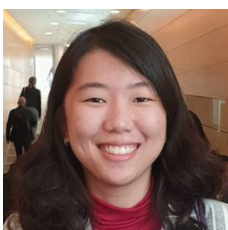
Research summary: Architects and spatial practitioners: Let's heist, hack, hijack, and copycat! Socio-spatial exploits often animate struggles for spatial control, but can they also be activism; acts of creative resistance against dense entanglements of state and corporate power?



Subharthe Samandra

Faculty: Science
PhD progress: Confirmation

Research summary: Subharthe's research focuses on identifying emerging contaminants into Australian wastewater treatment plants. This will allow water authorities to proactively manage the release of emerging contaminants into the environment. Additionally, this project is a stepping-stone to reduce the lag time between identifying an emerging contaminant and it being a monitored pollutant.



Maxine Chan

Faculty: Engineering & Information Technology
PhD progress: Confirmation

Research summary: Maxine is investigating what we can do to lower greenhouse gas emissions in homes,

from individual to system-wide level, and how these actions

Tim Baber

Faculty: Architecture, Building & Planning
PhD progress: 2nd Year Review

Research summary: With 700 new schools required in Australia in the next ten years, we can expect to see many more vertical schools in our cities. Understanding what kind of places, they are – from



the perspectives of the young people attending them – will better equip architects, teachers and policy makers to get them right.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

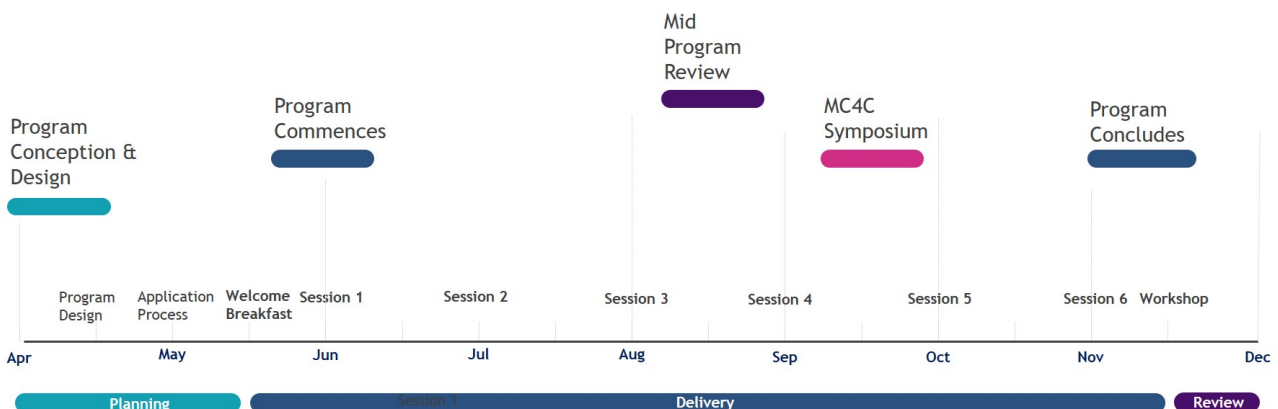
The central aim of the Horizons program was to foster graduate researchers' engagement in international career-building, countering relative isolation resulting from the country's locked borders, adverse time-zone inequalities and limited international mobility. This aim was addressed through six themes which were the focus of each monthly session. These were:

- Research partnerships
- Writing and publishing
- Grants expertise
- Knowledge exchange
- Conference know-how
- Internationalising career

Information about the program was made available on the Centre's website and can be viewed here:



TIMELINE



THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The Horizons pilot program was run exclusively for graduate researchers enrolled at the University of Melbourne. In May 2022 prospective participants were invited to submit an online application together with a letter of support from their primary supervisor. Applications were reviewed by a selection panel (appointed by the Melbourne Centre for Cities) with the aim of bringing together a mix of students from a diverse range of disciplines. Applicants were assessed against the following criteria:

- Has the applicant achieved their confirmation of candidature?
- Does the applicant's research align with the core aims of the Melbourne Centre for Cities?
- Has the applicant demonstrated ambition and plans towards engaging internationally in their research?

PROGRAM DELIVERY

Delivered between May and November 2022, Horizons was designed to foster critical skills to equip participants in international career building and inform the development of their own research through structured peer-to-peer engagement and mentoring from experts and senior voices (both internally from within the University and externally from international academics). Each session comprised:

- 3-hours preparation engaging with themed resources (see Annex 1 for reference list)
- 1-hour City Building workshop shared with Melbourne Centre for Cities graduate, early and mid-career researchers engaging with three speakers across key themes (see Section 2.5)
- 1.5-hour Horizons session bringing an international lens to key themes (Section 2.4) including:
 - discussion and reflection (45 minutes)
 - activity (45 minutes)

Alongside this, the program also included:

- a welcome breakfast aimed at providing an opportunity to meet their cohort and facilitators;
- optional participation the Melbourne Centre for Cities annual Symposium (Difficult Urban Questions) and;
- a final Workshop drawing together learning from across the six sessions.
- These activities are outlined in the following section.

HORIZONS SESSION OVERVIEW

Welcome Breakfast | May 2022



This was an informal event to give participants an opportunity to meet their cohort and program facilitators, and explore connections between research goals, international experiences and imaginations. Participants took part in two activities – ‘tweet

your thesis’ and ‘map your horizons’ – designed to break the ice and ignite the ‘international’ imagination.

Session 1: Research Partnerships | June 2022

If we are researching ‘cities in a world of cities’ the opportunities for international collaboration are core to much of how urban research unfolds, even in highly localised single-case endeavours. But what does it mean to partner internationally and how can this take place after the disruptions of COVID-19? This session looked at challenges to collaboration and engagement, with academics as well as non-academic stakeholders, across borders.

Session 2: Writing and publishing | July 2022

Publications are perhaps some of the most common markers of academic activity internationally, across most countries and contexts. At the same time, the global circuit (and market) of academic and academic-engaged publishing (and the publishing industry more generally) are a vast and complex ecosystem that often bewilders the most experienced scholars. How can we engage strategically and collaboratively across these dissemination networks? How do we navigate international trends in publishing and complex dynamics of exchange? How are publication profiles ‘fungible’ and translatable between diverse academic contexts? This session tackled these questions with an outlook on the changing international landscape of urban studies publishing.

Session 3: Grants expertise | August 2022

Although steeped in national funders and localised politics of academic resources, much of the international activity of urban researchers is also impacted by global circuits of resources, investments, grants and gifts which animate urban activities across national borders. International organisations, outward national initiatives, the private sector, philanthropy (and others) are all complex and often deeply international actors we can encounter as urban researchers as we engage internationally – or seek to support our aspirations and collaborations to operate in a more international community of city researchers. This session explored how to make sense of this system, giving a first-hand insight and experience in leveraging funds and resources (not always just monetary) from and with overseas partners, institutions and colleagues.

Session 4: Knowledge exchange | September 2022

As researchers striving to address contemporary challenges in building sustainable and inclusive cities, what can we do to help ensure our research reaches its target audience? How do we connect with urban development experts, policymakers and other stakeholders to understand and meet their information needs? This session challenged participants to consider how including stakeholders at all stages of the research process can

inform a more nuanced understanding of the research context and increase the relevance of research outputs as well as building connections and international networks that can help facilitate knowledge exchange of research findings.

Session 5: Conference know-how | October 2022

International conferences have long been some of the best opportunities to disseminate urban research, meet potential collaborators, and enrich intellectual circles. Yet much less is said about how to navigate decisions about which cities-based events to attend and how to make the most of an event – before, during and after it takes place. As many conferences have transitioned to virtual formats in response to COVID-19 travel restrictions, this has increased the potential number and range of events to attend as a participant and presenter – introducing new questions about how many events to attend and how to engage well. As in-person opportunities begin to open up again, there are even more questions about whether in-person or virtual attendance is preferable. This session tackled these questions and more offering pragmatic insights into how to navigate this changing international conference landscape.



Alongside this, Horizons participants were also invited to apply this learning by engaging in the **Melbourne Centre for Cities Symposium**.



Session 6: Internationalising career (November 2022)



One of the most heavily disruptive aspects of COVID-19 has been international employment and workforce mobility. In urban specialisations where local engagement and familiarisation is critical, this has been particularly acute. This final session focused explicitly on what an international urban career entails, particularly in terms of establishing professional expertise in a multiplicity of urban 'places', and leveraging a multifaceted understanding of cities, urban processes and accumulative global urban 'network'. The session reflected on the movement of many PhD graduates outside of academia, and explored different possibilities for pursuing an international career.

