



BUSINESS EVENTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

(BECA)

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

TO THE

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

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1. Introduction

In response to a call from the Minister for Resources, Energy and Tourism, the Business Events (BE) industry produced a comprehensive BE Strategy in October 2008, a copy of which is attached to this submission:

*A National Business Events Strategy for Australia 2020
– Australia’s Untapped Potential.*

This Strategy clearly outlines the current performance and potential of this sector now conservatively estimated to be worth \$20 billion per annum to the Australian economy. This submission should be read in conjunction with the detailed information contained in the BE Strategy.

Public sector support for the business events sector (meetings, conventions, incentives and exhibitions) is well regarded globally as a legitimate and valuable investment by national governments in the social and economic development of their countries. Business events now represent the world’s most lucrative and sought-after visitor segment. Attracting international business events delivers a wide range of benefits to the community.

The ideal visitor

The business event delegate is widely regarded as the most desirable visitor in the world. They are at the high-yield end of the market, producing a daily spend well above that of the average leisure tourist. The benefits do not stop there as the most important legacies of business events can be felt long after these high-yield visitors have departed.

BECA strongly believes that attracting important global professional, academic and industry conferences to Australia is fully in keeping with, and complimentary to, the vision for the country outlined by Prime Minister Rudd.

The Business Events Council of Australia (BECA) lodged submissions during development of the Federal Government’s Tourism White Paper in 2002. Subsequently, the White Paper recognised business events as one of the key sectors to be developed: however, no dedicated funding was allocated.

The current Minister for Resources, Energy & Tourism and Tourism Australia have both acknowledged business events as an important high-yield source of international visitors, worthy of further investment. Lack of allocation of adequate resources remains the issue.

Australia continues to be out-spent, out-marketed and out-performed by our competitor countries, particularly those in the Asia region.

Dedicated adequate resources to market Australia at a national level as a business events destination remains the missing piece to provide a strong global push in concert with private and state-based efforts.

The return on any investment made by Government into the business events sector can be measured by leads generated and specific business written directly as a result. This is a sector which is highly measurable, and easily tracked.

BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

The Business Events Council of Australia calls on Government to provide an initial investment of \$20 million to:

Establish a \$10 million Federal Government Business Events Support Fund to help Australia win international business.

Provide \$5 million for a Federal Government International Delegate Boosting Fund to help maximize international attendee numbers to business events already scheduled to take place.

Provide \$5 million to Tourism Australia specifically to fund a BE destination campaign.

2. Business events deliver for Australia on a number of levels

2.1 Immediate high-yield spend

BE delegates are well known for providing the tourism industry with its highest daily yield. The National Business Events Study (NBES) confirmed this. In fact, the NBES showed that international conference delegates can spend over five times more (on a daily expenditure basis) than the leisure visitor.

The NBES notes two important measures of the economic significance of the sector:

including direct and indirect effects, Business Events contribute 2% or \$6.13 billion of “value-added” to the Australian economy;

Business events employ (directly and indirectly) over 214,000 people.¹

Related and interdependent industries on which the sector has a positive impact include transport, restaurants, hotels and retail. Convention delegates and incentive travel reward winners tend to be high-net-worth individuals and professionals who stay in upscale hotel accommodation and whose employers often cover the costs of their travel. A large proportion undertake “pre and post touring,” often with their partners and families, which represents a significant flow-on benefit for other sectors of the economy.

2.2 Boost leisure tourism and regional dispersal

The NBES found that 46% of international delegates toured in other parts of Australia and more than a quarter of them (25.7%) brought accompanying persons.

2.3 Long term legacies for Australian community

The legacy of business events can be felt long after these high-yield visitors have departed:

Exposure to, and promotion of, world’s best practice

Networking and enhancing business-to-business relationships

¹ National Business Events Study 2003, Sustainable Tourism CRC

Education
Trade opportunities from exhibitions and commercial sponsorships
Exposing original research to the marketplace
Leveraging existing exports such as mining, medicine and technology
Fundraising opportunities
Enhancing international prestige
Business migration inflow
Showcasing host-nation infrastructure.

