

Report on the World Diabetes Congress 2013 Melbourne

Anne-Marie Felton



The city of Melbourne provided the platform for the World Diabetes Congress 2013 enabling the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) to speak to the city and the world, 'Urbi et Orbi', on the challenges facing mankind in the light of the global epidemic of diabetes. The Congress represented a kaleidoscope of excellence through its scientific programme and numerous satellite symposia bringing together key participants: people with diabetes, professionals, professional societies, politicians and policy makers.

The scale of the event was enormous and has been recognised as the largest medical conference ever held in Australia. A total of 10,300 participants attended the Congress which offered over 275 hours of scientific sessions delivered by 400 world-class experts. The dilemma for many attendees was making decisions between competing interests. However most of the keynote presentations are currently available to view on the IDF website as webcasts. All of the abstracts and oral presentations are also available.

The political significance of the Congress has gathered momentum with the formation of the Global Parliamentary Champions for Diabetes Forum, led by Mr. Adrian Sanders MP, as its President. This significant forum will now hold the centre ground for political advocacy for diabetes at a global level. It has had a long period of gestation and the commitment of Sir Michael Hirst, IDF President, and Guy Barnett, former Australian Senator, has nurtured and ensured its delivery. It is noteworthy that so many politicians including representatives from the EU, notably Commissioner Tonio Borg and

his cabinet colleagues, and First Lady of South Africa, Bongi Ngema, actively contributed to forum discussions and have made formal commitments to sustaining its success. I have no doubt that the Global Parliamentary Champions for Diabetes Forum will become an integral part of IDF's global mission of political advocacy.

The eloquence of Sir Michael Hirst was evident in his opening address and his keynote lecture during the Congress. I had the great honour and pleasure of chairing the Opening Ceremony and, without exaggeration, one could hear a pin drop between the moment his address ended and the standing ovation began, illustrating the appreciation by all for his charismatic leadership and profound commitment to diabetes.

Youth was very evident throughout the Congress, not only in the Opening Ceremony but also in the IDF Young Leaders in Diabetes Programme. These Young Leaders are the future of national diabetes organisations and IDF. The leadership programme developed by IDF through the initiative of its Chair, Debbie Jones, will continue to be a beacon of hope and pertinence to ensure the future of IDF.



IDF President Sir Michael Hirst (right) presents former cricketer Wasim Akram (left) with an award for his work in regard to diabetes around the world

The scientific programme provided three and a half days of multi-streamed content. There were seven Streams in total including two new ones: *Diabetes Research in the 20th Century: a Historical Perspective* and *Diabetes in Indigenous Peoples*. The IDF Award Lectures for these two Streams were given respectively by Jesse Roth (USA) and Alex Brown (Australia). The other six IDF Award lecturers were: Michael Brownlee (USA) (*Basic Science*); Stephen O'Rahilly (UK) (*Clinical Science*); Jean-Philippe Assal (Switzerland) (*Education and Integrated Care*); Jean-Claude Mbanya (Cameroon) (*Global Challenges in Health*); Wasim Akram (Pakistan) (*Living with Diabetes*) and Nick Wareham (UK) (*Public Health and Epidemiology*).

The latest and sixth edition of the *IDF Diabetes Atlas* was presented in December, which has become the gold standard resource for referencing the worldwide diabetes crisis, and utilised by all multi-stakeholders working with IDF to stop the pandemic.





Morning run with Sir Michael Hirst (President, IDF), The Hon David Davis MLC (Minister for Health and Minister for Ageing, Victoria) and Bas van de Goor (Olympic gold medal-winning volleyball player and person with type 1 diabetes)

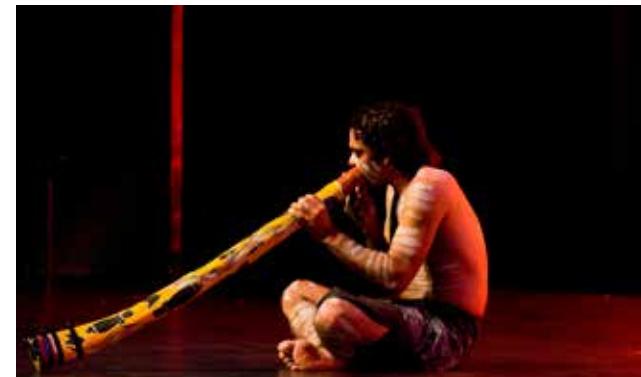


In summing up, the 2013 World Diabetes Congress built on the experience and success of previous congresses. There was a sense of marked inclusivity and everyone present felt truly inspired. The Congress undoubtedly offered a unique opportunity for both first-time participants and consummate diabetes experts to network. The experience provided a renewed commitment to diabetes and the chance to be inspired by youth and accomplished experts.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for participating in the 2013 World Diabetes Congress and to those who will engage the Congress webcasts. In addition, a personal thank you to the Organising Committee and the Congress Team in the IDF Executive Office, the Chair of the Programme Committee, Paul Zimmet, and the Chair of the National Advisory Committee, Trisha Dunning.

Also a special thank you to the IDF Media and Communications team who ensured that key messages were delivered globally. Last but certainly not least, a special thank you to the Diabetes Australia Victoria and Diabetes Australia for their generosity of support and commitment to all aspects of this Congress.

I have the privilege of chairing the Organising Committee for the upcoming World Diabetes Congress, 2015. I look forward to seeing you there.



Aboriginal Australian performance at the WDC 2013 Opening Ceremony

Anne-Marie Felton

Anne-Marie Felton is a Vice-President of IDF, and the Co-Founder and current Chair of the Federation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND).