

## **My Journey to APRICOT 2025: A Transformative Experience in Networking**

### **The Road to APRICOT 2025 & APNIC 59**

The journey to **APRICOT 2025** was an exciting and enhancing experience. Just after participating in **SANOG 42** and receiving a full fellowship for the event, I was encouraged by a many to apply for the **APRICOT 2025** fellowship. To my delight, I was chosen as one of the fellows, marking my participation in two of the most significant networking events in the Asia-Pacific region. This opportunity allowed me to further expand my knowledge, connect with industry experts, and enhance my expertise in networking, particularly in Border Gateway Protocol (BGP) and related technologies. Here I want to share what I gained and other further steps in coming days.

### **Masterclass: Advanced BGP – A Deep Dive into Routing**

One of the highlights of my participation in APRICOT 2025 was attending the **APRICOT Masterclass: Advanced BGP**. As a network engineer passionate about MPLS and Routing—especially BGP—this session was an obvious choice to refine my skills and gain deeper insights into real-world applications. The session was conducted by industry veterans: **Aftab Siddiqui (APNIC Foundation)**, **Tashi Phuntsho (FLEXOPTIX)**, **Mark Duffell (Telstra)**, and **Phil Mawson (Vocus)**, who provided an engaging and immersive learning experience.

This masterclass was designed for the participants who had a basic understanding of BGP but wanted to explore advanced topics. The training covered detailed configurations, scaling techniques, and best practices. Additionally, I had the opportunity to engage in hands-on lab sessions, working with BGP traffic engineering, load balancing, and BGP communities in IXP environments. The discussions on remote peering and optimizing routing policies were particularly insightful, equipping me with practical knowledge applicable to my work.

### **BGP Security and Best Practices**

A crucial part of the masterclass was understanding BGP security threats such as BGP Hijacking, Route Leaks, Man-in-the-Middle attacks, and DDoS incidents. The instructors emphasized the importance of **RPKI (Resource Public Key Infrastructure)** and **ROA (Route Origin Authorization)**, which are now widely implemented to enhance security. Through hands-on labs, I practiced implementing these security measures in a simulated environment, reinforcing my understanding of how to protect networks from potential threats.

### **Engaging with the great Community**

Beyond the technological sessions, one of the most precious aspects of **APRICOT 2025** was interacting with the Asia-Pacific & other networking community. Meeting fellow engineers, industry leaders, and trainers in a casual setting allowed for deep discussions and knowledge exchange. I had the chance to connect with experts from different companies and gain insights into their experiences and challenges, making this event one of the most fruitful networking opportunities of my career.

### **APRICOT Fellows Skills Workshop**

On **Sunday, 23 February 2025**, I participated in the APRICOT Fellows Skills Workshop, a day-long session aimed at developing soft skills essential for career growth. Conducted by **William Stockbridge**, **Aftab Siddiqui**, **Terry Sweetser (APNIC)**, and **Robbie Mitchell (Internet Society)**, the session covered topics such as presentation skills, overcoming public speaking fears, leadership in the community, and scenario-based incident management. The interactive workshop was instrumental in helping me foster confidence in communicating technical topics and leading discussions in a professional setting.

Then comes the **Conference Week** from **Monday, 24 February to Thursday, 27 February 2025**, the main conference sessions took place, covering a wide range of topics essential for network engineers and industry stakeholders.

#### **Key Highlights from the Conference:**

**Opening Ceremony and Plenary Keynotes** Hosted by **Philip Smith (APNOG)** that included *"How I Grew Up with NOGs and the Internet"* by Kurtis & *"Making Network Engineering Cool Again"* by Alexis Bertholf then **IPv6: The Unfinished Transition** the discussion that centered around why, despite efforts over the past two decades, IPv4 remains dominant and why large-scale providers have been slow to transition fully to IPv6 the session titled *"Whatever Happened to IPv6?"*, explored the challenges, misconceptions, and possible future directions for the industry. Speakers **Mark Tinka, Ganesh Sivasamboo, Marvin Tan Yi Wei and Jonathan Brewer** presented a detailed breakdown of submarine cable system components and operations and knowledge on the panel discussion in **Submarine Cable Systems and Infrastructure** The day concluded with a social event at Andaman Ballroom, Kuala Lumpur, providing a great opportunity to unwind and network with peers.

Conference days continued with the Deepening Knowledge in APNIC Services and Network Automation. The second day was focused on **APNIC Products & Services**, including updates from Pubudu Jayasinghe, Peter Blee, and Terry Sweetser. I also attended a fascinating session on **Measuring & Automating Networks** by Dave Phelan, which provided valuable insights into monitoring and automation tools. I also participated in other session like **Network Management & Monitoring**, featuring a session on **The Next Era of Network Management Operations (NEMOPS)** by Mark Duffell. This session discussed the evolution of network management protocols such as **NETCONF, RESTCONF, and YANG**, along with a reflection on how they align with the needs of modern networks. I also got attend a **Panel Discussion on Submarine Network Infrastructure**, moderated by Walt Wollny (Hurricane Electric), with contributions from Ganesh Shivasamboo, Mark Tinka, Marvin Tan Yi Wei, Rupesh Mittal, and Jonathan Brewer.

The day concluded with a **Closing Plenary**, including **Keynote: Designing AI-Optimized Data Centers** by Billy Lee Kok Chi, **Conference Network Report** by Yoshinobu Matsuzaki a **Closing Remarks** from Jia Rong Low (APNIC Director General) along with the **Thank You Note** by Philip Smith and further **Welcome Note for APRICOT 2026** – APJII Chairman, the day & the event concluded with a **Closing Social at Chakri Skyhill**.

#### **Final Day: APNIC Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

The last day was dedicated to the **APNIC AGM**, where APNIC members discussed plans, budgets, and provided feedback to the Executive Council. The results of the **APNIC EC elections** were also announced.

Attending APRICOT 2025 is a transformative experience that expanded my technical expertise, industry connections, and leadership skills. Moving forward, I am committed to Sharing Knowledge within my organization to transfer the knowledge gained from **APRICOT 2025**. Community Engagement by actively participating in networking forums & sharing insights, collaborating with other engineers. Implementation of Best Practices learned from the masterclass and conference to improve routing security, automation, and network optimization in my professional role.

**APRICOT 2025** was an incredible journey filled with learning, networking, and growth. From securing the fellowship to gaining hands-on experience in BGP & its security, the event has left a lasting impact on my career. I look forward to leveraging this experience to contribute to the networking community and advance the adoption of best practices in the field. A huge thank you to the APRICOT fellowship committee, the instructors, and my peers for making this an unforgettable experience!