

Why go to a conference like IGAC? There are so many reasons!

International conferences allow PhD students to get involved in a way that no other event allows. Where else can you be discussing your latest findings about the composition of aerosol to hearing about the impact of policy changes in South Africa. International conferences allow a unique mixture of people from world renown institutes and truly, the leaders of their fields to come and discuss their passions with other researchers and students. IGAC is an amazing opportunity for those who are fascinated by atmospheric science and aerosol.

This year IGAC was held in beautiful, scenic Takamatsu. The rolling hills and beautiful skies put our work into context. Aerosols, within the context of atmospheric science are a big part of climate change and work done to clean up the planet. But on the flip-side of that, what happens when climate change is left to run rampant. Towards the end of the conference, we got caught up in a typhoon and got to see first-hand the power of nature.

Back within the walls of the conference building, we got the opportunity to see the direction science is heading. Increased co-operation between nations and crossing borders in the pursuit of knowledge. One interesting talk was by Ian Galbally, who gave a brief history of the field and notable contributors, particularly highlighting the oft-overlooked women in the field and spoke very positively and excitedly about the evolving nature of the field and those contributing. It was very inspiring to see young scientists such as Eloise Slater and Kathryn Emmerson, who gave very interesting talks on gas phase OH and biogenics in Australia. It is really a great opportunity to see what other young scientists are doing and take inspiration from them to push forward in my own work.

I had the opportunity to present my work during the second poster session and it was invaluable. Leaders on the topic I presented (nitro-phenolics in organic aerosol) were very keen to discuss the work I have been doing and comparing my findings to work they were doing in their own labs. I learnt a great deal from them, some tricks of the trade and caveats when working and detecting these compounds.

I believe attending these conferences is rewarding in many different aspects of your professional life. I would highly encourage early career scientists to attend and if possible present at a relevant conference, and highly recommend IGAC. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the aerosol society for helping to fund my attendance. Without them it would not have been possible to take part in any of these experiences.