Workshop | November 2022

Bringing Horizons to a close, the workshop offered an opportunity to consolidate learning and reflect on common themes across each of the six-monthly sessions. A panel of internationally experienced academics were invited to take part in a panel discussion to help draw out learnings and offer further insight into an international career trajectory.



CITY BUILDING OVERVIEW

City Building is a series of eight workshops designed to equip post graduate and early career scholars within the Melbourne Centre for Cities with professional skills to enable them to position and represent themselves for their future careers. The series is open to all but is designed with an audience of early career researchers, doctoral students, and ambitious honours and masters' students in mind. City Building is a Q&A style panel, engaging three speakers to share their knowledge and expertise across the following themes:

- **Building networks:** At the Melbourne Centre for Cities, we want to help connect you with other cities researchers. But how do you reach out to others? This workshop will help you to build collegial, collaborative networks with other urban researchers. We will explore some of the best ways to connect with researchers at the University of Melbourne, as well as researchers overseas, and we will discuss the kinds of resources that you might need to do this effectively.
- **Building interdisciplinarity:** We want the Melbourne Centre for Cities to be a truly interdisciplinary space, bringing people from different disciplines together around shared topics. But having interdisciplinary conversations and doing interdisciplinary research is often easier said than done! This workshop will explore some of the ways to begin having interdisciplinary conversations about cities research, as well as spotlighting some of the challenges you might encounter.
- **Building research partnerships:** The Melbourne Centre for Cities is committed to fostering outward-focused research that seeks to make a positive difference in our cities. But how do you develop effective partnerships with non-academic stakeholders to undertake research? This workshop will explore the ways that you might develop urban research

partnerships, through community collaborations and co-designing research with the private and public sector.



- **Building a writing portfolio:** Members of the Melbourne Centre for Cities write for a range of urban-focused journals. But what journal should you choose to publish your cities research in and how do you build up a portfolio of publications? This workshop will introduce you to some of the key journals in the cities space, and it will guide you through some of the things you should consider when developing a portfolio of publications from your project.
- **Building grants expertise:** Researchers in the Melbourne Centre for Cities successfully bid for research funding from a range of different agencies. But how do you choose which grants to apply for and what makes for a successful application? This workshop will introduce you to the range of funders available to you to seek financial support to undertake your research, as well as strategies for maximising your chances of grant success.
- **Building knowledge exchange:** Researchers in the Melbourne Centre for Cities are committed to making their research findings speak to wider audiences. But how do you share your research with non-academic audiences? This workshop will explore how to translate your research so that it is helpful for diverse stakeholders beyond the academy, as well as how you can use the media to amplify your findings.

- **Building conference know-how:** Our Annual Symposium is one of the Melbourne Centre for Cities flagship events where you can share your research and learn about other members' projects. But how do you get the most from symposia and conferences? This workshop will explore some of the best ways to navigate conferences successfully while also making them enjoyable rather than daunting experiences!
- **Building your career:** Members of the Melbourne Centre for Cities go on to have successful careers in a range of different sectors. But how do you decide which career path is for you? This workshop will explore the range of careers that cities experts can develop, from careers in academia to careers in the private public sectors—and everything in between!

PROGRAM OUTPUTS

A key component of the Horizons program was the production of a series of 'two-pagers'. Developed in consultation with facilitators and participants, the 'two-pagers' are a take home resource for participants, providing an overview of resources, themes and key learnings that emerged from each session. Also included in this section are two reflection pieces written by program participants exploring overarching themes from across the program.

SESSION 1:

DEVELOPING AND STRENGTHENING INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

SESSION SUMMARY:

International research partnerships are core to many urban research projects. Beyond the research outcomes they produce, endeavours to bring together actors from various geographical locations are valuable to fostering connections between science, policy, and community action. Because international research partnerships are simultaneously complex and ambitious, challenges are inevitable. Many early career researchers (ERCs) who wish to expand their research horizons are concerned with the practical and ethical challenges involved in developing international research partnerships.

In this session of the Horizons program, the cohort discussed what it means to do research in partnership with people based overseas and how they can incorporate such partnerships into their research journey. At the start of the session, participants reflected on the City Building session¹ where three academics were invited to talk about different forms of research

partnerships. The facilitators then briefed the cohort on major types of international research partnerships and common challenges that researchers may encounter. Building on that, the cohort then shared their perspectives and experience of undertaking research partnerships. How to develop meaningful partnerships with communities emerged as a major challenge in the discussion. The session continued with a group activity where the cohort were invited to develop hypothetical research partnerships with their peers and international partners. The session concluded with the presentation of partnership ideas and the cohort's collective reflection on them.

The session's key learning points

- Shapes and diversity of international academic collaborations
- Shapes and diversity of international non-academic stakeholders
- Collaboration ethics of North-South/South-south exchange
- Building personal relationships

SESSION MATERIALS:

Doing international research partnerships differently

Many early-career researchers may already be familiar with the fundamentals of partnerships, such as identifying alignments with potential partners, leveraging current networks, securing funding, managing project implementation, and monitoring the process. Beyond these fundamentals, what do we need to do differently and why?

Universities as civic actors

In projects that involve non-academic stakeholders, universities are often viewed as 'spatially and culturally disconnected' and 'politically disengaged' from the realities of the society in which they are a part [1]. In reality, universities are civic actors who should play an active role in generating societal changes. Among other things, this can be done by designing research partnerships that aim to address short-term problems and challenge current structures that contribute to producing these problems. Some of these structural problems transcend borders and are globally configured. Researchers can support universities' commitment as civic actors by paying attention to these structural problems when they do international research collaborations.

The equity of partnerships' value for all partners

In international research partnerships that involve often marginalised local communities in a specific country, the ‘outsiders’ (researchers, funders) typically gain most from recognition associated with obtaining research grants and subsequent publication of research findings [2], despite the claim that such collaborations assist the communities. What is valuable for community partners (and non-community partners) can be vastly different. In some cases, the benefit comes with costs that the researchers may underestimate. The time and energy that each partner will invest to navigate cross-country and cross-institutional bureaucracy are not equal and can cause tensions in partnerships. This is often the case with research partnerships that involve researchers and funders based in Global North and community partners from Global South [3, 4].

The cross-cultural nature of international research partnerships

Cultural sensitivity is important at every step of international research collaboration, from building relationships and establishing partnerships to addressing issues that a. Additionally, since some research activities come with risks, understanding the cultural context of potential risks for partner communities is essential. A deeper understanding of this cultural context will help researchers avoid unnecessary issues in their partnerships and help them do better research. With humility and sensitivity to local contexts, researchers can frame questions and interventions more appropriately, improve the reliability and validity of the data, and enrich data interpretation.

INSIGHTS FROM COHORT -- HOW CAN THE UNIVERSITY SUPPORT PHD STUDENTS TO DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS?

- ✓ Give room for flexibility for PhD students whose work need to be built on long-term partnership. The cohort were especially concerned about the irreconcilability of the PhD (short) timeline with the amount of time needed to build trust with partners. While this can be tackled by some by rethinking the feasibility of their PhD timeline, some others need long time to build trust with their partners.
- ✓ Provide channels to showcase past and ongoing partnerships that the academics in the university have, within and beyond academia

Research partnerships are evolving

Increasingly, researchers believe that research partnerships do not have to follow the traditional way of ‘doing research’. Researchers need to critically reflect on the research tradition as contexts (e.g., Indigenous-led research), research risks being a neocolonial exercise and contexts (e.g., Indigenous-led research), research risks being a neocolonial exercise an ‘extractive’ process. In many contexts (e.g., Indigenous-led research), research risks being a neocolonial exercise incompatible with various knowledge systems. Many partnerships are starting to break the mold, for example, by applying a no-method approach with no

predetermined research design in fieldwork [4]. Though they are not always measurable by academic standards, informal and creative approaches can be crucial to strengthening such partnerships.

