

Panel for IRSPM Annual Conference, 2019 Wellington

Panel Title: Can there be Stewardship of public infrastructure assets?

Chairs:

- Prof. dr. Kerry Brown, Edith Cowan University, Joondalup, Australia
- Prof. dr. Robyn Keast, Southern Cross University, Gold Coast, Australia
- Dr. Rob Kivits, Coventry University, U.K.
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Elected officials and public managers are expected to ‘do more with less’ and at the same time offer ‘ribbon-cutting’ opportunities by investment in new infrastructure. New Public Management (NPM) demands tight control of inputs, whilst public expectations for ever better infrastructure rise. Complex challenges including sustainability and climate change, burgeoning populations and an ageing citizenry, engulf the public sector. Balancing conflicting public values such as immediate economic performance and needs of the future when developing public policy and delivering services requires a new paradigm. New Public Governance (NPG) with its focus on interorganizational and cross-sectoral relationships has been progressively addressing other limitations of NPM, providing a conceptualisation of a governance system that encompasses the multiple actors and stakeholders. Yet this inclusion of the public has not been accompanied by a conceptualization which facilitates balancing of public values.

Stewardship offers the possibility of being a conceptualization that achieves that balance. Across topic areas such as global powers, shared international wicked problems, the environment and health care, stewardship is conceptualized as the governance systems, responsibility, behaviour or as an outcome. Yet there is little application of any of these conceptualizations to the satisfaction of infrastructure asset public values. The questions then are:

1. Is stewardship a useful conceptualization of balancing public values for infrastructures?
2. In what ways can the adoption of stewardship as an element of the NPG paradigm be embraced?
3. How may stewardship be directed towards influencing policy development and/or service delivery?

This panel taps into the burgeoning broad concern for stewardship to distil the diverse perspectives as to stewardship into conceptualizations of stewardship of public infrastructure assets. The panel seeks to engender innovative proposals as to how stewardship can be integrated in the lexicons of public managers, elected officials and the public. We further seek to build knowledge about the requisite governance systems and day to day practices that may promote the stewardship of public infrastructure assets.

We invite papers that take innovative perspectives in any of the following topic areas or other topics related to infrastructure asset stewardship:

- Forms of stewardship
- Stakeholder perspectives and stewardship of public infrastructure assets
- Measurement and evaluation of stewardship
- Project stewardship
- Public values
- Inter-organizational relationships
- Strategic asset management/asset management
- Case Studies and practice examples of *Next Practice* stewardship frameworks, models, or approaches
- Comparative studies that assist our understanding of the trends and global differences in the stewardship of public infrastructure assets.