Benefits beyond spend

“The International Water Association meetings are an absolutely critical network for water professionals, where they learn and interact with each other trying to get another league in understanding by exchanging information and building relationships . . . when we get a critical mass [it] leads to big changes, to new ideas and the rethinking of water research and strategies. It generates a lot of innovation . . . ”

Dr David Garman, President,
International Water Association (IWA)²

Please refer to Annexure A for case studies which illustrate the economic and intangible benefits of business events.

3. Unified Support from Key Stakeholders

The National Business Events Strategy has received support from the following key tourism stakeholders which all agreed on the need for a greater government investment in the business events sector:

Australian Hotels Association (AHA)
Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC)
TTF Australia (Tourism and Transport Forum)
National Tourism Alliance (NTA)

“Business events are a critical source of business for Australia’s major accommodation hotels. We are facing increasing competition from the Asia-Pacific region for business events and it is vital for the hotel industry that we continue to attract as many of these events as possible to Australia. Invariably people who travel either within Australia or to Australia for BE are among the highest yielding guests for hotels.”

Hamish Arthur,
Manager National Accommodation Division,
Australian Hotels Association (AHA)

² Interview, CIM Magazine 2008

4. Parliamentary Bipartisan Support for Business Events

The Australian Parliament has already considered the role of business events and provided in-principle support which has yet to be matched with a hard investment.

The Committee recommends that the Government provide additional funding to Tourism Australia to extend the international marketing of Australia's Business Events capabilities.

Bipartisan Parliamentary Committee report
on Current and Future Directions of
Australia's Services Export Sector, 2007

5. Current Economic Climate

The current economic climate has accelerated the need for Federal Government support for this sector. The business events market is facing a serious downturn as a result of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), impacting the direct economic spend and in turn job security for those employed in the industry.

Key GFC impacts:

- corporate meetings, training seminars, and company events evaporating
- inbound corporate business dropping, especially out of the US market
- association meetings already won for Australia facing drops in number of delegates expected to attend
- slowing level of enquiries and business being written now for the next 1-5 years, both on a domestic and international level
- drop in exhibition business in terms of number of shows, size, and attendees
- cancellation of government meetings.

BECA recognises the work being done at a national level to develop a **National Long Term Tourism Strategy**. It is anticipated that many of the supply-side issues raised in the Business Events Strategy will be taken up by this over-arching Strategy. However, this Tourism Strategy is not focusing on the critical demand-side issues, nor is it dealing in detail with the specific issues facing the business events sector. The business events industry has acted quickly in 2008 to produce a comprehensive strategy and believes action in the demand area cannot be delayed, especially in the light of the serious current economic downturn which has deepened since the release of this report.

6. Budget Recommendations

BECA believes the business events sector is well placed to act as a vehicle for economic and job stimulus and calls upon the Government to adopt the following recommendations for both the international and domestic markets.

International Market

The National Business Events Strategy makes a clear case for additional government funding for the BE sector. The market failure argument is dealt with in detail in Chapter 7, page 58.

There is evidence contained in the report of Australia losing share in the international associations market, based on the latest figures available at the time. This situation is anticipated to worsen in the coming year. Action to redress the issue should not be delayed any further.

While a number of recommendations were made in the Strategy suggesting a course of action, no specific dollar amounts were provided. BECA now goes further in calling for the following steps to be implemented:

6.1 Business Events Support Fund to help Australia win international business

Immediate introduction of a Federal Government \$10 million Business Events Bid Fund which would provide support to organisations bidding to host international events in Australia. The Fund would be open to applicants needing assistance to bring existing key international conferences to Australia and to applicants wishing to establish new anchor international business events or expand existing Australian events into Asia Pacific events.

Preference to be given to applicants requiring bid support to win business events which:

- will help promote world's best practice to Australians in the fields of industry, scientific and professional sectors
- encourage innovation
- promote export trade
- make a strong business case with regard to the feasibility of the event
- can show a return on investment to Australia
- have the support of the relevant local convention bureau

6.2 International Delegate Boosting Fund to help maximise international attendees numbers to business events already scheduled to take place in 2009 and beyond. The National Business Events Strategy provides statistical proof of the high-yield nature of the international business events visitor, who daily spend an average 5 times more than the average leisure visitor.

