**WORLD CONGRESS ON ADULT CAPACITY 2022**

**7 - 9 JUNE 2022**

**EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE**

**“CLOSING PLENARY: WCAC 2022 AND BEYOND”**

**THURSDAY 9 JUNE 2022**

**12.00 – 13.30**

**“Closing the Congress”**

**by**

**Adrian D Ward MBE LL.B**

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*[My closing address was partly spontaneous, partly pre-planned. Below I have sought to reflect the spontaneous parts. Because some (but not all) of the fascinating preceding content of this session over-ran, I was concerned not to inconvenience any delegates who had to leave promptly, so I abbreviated some parts of the pre-planned text. For the record, those parts have been “edited back up” below. I commenced with final “housekeeping” items: that delegates seeking to have the onward networking facility from the event must fill in their details on the app, and if they don’t, fellow delegates will not be able to contact them; and that following the Congress all delegates will receive an evaluation form, a certificate of attendance, and the link to access all PowerPoint presentations from the whole Congress. I asked everyone to complete the evaluation, to help us in our reporting back to the sponsors and supporters without whom the event would not have happened, and also to assist in the planning of future Congresses. As time was tight, I also asked delegates to hold back their applause until I had finished speaking and handed back to the Chair of the closing session, Lord Scott.]*

Firstly, I must thank John Scott for all of the input by him, and the team on the Scottish Mental Health Law Review, including his chairing of this final session. I hope that participation in the Congress will be useful in the huge amount of work, in the short period that remains, before the Review Team is required to produce its Final Report. Their further consultation on three topics has already been issued during the course of the Congress.

For you, John, the transition from present out into the future that has been the theme of this session coincides with your personal transition from John Scott QC, Solicitor Advocate, to Lord Scott, Senator of the College of Justice here in Scotland. We wish you well through that transition, coupled with our delight that on taking it up you sought and received the permission of the Lord President to continue your leadership of the Review through to issue of the Final Report.

In reverse order, Isolina Dabove’s video presentation was pre-recorded yesterday. She has given us an exciting preview of some of the themes being developed in South America, which will no doubt be reflected in the next World Congress in Buenos Aires in 2024. We do not yet have precise dates, but following yesterday’s meeting of the International Advisory Board I am able to give you an indication that you can probably anticipate that it will occur in or around the second half of August in 2024. Buenos Aires will still face substantial challenges, including issues with their economy and exchange rate, but at least all of us from elsewhere can probably take advantage of those exchange rate issues to ensure that as many of us as possible do attend that next World Congress.

Before that, Mary-Frances Morris contributed powerfully towards keeping the actual lived experience of people, including that of families and carers, at the centre throughout this event. Each of them has focused us, often movingly, on the human reality that our subject is all about.

Wayne Martin has presented us with a breathtaking vision, elegantly and thoughtfully constructed, drawing comprehensively on so much that we have heard. It is a vision of where our subject has got to and where it is going. It has confirmed that this has indeed been a world class event. I disagree with him only on one point: I asked him, and did not instruct him, to attempt the near-impossible that he has so magnificently achieved! Few if any in the world could have delivered that address even if given a month to prepare it. To my knowledge, from nocturnal exchanges of emails, he prepared his overnight last night.

On his “Humanity plus what?” question, having heard his presentation immediately followed by Mary-Frances, with her strong plea for justice, reminding me how the one word “justice” was the slogan of the campaign to achieve our Incapacity Act for Scotland in 2000, I wonder whether “Humanity plus justice” might point towards an answer.

We in Scotland will leave this event humbled and challenged by Wayne’s assertion that “the world is watching you”.

This slide shows that we have 274 participants. If this event was a success, that was done not only for you, but by you. We took a collective deep breath and opted for a live-only Congress. It would not have been possible if, despite the difficulties and hazards, you had not similarly decided yes – you were going to take the often brave decision to come, and to pay for registration on top of your other costs, to make our event financially viable. I can tell you that no-one paid a penny too much – we reached break-even a little over a week ago. Above all, you made this event a success by your enthusiasm, which was palpable in every session, and buzzed through each break time. You came from 30 countries, counting each country with multiple jurisdictions, such as the United Kingdom, as one. 144 of you submitted abstracts, 11 of you posters. Our thanks to you in particular, and a special thanks to all who served on our academic programme committee – listed on this slide – all our speakers, the Chairs of our 28 sessions, and the many multiply active in several of those roles.

I again thank our sponsors and supporters, without whom – in such difficult times – our event, again, would not have happened.

What seems like half a lifetime ago I was taken on a tour of possible venues. I saw these areas empty. I dreamed the dream of that emptiness filled with all the friends, and new friends, such as I had met at previous excellent World Congresses. You deserved the best. This venue, and its staff, have given us that.

That dream, despite all the extraordinary reasons why at times it seemed so close to being an impossible dream, has come true. That it is now no longer only a dream is due above all to eight extraordinary people. No-one could have predicted the huge burden placed on the six whom I asked to join our organising committee; I had no right to expect anyone to shoulder such a burden – least of all a team of volunteers – if indeed my recruitment tactics elicited the level of free and informed consent which would have satisfied this above all audiences! Instead – two words. They delivered.

They were:

Alison Hempsey

Allison Gibson (not here just now for professional reasons)

Jill Carson

Jill Stavert

Kate Fearnley

Sandra McDonald

Our team grew from six to eight: with Sharon Kerr and Amy Love from our professional organisers, In-Conference. Particularly for the really tough end of our preparations, they too delivered.

These, with the assistance of one of our overseas delegates, are some personal gifts as a token of my gratitude to each of you.

Together, as a team, we did it!

There is however a vastly larger and more important task, and a much bigger team. The team is all of us. Soon we will disperse across the world, remembering that we are in the midst of such an exciting period as Wayne has described and, like me, better informed, enthused and motivated to pursue, through all the challenges, not a dream, but a purpose.

Go for it.

Chair, I hand back to you to close this final session of the 7th World Congress on Adult Capacity 2022.

*Adrian D Ward*

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*# June 2022*