Some practical tips to do research partnerships differently

On building trust with partners

- If you have a limited time frame for the partnership, have honest discussions about your time capacity with the partnering organisation while reiterating the broader long-term commitment (if you can) [1]
- Develop relationships and meet new contacts through community gatekeepers; ask what research questions and methods are appropriate; and discuss what types of knowledge are needed in the community [1]
- Take time to learn about the partners and partners’ communities [1]
- Interact with people in the community who are unconnected to the partner organisations with which we work [1], but be cautious of the dynamics and politics in the community.
- Pay attention to reciprocity and make it a core value in the partnership [1]. Acknowledge, however, that there is an extractive dimension in academic research. Researchers are from a privileged position so it may not always be about your learning process. “I am here to learn about [...], what can I do for you that will benefit you in that process?” [5]
- If possible, work together with partners on non-research activities to support the development of shared meaning and trust, which later may allow you to undertake some of the more ambitious aims of the research [5-9]
- Pay attention to the process (driven by respect, responsibility, and care) rather than just to the outcome (agreement on joint outputs or activities) [6]

On making meaningful partnerships

- Support models whereby partners with disadvantaged power relations (e.g., global South actors) fundamentally shape agendas, from research design to feeding findings into policy [3]
- Make proactive efforts to ensure that contractual aspects of the project set-up do not get in the way of genuine research co-design and co-production [3]
- Ask how your own practices, assumptions and behaviours contribute to the very inequities and issues we seek to improve [4]

On addressing issues and strengthening partnerships

- Focus on respectful listening on all sides [2], remain flexible, and engage in critical and reflexive introspection [1]
- Ensure timely communication with all partners and work together on solutions that can accommodate all partners [1]



Picture 1. Snapshot from the Horizons session

Resources:

1. Allahwala, A., et al., *Building and sustaining community-university partnerships in marginalized urban areas*. *Journal of Geography*, 2013. **112**(2): p. 43-57.
2. Minkler, M., *Community-based research partnerships: challenges and opportunities*. *Journal of urban health*, 2005. **82**(2): p. ii3-ii12.
3. Cotula, L. *Confronting structural inequalities in South-North research collaborations*. 2022.
4. Perry, M. *North-South research partnerships must break old patterns for real change*.
5. Cohort, H.P. *Horizons Program Session*. [Discussion Forum] 2022.
6. Butcher, S., *Research solidarity? Navigating feminist ethics in participatory action-research in Kathmandu, Nepal*. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 2021. **28**(4): p. 497-518.
7. O'Shea, J. 2022 [cited 2 June 2022].
8. Chin, Z. 2022 [cited 2 June 2022].
9. Jones, T. [cited 2 June 2022].

SESSION 2:

WRITING AND PUBLISHING FOR EARLY CAREER URBAN RESEARCHERS – EXPANDING HORIZONS

SESSION SUMMARY

For early career urban researchers, the global landscape of academic and academically engaged publishing may appear daunting. Various scholarly networks spread across the global circuit of academic publishing create a vast, complex ecosystem that urban scholars may find hard to navigate. Most early career researchers (ECRs) know that they need to engage strategically across these scholarly networks through writing and publishing—but where do they need to start and how? Furthermore, academic

publishing is also highly dynamic. How do ECRs navigate changing global trends in academic publishing? For urban research scholars working on a specific area, how can their publication profiles be translatable across diverse academic contexts?

In this second session of the Horizons program, the cohort delved deeply into the value and challenges of writing and publishing as early career researchers. The first half of the session started with the cohort's reflections on their experience with academic publications and the challenges they encountered. During this discussion, the cohort drew from several emerging themes from the City Building session, where Prof Louise Johnson from Deakin University shared her decades-long experience in academic publishing. Some of the emerging themes were: the value of publishing research at different stages of one's academic career, and being strategic in publishing research. In the second half, the cohort worked on a group activity where they were assigned an abstract of a (fun!) hypothetical study and identified which journal/publication they would send the manuscript to. They were asked to tailor the submission based on the scope and readership of the journal/publication. The session concluded with a final reflection on the activity and the cohort's publication plan moving forward.

The session's key learning points

- International publishing landscapes
- International writing collaborations
- The diversity of writing/publishing cultures: How to bridge diverse worldviews?
- Non-academic writing and publishing: between op-eds and multilateral reports
- Shapes and diversity of international academic collaborations

WRITING AND PUBLISHING AS AN URBAN RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Urban researchers are scholars from various disciplines, from planning, engineering, sociology, geography, economics to political science, who come together to study cities as a unique social phenomenon requiring a distinct field of scientific inquiry [1]. Since much of the field is oriented toward the solution to or amelioration of problems regarding people's connection to places, writing for publication has become a primary way for urban researchers to connect and disseminate research findings. Beyond this primary function, why should you write and publish as an ECRs in urban research?

Publications serve as a proxy for your scholarly interests

Writing and publishing early in your career is useful for creating your writing portfolio. As a researcher, you will want to make a mark in your field and stand out from the crowd. Your writing portfolio will allow other people use to spot your expertise in your field [2].

Publications are strong evidence of expertise when applying for grants

Publications can be an effective testament to your capacity to do projects on certain topics. When you are applying for a grant, your list of publications can demonstrate why you are the right person to do the project. Grants assessors will also likely consider applicants' citation metrics and the balance of individual and collaboratively written papers when assessing grants application [2].

Publications keep you relevant when you are moving in and out of academia

Since a good part of urban research is oriented toward the solution and/or amelioration of problems in cities, you may find yourself working in and out of academia throughout your career—intermittently or simultaneously. You may even find the line between academia and non-academia to be less clear at some points in your career. When both your academic activity and non-academic work supports each other, keeping yourself relevant in academia is important. Writing and publishing can be one of the most effective ways to do this [2].

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES IN WRITING AND PUBLISHING AS AN EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER IN URBAN RESEARCH?

Below are several key challenges that ECRs in urban research face—and how you might tackle them.

- *The challenge:* Less freedom in choosing with whom you want to work and write
How to tackle it: As an ECR, you can slowly push your boundaries by trying to have a balanced mix of people in terms of seniority, disciplines, positions and role in your career (e.g., your supervisors, peers) and seek their support to collaborate. Researchers feel excitement not only about the idea of the writing project but also the team behind it. You may have less freedom in choosing who you want to work with and write with as an ECR, but there can be more freedom as you gain more footing in your field [2].
- *The challenge:* Finding your 'place' in your publishing landscape
How to tackle it: In urban research, it can be tricky to find your footing when the scholarly trend is changing fast. If you feel overwhelmed by the breadth of topics in your field, you can start by finding a niche—an

academic 'tribe' where you can collaborate and grow your expertise through writing and publishing [2].

- *The challenge:* Compromising on the kind of research you are passionate about for the sake of common academic performance measurement (such as the Impact Factor)
How to tackle it: You can try to slowly 'rock the boat' by doing projects you want to do, even when they may not be as well-received by publishers and journal editors as the more mainstream topics. Be careful not to rock the boat too much—try to have a good balance of boundary-pushing works and work that allow you to grow and collaborate with others [2].
- *The challenge:* Dealing with the self-doubt of not having enough expertise in your area of research
How to tackle it: Navigating yourself in a growing topic or field can be tricky. One key strategy is to understand and get a good grasp of the key literature that fuels conversation and debates in the field. You will likely never be familiar with everything in your field given the volume of work published now. So be kind to yourself—the literature review is the trickiest part of not only writing and publishing but research in general. You can try to draw a bracket around your research and identify 3-5 areas where your work intersects and makes a contribution to your field. Familiarise yourself with the 'core' literature in those areas.

EXPANDING YOUR PUBLISHING HORIZONS

Why expand horizons in writing and publishing research in urban research?

There is an increased awareness that the 'international' academic writing and publishing landscape is more of a social construct than a factual description [3]. In urban research, there is a perceived hegemony of Global North publishing traditions and citation patterns. The authorship and their affiliations, the cities in the discussion, and the urban theories emerging from those discussions are mostly dominated by the Anglophone world [4, 5]. The Global North hegemony has become deeply embedded in higher education institutions in diverse areas of the world, influencing what are perceived as 'high quality' and 'rigorous' international journals.

As urban research scholars, your research may seek to transform the landscape of your field. To do so, publishing beyond the norm may be a valuable component of your research. If your research is situated in a context that challenges the currently dominant approach to studying urban space, you may want to publish outside of the mainstream 'international' publications and contribute to building a new readership base.

Expanding your horizon in writing and publishing can be a learning and un-learning process about how little you know about ‘the world’s cities’, and hence about other worlds of urbanism from different perspectives and locations.

How to expand your horizons?

1. Think of performance indicators in publishing as proxies for performances in institutions and geographical contexts, not a universal, unbreakable mould that everyone needs to fit into.
2. Look out for your scholarly ‘tribe’ and make that a bridge to expand your horizons in writing and publishing.
3. Familiarise yourself with the unfamiliar. Find out if there are any publishing circuits or indexes in your field that are written in non-Anglo or based outside of Global North countries. Some examples are the Latin American Index of Scientific Publications Serials (Latindex) and African transnational index developed by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA).
4. The uncounted can be as valuable as the counted. Focus on building relationships and collaborations internationally and be open to what is impactful in other contexts.