A \$5 million Federal Fund needs to be immediately established for use to boost attendances to specific events and to address the growing concerns about realisation of attendee numbers which will affect economic returns to the wider community and viability of the events.

The details about access to the Fund should be developed by Government in consultation with industry, but it is envisaged that preference would be given to applicants requiring financial support to supported targeted campaigns which would:

- Help attract overseas attendees to Australian-hosted international conferences
- Boost overseas attendance at relevant Australian-based trade exhibitions

6.3 Branding and Marketing Australia as a Business Events Destination

An immediate allocation of an additional \$5 million to Tourism Australia specifically to fund a BE destination campaign. Tourism Australia has developed a Business Events Brand but lacks sufficient resources to launch a strong campaign in the international marketplace which will help restore Australia's profile in this market and combat fierce global competitors, especially those which enjoy strong government backing in the Middle East and Asian regions that are currently out-marketing and out-performing Australia.

Australia's position in the global international association meetings market has been steadily slipping over the past few years. In 2007, Australia dropped from the top 10 global countries to Number 13 position. In the Asia Pacific region, Australia has slipped has been overtaken by Japan and China. Its market share based on number of the association delegates is also falling against the world benchmark.

The latest ABS figures show Australia experienced nil growth in inbound convention numbers for the 2008 calendar year in comparison to 2007, although outbound convention attendees continued to grow, widening a negative gap for Australia.³

BECA notes that the 2008 Country Brand Index (*Futurebrand report*) ranks Australia No 1 as overall country brand; and Australia figures in the top 10 rankings for "Ideal for Business", "Easiest to do Business", and "Extend a Business Trip". But Australia does not rank for "conferences". This result supports our position that there is an obvious lost opportunity in our sector, and that a boost is needed in marketing Australia as a conference destination.

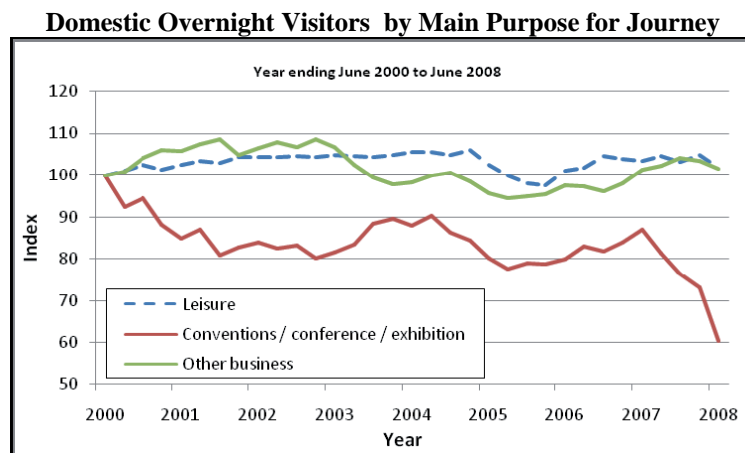
Global competition to attract international business events has intensified over the past decade with more infrastructure coming on-line especially in Asia and the Middle East which are closer to the major markets than the long-haul destination of Australia. This growth has been backed by a big marketing investment by governments. By way of example, most recently Singapore which already holds a key position in the marketplace, took quick action in response to the global financial crises by announcing a SGD\$90million (AUD\$91M) tourism initiative BOOST (Building On Opportunities to Strengthen Tourism) which will focus on business events as one of its fronts. Malaysia late last year established a national convention bureau which has a 15 million ringgit (AUD\$6.5M) convention bid fund.

BECA believes that an Australian BE campaign, developed in consultation with the industry, would attract strong cooperative industry support.

Domestic Market

6.4 125 per cent Tax Incentive on Employee Training

The National Business Events Strategy makes a specific recommendation to stimulate the falling domestic corporate conference and seminar market.



