

SESSION 4: PATHWAYS AND PROSPECTS

CHAIR: MARGARET AUSTIN

Margaret Austin opened the session with an outline of how the session was to be run. The focus was to direct attention to the future. The panellists, Murray Parsons, Christine Heremaia, Harry Broad and Judith Lindsay-Roper, were invited to inform, question and engage together and with those attending the symposium for a lively, thoughtful and provocative session. Each speaker was allotted 10–12 minutes to make their case and then to pose a question arising out of their presentation to each of the other panellists. Panellists in turn were invited to question the speaker and finally at the end of the presentations the audience were invited to comment and ask questions. The outcome was as anticipated, interesting, participatory and informative, and the debate lively.

Margaret Austin said the papers had so far provided insights and lessons to be learned from initiatives already taken. We had heard about partnerships with landowners through the QEII National Trust and the covenants that have been entered into. Questions had been asked about evolutionary responses in some habitats, the consequences of land use on biodiversity, and the resilience of alpine grasslands. It had been considered what to do about weeds, the role of taxonomists, flora-fauna interdependencies, and how the home gardener can do a bit as well.

She said that at the beginning of the 21st century we were already focussing on the 22nd century and it was her pleasure to introduce the panel of speakers for the last session of the symposium who were charged with reflecting on Pathways and Prospects in the expectation that our successors will enjoy the legacy we leave.

Concluding the session Margaret Austin thanked the panellists and the audience for a most stimulating session with good questions and interactions from the floor. She was of the opinion that we may not have solved the problems of biodiversity and conservation but we had gained a much better understanding of the issues, and better still, we had earned our dinner!

In having spent a great deal of time contemplating New Zealand Margaret Austin said we should not lose sight of the international arena and also the cultural dimensions. So she put on her UNESCO hat and drew attention to the International arena and the cultural dimension. Tongariro National Park as one of three UNESCO World Heritage Sites in NZ has the distinction of being the first to include cultural landscapes in its designation. This is highly regarded

internationally as a notable landmark in placing spiritual, traditional and cultural values alongside those of natural and ecological ones.

UNESCO has a Convention for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage and is currently working on a Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and a Standard Setting Instrument for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is all part of a worldwide movement to recognise, safeguard and conserve.

UNESCO is also determined to improve human security by better management of the environment and social change and is embarking on a global initiative on Biodiversity Education. New Zealand is well represented on the scientific programmes managed by UNESCO through the Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, Man in the Biosphere, the Intergovernmental Geoscience Programme, and Management of Social Transformations. We also have a representative on the International Bioethics Committee, which has been responsible for the Universal Declaration on the Human genome and Human rights, and is now adding a Declaration on Human Genetic Data.

Hierochloa redolens,
kāretu or holy grass, held a
significance for pre-
colonisation Māori that
might be surprising for the
uninformed. The sweetly
scented grass played a
symbolic role in courtship,
marriage and child-
bearing. It was used to
scent and decorate
people's houses and
bodies, to infuse steam
baths for the sick, and to
make fragrant woven belts,
headbands, waistbands,
anklets, neck sachets and
string. (del. Hugh Wilson)

