

Exploring the 'green' agenda for ports

Australian specialists played an important part in this year's World Greenport Congress in Norway, writes Paula Wallace

MORE THAN 230 PARTICIPANTS

from across the globe travelled to the Norwegian city of Oslo for the 2019 World Greenport Congress in October.

Hosted by the Port of Oslo, the event once again brought together port-sector leaders and representatives to collaborate on a range of contemporary issues facing port managers around the world.

This year the 'cruise' congress was also run concurrently with the 'port' themes which enabled cross collaboration.

For the third time, Renee Hovey and Jason Sprott from Australian port planning, environmental management and sustainability advisory firm Sprott Planning & Environment attended the Congress, having been invited to present at previous events in Amsterdam in 2017 and Baltimore in 2018.

"We continue to value the investment in this forum which brings together port professionals from across the globe interested in transitioning their ports in a number of key themes including environment, business efficiency and viability, port resilience, renewable energy, climate change, alternative fuels, new technology and stakeholder engagement," Mr Sprott says.

HOT TOPICS

Topics at this year's Congress were extensive and Renee Hovey co-facilitated a workshop on 'Developing Sustainability Strategies', using the project methodology developed by the Sprott Planning & Environment team which has now been applied in both Australia and New Zealand.

The Congress covered areas as diverse as zero emissions technology/emissions reduction, to new UNESCO regulations regarding World Heritage listed sites, onshore power technology, LNG bunkering and the use of circular economy concepts across the whole of port precincts.

Of course, the topic of new limits on sulphur emissions was also discussed along with models for developing port sustainability strategies, UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the implications of Brexit on ports in the European region.

The Port of Vancouver presented an interesting case study on measuring and reducing underwater vessel noise, and there were numerous contributions on alternative energy sources for plant and equipment, renewable fuels in shipping and air quality measurement.

WORLD-CLASS PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The workshop concept was developed by Ms Hovey in collaboration with Dr Chris Wooldridge from the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences at Cardiff University. The session included presentations from Charles Haine from WSP, Michel deVos from Napier Port and Henrik Ravandal from Norway-based Sustainable Energy consultancy Sweco.

The workshop focused on the four steps of the Sprott Planning & Environment strategy development methodology including gap analysis, materiality assessment, strategy development and forward leadership commitments to communication, review and reporting.

"It was pleasing to see a number of ports participating in the workshop with many acknowledging the importance of a staged approach to robust strategy development," Ms Hovey says.

The workshop also focused on the importance of considering the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals within the strategy development work.

"Charles Haine from WSP highlighted the importance of external and internal stakeholder involvement and materiality assessments which is a key foundation of strategy development in our view – and one being focused on by a range of investors and private equity firms



Renee Hovey presenting the workshop at the World Greenport Congress

interested in investing in the port sector," Ms Hovey says.

"Clearly, investors are understandably wanting to ensure ports are focusing on 'the most important issues' in terms of their overall port strategy and direction, and our process allows this," Mr Sprott says.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

The Congress also included a waterside port tour on the Port of Oslo's electric ferry, which allowed participants to gain an insight into operations in Oslo despite the cold conditions.

The location for the 2020 Greenport Congress is yet to be announced but will be sure to continue to attract great interest from the port and maritime sector.

"Whilst the topics were of great technical interest, delegates reinforced that the real strength of the Congress is the opportunity to collaborate with port professionals and friends from around the globe – all facing similar issues and all benefiting from shared experiences," Mr Sprott says. ■