Resources:

1. Bowen, W.M., R.A. Dunn, and D.O. Kasdan, *What is “urban studies”? Context, internal structure, and content*. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 2010. **32**(2): p. 199-227.
2. Cohort, H.P. *Horizons Program Session 2*. 2022.
3. Getahun, D.A., W. Hammad, and A. Robinson-Pant, *Academic writing for publication: Putting the ‘international’ into context*. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 2021. **16**(2): p. 160-180.
4. Kong, L. and J. Qian, *Knowledge circulation in urban geography/urban studies, 1990–2010: Testing the discourse of Anglo-American hegemony through publication and citation patterns*. *Urban Studies*, 2019. **56**(1): p. 44-80.
5. Collyer, F.M., *Global patterns in the publishing of academic knowledge: Global North, global South*. *Current Sociology*, 2018. **66**(1): p. 56-73.

SESSION 3:

NAVIGATING GRANTS, BUILDING EXPERTISE

SESSION SUMMARY

Much of urban researchers’ activities are impacted by circuit of resources and investments that flow through cities. While some of them are embedded in national funding mechanisms and the local politics of resources, others are more global. The global circuit of research funding can often be found in international organisations, outward national initiatives and regional cooperation, and the globally networked private sector and philanthropy entities. As the competition for national research funding gets more intense, urban researchers are expanding their horizons in search of financial resources. Many early career researchers (ECRs) are still unfamiliar with the landscape of research funding in general, let alone those that operate within a deeply international network of urban researchers.

In this third of the Horizons program, the cohort shared their perspectives and concerns about navigating research grants. The session started with a short reflection on the City Building session, where three invited guests shared their experience in obtaining and managing grants. The facilitators then led a focussed discussion on the research grants landscape in and beyond Australia. The session concluded with a group activity where the cohort were asked to consider funding opportunities for a hypothetical researcher profile.

The session’s key learning points

- International funding landscapes
- International research funding collaborations
- The diversity of funding/granting cultures: how to bridge diverse worldviews?
- Non-academic funding: between consultancies and global consortia?

GENERAL AND PRACTICAL TIPS IN NAVIGATING RESEARCH GRANTS

Australia has a number of prestigious research funding schemes that are highly competitive. Some of the most prominent ones are the Australian Research Council (ARC), which funds research across various disciplines except health and medical disciplines, and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Despite the increasing importance of urban-related research, the number of ARC funding awarded to disciplines covering urban issues is in decline [1], at least in architecture, planning and construction. While research on urban issues grapples with ‘wicked’ problems that transcend traditional discipline boundaries, many universities and research institutions are still focusing their support on ‘key’ disciplines whose scholarly boundaries are easier to delineate. With limited time to spend writing lengthy grant proposal [2], urban researchers are often required to pursue novel research ideas and navigate research grants more strategically. Below is a summary of practical tips in

navigating research grants for ECRs, drawn from the Horizons session and reading materials.

Preparing

- Prepare early by investing time in finding new networks and solidifying existing networks, both in and beyond academia before you begin grant writing [3]
- Balance the time in your early career between building a research portfolio (writing papers) and applying for grants. Both require time and energy. Many ECRs who spend a lot of time applying for grants (and getting them) do not have time to write papers. This may become a disadvantage later since your academic track record influences the decision on whether you are fit for the grants you are applying for. For ERCs, papers can be a key to getting grants when you have never obtained grants before. [3]
- Decide carefully why the grant you are applying for is the ‘right’ grant, not only for the project you have in mind but for your aspiration and situation at that period [3].
- Starts with smaller, internal grants. Small things count for ECRs. Build your chances gradually [3].
- When you have a specific grant in mind to apply for, be strategic between your time and the potential benefit. Is it worth your time and energy? There is no straightforward answer for everyone. Make your time effective whenever possible. You can use materials from your previous grant applications to save time! [4]
- Do extensive research on available grants and note the differences in the types of projects financed by various funding bodies. Government-sponsored grants may be more interested in addressing the nation’s priorities or big, conceptual questions in certain disciplines, while private foundation-sponsored grants will focus on projects that are more niche and aligned with their missions [5]

Writing and submitting

- Having a good research idea is not enough. You need to be able to communicate clearly how your idea fills the gap in your area, demonstrate why you are the right person to develop that idea, and convince them how you are going to achieve the outcomes you promise to deliver [3, 5]. Ogrants (<https://www.ogrants.org/>) is an open access database for past grants proposals you can use as a guidance
- Assessors will look for projects that will achieve a critical breakthrough or conceptual advancement in your area. Make sure that your idea offers a new way into existing issues [3, 5]

- It cannot be stressed enough how important clarity is in your proposal. Few assessors will look at the nitty gritty of your application, but a lot of people will look at the broader concepts and ideas. Capture the excitement of the examiners—whether they are someone in your field or outside. Satisfy the ‘specialist sophistication’ that is required for reviewers in your field but also make an easily understood case for reviewers outside your field [3, 5]
- Have clear deliverables and a feasible timeframe for your project. If your project involves a partnership, be clear on who is doing what [3].
- Be precise, but flexible. Leave some room in your budget for unforeseen situations. You need evidence that the numbers are reasonable but have some room for flexibility whenever you can [3].

HOW UNIVERSITIES CAN HELP

>> Distribute research funds through smaller and more consistent grants with the goal of supporting the long-term career development of ECRs [2, 3]

>> Shorten the application process in internal grants so that only information relevant for peer review, not administration, is collected. This would have little impact on the quality of peer review and the time saved could be reinvested into research. [2, 3]

- When drafting your budget, one thing you can do is to start with essentials (field trip, accommodation) then work backwards. You should decide how many people you need in your project, whether they are part time or full time, and whether the grant can afford to hire them. Pay attention to the number of locations in which the project will take place and where—you might be able to spot ways to trim your budget if you have local partners who you can ask for assistance [3].

After the result

Better luck next time?

It may be discouraging to work on an application for so long only to get rejected. For ECRs, getting rejections early in your career may be an important learning experience that will be valuable in your journey later. As many have said—rejection makes you a better academic. Can what you wrote be recycled for another paper, or another grant application? If so, move on to the next thing as soon as you can. The more you write, the higher your likelihood of success will be [4].

Successful! Now what?

Successful application is only halfway through the journey—the rest of it is successful project delivery. You may need to make frequent adjustments as the project goes on. In many instances, projects experience budget cuts for many unforeseen situations (for example, the COVID 19 pandemic). You will need to hone your

ability to troubleshoot and to main deliverables completed (e.g., cross-subsidisation between different activities or redistribution from one grant to another). If your project involves partnerships, being open and honest about the challenges and viable solutions is key [4, 5].

APPLYING FOR RESEARCH GRANTS BEYOND YOUR ‘HORIZONS’

Applying grants from international funders

There are several grant schemes that are open globally or awarded by countries outside of Australia for international researchers. The notable ones are the Wellcome Trust from the UK, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation based in Germany, and the Horizon Europe program run by the Europe Research Council. Some of them may be quite specific in terms of scope and requirements. Talking to a colleague who has been awarded or applied to one of the international funding will be immensely helpful before you start your application.

Invest in expanding your work

Grants are beyond the research idea; they are made up of networking, conversations, and papers that take place long before the application starts [3]. Partnership and publications, two topics covered in the previous sessions of this program, are important parts of your grant-seeking journey. Expanding your horizons in seeking grants may require you to expand your partnership and scholarly writing horizons.

Resources:

1. Troy, P., *Australian urban research and planning*. 2013, Taylor & Francis.
2. Christian, K., et al., *A survey of early-career researchers in Australia*. Elife, 2021. **10**.
3. Cohort, H.P. *Horizons Program Session 3*. 2022.
4. Robertson, J., *Achy breaky heart: coping with academic rejection*, in *The Thesis Whisperer*. 2013.
5. Sohn, E., *Secrets to writing a winning grant*. Nature, 2020. **577**(7788): p. 133-135.

SESSION 4:

EXPANDING HORIZONS THROUGH KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION AND EXCHANGE

SESSION SUMMARY

As researchers striving to address contemporary challenges in building sustainable and inclusive cities, what can you do to help ensure your research reaches its target audience? How do you

connect with urban development experts, policymakers, and other stakeholders to understand and meet their information needs? More importantly, beyond being translated, how do you ensure that knowledge is meaningfully exchanged across domains and disciplines? As early career researchers (ECRs) in urban research seek to address complex challenges, it is important to know how to contextualise research and maximise its impact locally and globally.

After grappling with topics related to preparing and doing research in the first three sessions, the fourth Horizons session tackles the question of what happens after the research is done. The session started with a short reflection on the City Building session before that, where three seasoned academics shared their strategies for engaging with diverse stakeholders beyond the academy and using the media to amplify their findings. The cohort then discussed the readings posted by facilitators in the Notion platform and reflected on their experiences of knowledge translation and exchange. In the second half of the session, the cohort experimented with identifying different target audiences for their research and mapping out the research dissemination process.

The session’s key learning points

- Ad hoc vs sustained international knowledge exchanges
- Working in international networks
- Engaging with international audiences
- Non-academic knowledge exchange: venues and opportunities

THE IMPORTANCE OF NAVIGATING KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION AND EXCHANGE

When research is done, what is next? As researchers whose work addresses real-life challenges, ECRs in urban research often aspire for their research to have meaningful impacts in the world beyond the academy. Translating and exchanging knowledge is an important process that lets your research be a part of a broader conversation and has the potential to enact change. There are many ways to translate and exchange knowledge—reaching out to specific interest groups, informing policymakers (if your research aims to influence policy changes), or creating public awareness (if your topics and findings need more public attention).

In urban research—where many research problems are cross-discipline, complex, and multifaceted—navigating knowledge translation is crucial. The ways that knowledge is translated and the impact that it has on policy and practice may be embedded in a deeply political process, not only between academics, the

public and policymakers, but also between the local and global, between different disciplines with different approaches to issues at hand, and different actors [1]. ‘Wicked’ problems like climate change are a good example of how knowledge translation is important. Global agendas formed considering these ‘wicked’ problems—such as the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—were shaped through knowledge translation across different disciplines and interest groups [1]. These global agendas were ultimately shaped by the political dynamics and presumptions of what knowledge is useful at specific historical junctures. Scientific consensus and the normative actions derived from them are the results of complex knowledge translation processes [2].

Against this backdrop, the main questions for ECRs in urban research who want to translate the knowledge from their research are: *What is the aim of getting your research out there?* Beyond informing stakeholders that can act on the findings (e.g., policymakers, businesses, broader public) your research can become a building block of a larger process. Take an agenda-setting process like UN-Habitat for example. The first, second, and third editions of the HABITAT conferences (the United Nation-convened conferences on urban settlement and consequences of urbanisation) have distinct outputs formed through different knowledge translation paradigms. While Habitat I focused on building a collective narrative and Habitat II emphasised targeting performance criteria and sectoral development, the core attention of Habitat III was on data measurement on urban development [1]. As ECRs in urban research, you should aim to expand the horizon of your research and think about the ripple effect it may enact in the future.

The second question is *‘What is the message and whom do you want to convince?’* Your research scope may be local but have implications at regional, national, or even global levels. This means addressing multiple groups of audiences with different interests in your research.

ISSUES WITH GETTING YOUR RESEARCH ‘OUT THERE’ AND CREATING IMPACTS

After you decide on the goal of disseminating your research and the key audience you are targeting, the next question to ask is how you can communicate your research in a meaningful way. The process may not be as straightforward as ‘talking to person A and B about the research findings’. Some issues you may find along the way are:

Different cultures and languages between institutions and countries

This issue mainly affects the accessibility of your research. If your research is conducted and written in English but you seek to

communicate them to stakeholders in places that do not use English as the main language, you would want to not only translate the research into another language but also fit it into the sociocultural context of that place. For example, if your research discusses slums, there might be differences in the concept of ‘slums’ across different places. Beyond that, researchers are often trained to write only for academic audiences and are not used to highlighting the policy and practical implications of the research [3].

Timeline

Researchers work within a specific timeline that often does not match the working timeframes of non-academics. Researchers often design their work around the timeline of journals’ review process, grant applications and academic promotions which can be lengthy and time-consuming [3]. Meanwhile, policymakers and industry practitioners need timely evidence for their fast-changing environment.

Incentives

Academic reward systems put emphasis on publishing and getting grants. While there are signs of improvement (e.g., altmetrics, which collates the ‘buzz’ around your research), there is not enough recognition or incentive for other forms of research dissemination [3]. Not to mention, there are substantial costs of translating research for non-academic audiences and a lack of platforms to bring together researchers and the users of their research.

Politics and power asymmetries

The politics and power asymmetries surrounding knowledge translation are subtler and more difficult to spot than the other issues mentioned above. Amid the trend of ‘expert-driven’ and ‘evidence-based’ policy, who gets to be ‘the experts’ and what counts as ‘evidence’ need to be closely examined [2]. There are disciplinary, geographical, and ideological monopolies of expertise in contemporary global issues that are often taken for granted. Consequently, researchers need to be aware of whose voice they leverage when they disseminate their research, especially when they engage with international audiences.

TIPS FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION AND EXCHANGE

Tips on how to approach knowledge translation

- Think about whom you want to tell this research about, why your research matters to them; why it may be a matter of interest for them. They can be people who you never thought about before [4].
- Start with building relationships. Though people move on from their jobs and institutions, some maintain relationships they made in their previous roles [5]. A

strong relationship takes time and needs maintenance. Someone in the industry may remember something you send a few months (or even years) back and ask for a follow-up.

- Be sympathetic to the positions of people you are working with or talking to about your research [5]. As an academic, you may feel frustrated with the lack of attention (from the government or industries) to the topics or findings in your research. However, as people whose work deals with those topics, they could have been already aware of the issues discussed in your research but have limitations in addressing them,

Actionable tips

- Tailoring your research to non-academic audiences is *not* dumbing your research down. Rather, it is a different way of communicating. It could involve making the message more straightforward to the public. It could also involve focusing on policy and implementation aspects. When giving policymakers or industry people a summary of your research, ask them 'Is this useful? Does this make difference?'
- Think about three utilities that your research may offer 1) Instrumental utility, which is the usefulness of the knowledge produced from your research, 2) Conceptual utility, or the accessibility of your research for people (Is it something that people can wrap their head around?), and 3) Political utility, or the compatibility between your research and the political agenda of people you are disseminating it to [6].
- Do not wait to be approached; engage with various media after completing or publishing your research. Do not be afraid to try unconventional media such as podcasts, performances, and visual graphics.
- Get some training on talking to the media which might involve learning about how to write media press releases, getting scripts, developing checklists, etc. Learn how to develop a media personality by talking with someone who already has one.

Resources:

1. Cociña, C., et al., *Knowledge translation in global urban agendas: A history of research-practice encounters in the Habitat conferences*. World Development, 2019. **122**: p. 130-141.
2. Mormina, M., J. Schöneberg, and L. Narayanaswamy, *Knowledge and Science Advice during and after COVID-19: Re-imagining Notions of 'Expertise' for Postnormal Times*. Available at SSRN 3790389, 2021.
3. Katsonis, M., *Bridging the research policy gap*. 2019, The Mandarin.
4. Bush, J. [cited 1 September 2022].
5. Barnett, J. [cited 1 September 2022].

6. Thompson, J. [cited 1 September 2022].

SESSION 5:

CONFERENCE KNOW-HOW FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS

SESSION SUMMARY

International conferences have long been some of the best opportunities to disseminate urban research widely, meet potential collaborators, and enrich intellectual circles. Yet much less is said about how to navigate decisions about which city-based events to attend and how to make the most of an event, both before, during and after. Furthermore, over the past few years, most conferences and symposia have transitioned to virtual formats owing to COVID travel restrictions. This has massively increased the potential number and range of events to attend as a participant and presenter, introducing new questions about how many events to attend and how to engage well. Now that in-person opportunities are beginning to open again, there are even more questions about whether in-person or virtual attendance is preferable. This session of Horizons tackles these questions and prepares early career researchers (ECRs) to navigate this changing international conference landscape well. In this fifth session of the Horizons program, the cohort reflected on their experience with conferences, especially in navigating international conferences. The session started with the cohort discussing their takeaways from the City Building session, where three guests at different academic career stages were invited to share their experiences with international academic conferences. The facilitators then led a focussed discussion on the international conference landscape, followed by a Q&A session with one of the Melbourne Centre for Cities' Symposium panelists and IPCC lead author Associate Professor Winston Chow. In this part of the session, the cohort explored the grey areas of international conferencing. The session concluded with an activity where the cohort brainstormed what makes a successful international experience.

The session's key learning points

- The international conferencing landscapes
- Going to conferences/attending virtually: formal and informal dimensions
- Managing international conferencing (and doing so strategically): how to choose what to do there and why not to go
- Non-academic conferencing: what to do before and after a conference

THE WORLD OF ACADEMIC CONFERENCE

Types of conferences

Attending conferences is one of the many exciting parts of being an ECR—you get to meet academics and talk about your research outside your institution. Like everybody else, you want to go to conferences too—but which one?

Conferences can come in different names, such as congress, forum, and summit [1]. They all refer to meetings to discuss a specific subject or topic (in one or multiple fields), but they may slightly differ in objectives and formats. You may also hear of other similar-yet-different formats of meeting such as symposium (a scientific congregation on a specific topic or debate, usually smaller than a conference), seminar (meetings of a small group of scholars to study a particular topic), and roundtable (a gathering where people have an equal role as a speaker and a discussant) [1]. Specific formats of meetings can be more common in certain disciplines than in others. There are also non-academic conferences that academics may be interested in, such as industry conferences or hybrid conferences where people from different sectors come together to discuss a subject of interest.

Reasons to go

There are many reasons to go to a conference. Researchers, especially early-career ones, want to receive high-quality feedback for their research work, and conferences can be one of the best places to do so. Some researchers go to conferences to seek partnerships with groups they know will attend those conferences, broaden networks, update their knowledge on a subject of interest, and be ‘initiated’ into a community with shared interests [2, 3]. All the reasons above are valid, and you may find yourself going to conferences for more than one reason.

Roles

When going to a conference, you can choose the role you will take there. You may be presenting a paper, presenting a poster, chairing or speaking in a panel, workshoping, or observing others’ sessions [4]. While giving a talk and presentation are more straightforward, presenting a poster can be unfamiliar for some. When presenting a poster, researchers are expected to provide a one-on-one conversation about their research to many people who come to their poster stands. Poster sessions can be less publicised than presentations/talks; hence the number of audiences is uncertain. Still, it can be a valuable chance for researchers to get individual feedback from other scholars.

Conference beyond the talks

Beyond facilitating discussions and knowledge exchange between people who have similar interests, conferences can be sites of public performance, knowledge legitimation and protest [5]. By bringing together people of various ideological positions and identities, conferences become a space of visibility where these positions and identities are negotiated. Conferences are

thus embedded in politics and power dynamics—especially in urban research. For example, the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference ran in parallel with the citizen-led Klimaforum09, where citizens and civil society organisations’ voices were showcased, and the Copenhagen Climate Challenge Conference, which featured climate change sceptics [5, 6]. Scientific consensus (and dissensus) coming out of smaller conferences can also influence more significant agenda-setting events such as the HABITAT conferences, as briefly discussed in Session 4 handout. By being aware of the political aspect of conferences, ECRs can place themselves and their research more strategically within the landscape of scholarly discourses in their field.

HOW TO BE CONFERENCE NINJA: BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER

Below are some tips to navigate conferences as ECRs from the readings, session talks and discussions.

Before

Which conference to go to?

- Look beyond the conference title and research the conference program with your strategy in mind [3, 7]. Who is giving keynote speeches at the plenary sessions? Are there specific ‘themes’ in the parallel sessions that align with your research interest? What does your research contribute to the discourse that will be happening at the conference?
- Find out if they have dedicated programs for early career researchers to network with each other and with more senior researchers. It can be an added value to come to a conference that caters for ECRs [8].
- If you are unsure where to start looking for conferences, ask senior colleagues in and beyond your institution about past conferences they attended [7]. Your supervisors can also be your guide in choosing conferences.
- Think about logistics. Going to international conferences requires travel (if you want to attend in person), which means arranging trips, accommodation, and visas [8].

What to prepare?

- Prepare your presentation or talk in advance. If you are part of a panel, familiarize yourself with the work of other panel members so you can engage more with the discussion [7].
- Work your schedule well before and after the conference so you have enough time and energy to travel and rest [7]. Are there important deadlines around the time of conferences? Is there any way you

save energy during your trip (for example, by taking a shorter route)?

- If this is your first conference, you may consider joining your colleagues or fellow PhD students with related topics of interest in your department. Having someone you know attending the same conference can make the trip easier to navigate [8].

During

How to succeed in presenting?

- If there are several interesting conferences you can go to, yet you only have one or two research works ready to be disseminated, tailor your presentations for different conferences [3, 7].
- Engaging the audience in academic conferences does not always have to be rigid in a paper's structure style. Include the core and most relevant parts of your research and leave out the cumbersome details [9].
- Sometimes, your audiences make comments or statements instead of asking questions. There is also a chance that they ask complex, long-winded questions you do not have the answer to. Do not be afraid to say, "Thanks for that; great information/questions. I'll look into it later." [9]

What to attend?

- Engage with sessions relevant to your research interest but explore sessions and topics you are unfamiliar with. It may be a good opportunity to expand the horizons of your research and keep you updated on what's going on in your field [7-9].
- Conferencing takes a lot of energy - take a break if you need one [7]. It is okay (and sometimes important!) to miss a session to recharge.
- Take part in extra events (ECRs) [8]

How to navigate the tearoom talk?

- Be ready to introduce yourself regardless of the setting. You may talk to interesting people in the hallway, while waiting for the conference bus, or in the dinner queue! Have the following ready: a one-liner (this is the headline of your research), a five-liner (a little more info if they are interested), and a few compelling questions prepared for others (to show you are engaged). [7, 9]

After

- It would be nice if you could send emails to the conference organisers, other presenters, and people you met. Tell them what you loved about the conference or their presentation, what was

engaging, what made you think, and what has stuck in your mind. [7]

Resources:

1. van de Venter, R., *Is there a difference between a congress, conference, symposium, seminar, journal club, and workshop in terms of continuing professional development activities?* South African Radiographer, 2019. **57**(1): p. 24-26.
2. Teperek, M., *How to make the most of an academic conference – a checklist for before, during and after the meeting.* 2018, The London School of Economics and Political Science.
3. Chow, W. [cited 6 October 2022].
4. Etchells, P. 2012, Scientific American.
5. Craggs, R. and M. Mahony, *The geographies of the conference: Knowledge, performance and protest.* Geography Compass, 2014. **8**(6): p. 414-430.
6. Cociña, C., et al., *Knowledge translation in global urban agendas: A history of research-practice encounters in the Habitat conferences.* World Development, 2019. **122**: p. 130-141.
7. Phillips, C. [cited 6 October 2022].
8. Ningrum, D. [cited 6 October 2022].
9. Wiseman, J. [cited 6 October 2022].

SESSION 6:

EXPANDING THE HORIZONS FOR YOUR CAREER

SESSION SUMMARY

One of the most heavily disrupted aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic has been international employment and workforce mobility. In urban specialisations where local engagement and familiarisation requiring travel is critical, this disruption has been particularly acute. This closing session of the Horizons Series focused explicitly on what an international urban career entails, particularly in terms of establishing professional expertise in a multiplicity of urban places, and leveraging a multifaceted understanding of cities, urban processes and developing a global urban 'network'. The session looked at the movement of many PhD graduates outside of academia, as well as some of the strategies that Centre staff and associates have deployed to manage 'remote' engagement through the pandemic.

The sixth and final session of the Horizons program discussed career pathways and the process of transitioning between academia and industry/practices and between countries. In the first half of the session, the cohort looked back at the City Building

session held on the same day. The three guest speakers at the City Building session shared their experiences with moving careers in and out of academia, becoming both academia and industry practitioners at the same time, and dealing with failures and personal circumstances along the journey. The facilitators then led a discussion on the landscape of international careers in academia, especially the way it has developed after COVID-19. The session continued with an activity where the cohort divided into three groups to explore three different international career archetypes (the globe-trotter academic, the globally leading academic and the globally researching academic). They were invited to reflect on the theme of the previous Horizons program session (partnerships building, writing and publishing, grant writing, conference know-how, knowledge translation) and brainstorm how those themes affect each career archetype.

The session's key learning points

- What is an 'international' career?
- What are the international elements of a career trajectory?
- Moving between academia and practice: is the international landscape different to the local one?
- Moving overseas: the challenges and opportunities of international career moves
- How the pandemic has reshaped international engagement (and what this means for your career)

AN INTERNATIONAL CAREER- WHAT IS IT, WHY, AND WHAT IS THE VALUE?

An 'international' career is often both desired and expected as one's journey in academia progresses. As you build expertise in your field, you are expected to have the knowledge and experience beyond your 'horizons' (this could be your institution or home country). It is often taken for granted that an international career involves moving around the globe. While moving between countries is indeed a testament to an international career, there are other ways of internationalising your career in academia. With the help of technological advancement and with the flexibility that was catalysed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunities to advance your career internationally are more available now than ever before. While there are many ways that an academic career can be international, below are three types of international academic careers that the facilitators of this program developed based on the recommended readings and their own experiences.

- *Globe-trotter academics*, or the academics who physically move between different countries and institutions.

- *Globally leading academics*, or the academics who are well-connected with and actively shape the global landscape of their field.
- *Globally researching academics*, or the academics whose research focusses on a place or region outside of their home country.

The above three types are not mutually exclusive. A researcher can be a globe-trotter while also being a globally leading scholar. The boundaries between them became even more subtle for researchers in urban-related topics, where the knowledge produced is geographically fluid as much as they are place-based.

Why do universities want you to be an international scholar?

Hiring international academics is a key part of many universities' agendas to elevate their standards and set up global-oriented programs [1]. More grants and funding go to institutions with reputable researchers who have a good international track record. On one hand, it is a good thing to know that you are in high demand by universities around the world for being an international scholar. On the other hand, this means that you are expected to take on more responsibilities, such as establishing programmes and assisting with capacity building [1].

Should urban scholars move out to other countries to have an international career?

For researchers, the decision to move from one country to another to take up a new job differs from one person to another. A researcher who seeks a job abroad may want to experience different environments and cultures ('the explorer'), leave an unrewarding job or disadvantageous circumstances, seek more financial benefits, move up the promotion ladder faster, or look for a place where they can contribute more [2, 3]. The consideration to move out or stay in your home country must be based on a careful process of weighing up the pros and cons. You must be clear about your motivations and purpose—can it be achieved without moving out to another country? If you should move, does it need to be done now?

THE CHALLENGES WITH HAVING AN INTERNATIONAL CAREER

Challenges for researchers who physically move between countries

- Fitting in a distinct cultural background takes work, especially in places where marginalisation experienced by certain groups is still common. Gender, racial, and cultural privilege play a crucial role in ensuring a smooth migratory experience. Male and white academics from English-speaking countries, for example, have better experience migrating to other

countries and are more likely to take a job abroad. More importantly, a researcher has more than one identity that intersects with others. The intersection of these identities creates a complex web of privileges and disadvantages, which are not always apparent to others [5].

- Academic skills are not automatically transferable across different countries [6]. Language of instruction, institutional structure, teaching loads, and students' attitudes can be vastly different from one country to another. Aside from the logistics of moving, how receptive the country of destination to the researchers' academic skills needs to be considered.

Challenges for researchers who stay in their country of residence

- International researchers who choose to stay in one place for an extended period may feel isolated among their peers who move around the globe, especially when the place of residence is considered 'remote'. Not only will it make travel (for conferences, for example) more difficult, but the time difference will affect the frequency and quality of interactions with people on the other side of the globe.
- The researchers' ability to access location-specific grants, especially those pertaining to the location of interest in their research, may be impeded. The availability of research grants may be limited by the researchers' region and country of residence. If the researcher stays in one place for a prolonged period, this can be a considerable limitation for their overall academic career.
- Researchers may need to learn and get accustomed to other (more than one) countries' publishing landscapes and research protocols.
- If the primary sites of research are located outside of the researchers' country of residence, researchers may need to go above and beyond in establishing and maintaining partnerships

HOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CAREER

International career that requires moving

- Be clear about your purpose so that you move to the right institution and the right host country [7]. Ask yourself, can you imagine living and teaching in that place? Can you see your life outside of your work to be fulfilled living there?
- Consider a wide range of factors, from teaching style and loads, institution expectations for faculty members, leadership culture, language, living conditions, access to amenities, and host country bureaucracy [7]

- Maintain relevance in your home country by presenting at their national conferences and maintaining collaborative relationships with home country colleagues.

An international career from where you are at

- Prioritise building strong partnerships with key actors and academics in the field. Put your familiarity with your host institution and home country to your advantage. Experience with navigating the grants and bureaucracy of your home country can be a leverage point for international partnerships.
- Build a strong profile. Publish with other well-known academics in your field. Look to publish a seminal paper that is well cited.
- Make the most out of collaboration and conferences. Conferences are ideal opportunities for observing researchers from around the world in their (un)natural habitats. Get involved with organising a global symposium and invite these leading scholars to your sessions.

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WORKSHOP REFLECTION

During the workshop, Horizons participants were asked to reflect on their Horizons experience. They were first dispersed in small groups to look back at the key learning and takeaway points from all six sessions using the two-pagers. They then regrouped to share their reflections with everyone. Three common threads emerged:

- Thriving as a PhD student at the University of Melbourne
- Navigating the academic system
- Establishing and strengthening a cohort experience

Participants were then divided into three groups (one for each common thread) and invited to write a 'letter to future participants' focussing on these common threads. Below are the excerpts of these letters.

Thread 1: Thriving as a PhD student at the University of Melbourne

We believe that the University of Melbourne sets an environment where PhD students are encouraged to survive by any means possible, rather than thrive to become the internationally renowned scholars that we could be. We believe that thriving is key to establishing a successful, fulfilling and international career that is available to everyone.

We experienced many barriers to thriving as a PhD student. Coming out of the COVID era into the PhD experience, we were affected by the ongoing isolation and the general lack of social, professional and academic support through a disjointed and hierarchical system. Some of us also felt the imposter syndrome. Comparing and competing happens more when we do not have a strong cohort. We also notice that the university system is disempowering in that there are a lot of bureaucratic and opaque systems. Resilience is needed but it is not always a good thing - we should question the terminology that has been institutionalized. There is an assumption of self-reliance and self-responsibility as a survival tactic but what we collectively need are more supports when and where it is needed. Finally, thriving is challenged by the culture of competitiveness and overworking. How on earth do we balance publication expectations, with conference participation and engagement, meanwhile trying to produce a thesis on minimum wage? The consistent expectation worsens this that you just bounce back from shocks and stressors.

Overcoming the above challenges is a work in progress and participating in Horizons program has provided us with some supports. Key to overcoming the challenges to thriving is establishing a cohort of friends and colleagues, which has given us a safe space to share our experiences and concerns and to learn from one another. We were able to pick up tips on how to navigate some of the challenges we have been facing. We have

also benefitted from the facilitators who provided wise reflections on their own experience. The program of speakers gave us confidence in failure, recognising that success in academia is not always as it seems - and it especially not always binary. There are many ways to achieve your goals, you need to know whom to ask and how to pivot. For those of us who were not from Architecture, Building, and Planning faculty or previously affiliated with MC4C, we were able to situate ourselves in an urban context and think about the relevance of our work to other disciplines and fields; which in turn, helps us to broaden our horizons and look beyond our own faculties and fields of research. We learned how to embrace the complexities inherent in urban studies and use these to our own advantage by looking for opportunities in unexpected places. Finally, we recognise the need to speak up for what we want: transparency, openness, good support, and clear communication. We have also learned about the importance of collective resilience - learning from and leaning on each other.

We recognise the following points as the benchmark for thriving:

- Paid enough (more than minimum wage)
- Social support and cohort building
- Professional and academic support

Clarity and line of sight to career progression (so that you graduate with job opportunities)

Thread 2: Navigating the academic system

We think that anyone starting out on their PhD journey should have a basic understanding of academic systems, but it can be difficult to navigate the system when we just starting out. We have many questions, from high-level to technical ones, which we have no idea where to ask, from questions about how the university works (who are the leadership teams? who makes decisions?), how we succeed in our academic career (why do some people stay in academia and others not? what should we be focussing on? relationships/networking, publishing, conferences etc?), funding and projects (where does the money/funding come from? how do we navigate inter- and intra-disciplinary research opportunities at University of Melbourne and with people in other institutions?) to publication (how do we get our work published and where do we publish?).

Horizons is a place that you can come to with questions. It will also lead to you asking questions you did not even consider! As PhD students, we have a lot of things to do and do not always have the time to explore the broader academic landscape and consider our future careers. Horizons has given us an opportunity to understand the academic system, and how we can find support and navigate the opaqueness of the academic system along with our PhD careers. We do not know what

resources we have access to/what we can do, but this group brings together peers and experienced academics to answer our questions in a shared safe space. We are all from different faculties and academic fields and our university and other universities in Australia/overseas and through this program, we were able to learn anecdotal information from experts that we cannot find easily elsewhere. For those from international backgrounds, it provides information about the Australian academic context which helps us consider our academic pathways and careers. By better understanding how academic systems work we can forge a path that works best for us individually. After Horizons, we can talk more confidently about academic systems and liaise more confidently with other academics and university management staff. You will learn where to find your answers beyond Horizons through the contacts and researches you will be introduced to.

Thread 3: Establishing and strengthening a cohort experience.

It is a great thing to have networks outside of our disciplines of study within the academic community. Taking part in a cohort helps facilitate establishing relationships with researchers in other faculties; broadens our research network and directs us to the right person to ask for insight or information. Belonging to a diverse academic cohort creates opportunities for research ideas to emerge from our interactions and dialogue with people from different disciplines. We can also develop interdisciplinary and collaborative thinking; for example, by knowing that different disciplines have different understandings of the same term (e.g., what is a 'city') and bridging disciplinary siloes. A good cohort experience can also help you with learning methodologies and approaches to research that otherwise you have minimal exposure to.

Finally, being part of a cohort is an opportunity to get to know more people from diverse backgrounds and learn more about the university, exchange ideas, and make friends to better adapt to university life. For first-year students, being in a cohort can be a great way to enjoy research while connecting with other PhD students. During milestone preparation, you will be busy and participating in programs like the Horizon can help you to step out from your research while having the chance to build your capacities. For international PhD students who do not have many contacts and support systems as domestic and local students, it is good to participate in a PhD cohort and have a group of people to regularly connect with.

PROGRAM REVIEW

The Horizons program was curated and facilitated by a team of five Melbourne Centre for Cities staff, including three Centre Directors, a dedicated project coordinator to manage program delivery and administration, and a research assistant to document learning outcomes. Each facilitator brought a different perspective to the program, with varying degrees of experience working internationally and within academia itself. Section 4.1 offers a series of reflections on key aspects of Horizons from the program's facilitators, drawing on their unique insights.

As a pilot program, reflecting on session content, delivery (including facilitation), and participant experiences are all critical inputs for evaluating the program's effectiveness. Participants were asked to provide feedback at two stages: mid-way through the program (to allow for changes for subsequent sessions), and after the final session to support overall program evaluation. An overview of participant feedback, is provided in section 4.2 below.

FACILITATOR REFLECTIONS

Professor David Bissell, Director of Research Capability



There's something very exciting but also very unnerving about running a pilot program! However logical and sound a program might look on page in the design phase,

it's really only when rubber hits the road, when the program takes place for real, that you can glean a sense of whether it's actually working. As the first multi-faculty multidisciplinary doctoral program run by the Centre for Cities, we were excited about working with a group of graduate researchers from across the university to develop their careers. However, we were aware that this was not necessarily going to be a straightforward task. We needed a program that accommodated the vastly different ways of imagining and knowing cities across the physical sciences, social sciences and humanities. And we needed to offer something unique that didn't risk replicating the professional skills offerings that are already being run by individual schools. Orienting the program around the specific international dimensions of urban research provided exactly this novelty and enabled us to speak across and learn from the different disciplines represented by the group. Over the six-month program, seeing how this group has developed in terms of their thinking and their collegiality has been an incredibly gratifying experience. Our hope is that these relationships will continue

beyond the end point of this program and seed all manner of exciting new multidisciplinary collaborations.

Engaging in the international

Dr Alexei Trundle, Associate Director (International)



Having completed my own PhD in the early phases of the COVID-19 pandemic I am acutely aware of the deep fragmentation that continues to reverberate through doctoral candidatures and early career research projects globally. What we have strived for in this program is not a pretence of

continuity in a post-Covid world, but rather the creation of meaningful spaces for a deeper consideration of the ‘whys’ and ‘hows’ of international urban research, and what it means to be part of an internationally engaged research community. For some of our cohort, identifying with ‘internationality’ was intertwined with their own positionality, being, for instance, either international doctoral candidates or members of diasporas or migrant families. By focusing on urban research – represented across a range of Faculties and disciplines – we also ensured a diversity of positions within the academy. It was clear throughout the program that there was no single ‘right’ answer or pathway to a successful international urban research career. However, by drawing on our own equally varied international networks, the variety of pathways across each thematic area was able to connect meaningfully with the cohort in a multiplicity of ways. It is fair to say that this was by no means a one-way interaction either, with each of the doctoral participants drawing on their own emergent expertise, unique skillsets, and providing deep reflections on their own personal and professional backgrounds.

Designing professional development for the graduate researcher

Jennifer Dam, Project Co-ordinator

By virtue of their decision to pursue a PhD (which demands creativity, perseverance, curiosity and an openness to learning new things), graduate researchers are in many ways a unique group of learners. Designing a professional development program aimed at expanding



graduate researchers’ international horizons meant exploring ways to foster both the critical skills needed to navigate academic structures (e.g. university systems, publishing, knowledge exchange, grant applications and conferencing); and building capacity to meaningfully engage with like-minded researchers to support networking, partnership and international career building (across academic disciplines and international borders). The Horizons program sought to address these needs in several ways: bringing together a cohort of graduate researchers engaged in cities research from diverse faculties; creating space for meaningful discussion alongside practical skill building; and engagement with experienced academics who brought with them local and global knowledge – from within and outside of academia. As a pilot program, gathering feedback at the mid-way point (refer Annex 4) allowed for critical reflection on both program content and format, and resulting in some minor changes for the latter half of the program. As well as extending the length of sessions to cater for broader discussion of key topics, we also sought to provide more opportunities for engagement with experienced academics in discussion and reflection. As project coordinator, a program highlight was hearing from participants that not only did Horizons answer their many questions about navigating research and university systems, but it revealed (and answered) new questions through learning and insights along the way.

Discovering common threads, reflections from the final workshop

Dianty Ningrum



After six Horizons program sessions with different topics ranging from navigating research partnerships to internationalising careers, the workshop was intended to be a concluding wrap-up session for this year’s

Horizon program. We were very pleased to see how the group were able to find many common threads throughout the session and share their reflections with us. Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many of us have had a sense of restriction looming in various aspects of our lives. For some, to think about what’s beyond our ‘horizon’ could not be anything more than an afterthought. We hope the Horizons program opens a much-needed space for early career researchers to share their concerns and strategies for navigating a research career after recovering from the impact of the pandemic. It was fascinating—but at the same time not surprising, to see that ‘rethinking resilience’ was one of the

common threads that the cohort identified during the workshop. Fostering this resilience involves knowing ourselves better, engaging better with supporting systems, and broadening connections with whom we share the same space. Moving forward, we hope the program can continue to be a co-learning space for the university's early career researchers across different faculties and disciplines who otherwise would not have the chance to engage with each other.

Future Horizons: 2023 and beyond

Michele Acuto, Director



There is also something particularly fascinating about the power of traveling without necessarily moving. The Horizons program engaged not only the doctoral participants, but also experts (in-session and

in the City Building seminars) and indeed ourselves as convenors, in a variety of 'global' urban imaginations. We have collectively discussed changing horizons of career development, opportunities and international networking, and debated, at times hotly, how what is 'out there' globally shapes what we do 'in here' practically. In doing so I think that Horizons has set us on a terrific course for not only an eight-month rich exchange with brilliant early career scholars, but also charted the tone for our Centre's nascent doctoral 'academy'. The spirit of discussion and collaborative conversation pervaded what we see as an effort in co-producing the shape and content of that 'academy' which will in turn shape the experience of Horizons cohorts to come. At the same time, whilst imagining the possibilities of 'global urban' careers and engagements, it has also presented us with a variety of worldviews on how to be 'international' and open up doors to valuable cosmopolitan exchanges whilst not shying away from our particular positioning in and from Melbourne. Our hope, then, is that future cohorts will take up the same spirit of participatory adventure, openness to different and changing (whilst still challenges) horizons, and collegial exchange in and through the Centre which has been a truly amazing highlight of this program.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Feedback was sought at two stages of the program: at the mid-way point to gauge participants experiences and identify whether any modifications need to be made in terms of program delivery or content; and at the completion of the program to identify how the program had been received and whether the skills/topics explored were of relevance.

Overall, participant feedback was positive highlighting broad satisfaction with session themes and delivery methods. In particular, participants valued the discussion time and engaging with experienced academics. Some participants also expressed a desire for more individualised content and the possibility of mentoring, along with other suggestions which may help to shape future program design.

ANNEX 1: REFERENCE LIST

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