Source: Tourism Research Australia, 2008, unpublished data

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Overseas Arrivals and Departures, December 2008

It proposes an incentive of 125% tax deductibility on all eligible Australian-based training, similar to a R&D incentive.

The proposed new incentive scheme would:

Encourage Australian companies to increase their investment in employee training.

Aid the Australian Government's broader visions for Australia's "knowledge economy" and "education revolution".

Encourage Australian innovation through the fostering of face-to-face information learning networks.

Be a major boost to the flat domestic Business Events sector.

Encourage companies to hold their conferences and related programs onshore rather than overseas.

Help stem cuts in corporate training budgets resulting from the economic recession.

Conferences, congresses, seminars and workshops all play an important part in adult education in the workforce.

An education and training tax incentive for approved training would encourage companies to provide staff training and boost the domestic BE sector with an anticipated increase in off-site seminars, courses and professional conferences.

This would also address the issue of Australia losing domestic corporate business events to offshore destinations, providing a tax incentive to stay onshore.

The vital importance of education and ongoing training of the workforce needs to be recognised. The development of this resource is important for Australia's overall growth and should be viewed in a similar light to the tax break given to research and development funds.

The recent Cutler Report on the National Innovation System released by the Australian Government promotes the need for more information networks to be established, to promote the free flow of information. Business events are a key conduit for the exchange of information and knowledge, and provide an ideal environment in which innovative ideas can blossom. The eligibility of "training" for the tax incentive could be based on strict guidelines. In the case of conferences or seminars, the programs would need to have clearly established objectives and outcomes, to prevent any abuse of the incentive.

BECA draws Government's attention to the support for this recommendation provided by the National Tourism Alliance (NTA) in its Pre-Budget Submission. An excerpt follows:

"Business across all industries should be encouraged to utilise the coming downtime to develop their resources to be able to better prepare for when demand increases. One such resource that could be targeted is labour. Industry, unions, and Government have in past weeks been discussing skills development as an important consideration for business and a mechanism to help job retention. However, whilst this is viewed as a practical solution for job retention, the economic realities of business are discouraging them from pursuing this path.

The Australian Industry Group's chief executive, Heather Ridout, revealed in an article in The Australian⁴ that a survey AIG commissioned survey has revealed that businesses are looking to cut expenditure on training for staff as one method to lower overall costs. In the services industry, the survey noted that employers intended to reduce their training expenditure by 12.7 per cent. . . .

The NTA strongly encourages the Government to implement this proposal, to adequately equip business to trade through and out of the coming economic downturn. This will benefit employers, employees, the economy and tourism via the increased encouragement to support locally based training activities and conferences.

We note that in their pre-budget submissions both the ACCI and Restaurant & Catering Australia have supported an ongoing 120% taxation incentive for training, with this funded through adjustments to funding on training in other areas. Whilst different in intent, the outcomes of this proposal will be very similar and would be fully supported as an alternative to the short term, but higher, stimulatory measure.

It is interesting to note that the Thailand Government, as one of its tourism stimulus measure in response to the global financial crises, has reportedly announced that Thai-based companies holding meetings and seminars in Thailand can submit the amount for a tax-deduction at double the value for the amount paid.

7. Why we need business events even more now in this economic crisis

A time of economic crisis, such as the one we are facing now, is a time when the value of meetings, conventions and exhibitions is likely at its highest. This is the point at which it is most important to stimulate new growth, innovation and professionalism – which are all key parts of the package of benefits business events deliver.

When the economy is in the process of retracting, it is the very time that stimulation is most required. And there is no better way to create stimulation than by engaging people in the processes of product development, education, new investment, professional development and the exchange of new ideas, products and technologies. This is what meetings, conventions and exhibitions do, and why they inevitably play a key role in getting the economy going again.

Business events help advance business activity when it is needed the most. These are occasions for the exchange of information and the advancement of new ideas – the kinds of things that lead to product development and promotion. By creating a forum for this kind of activity, meetings play a key role in stimulating business activity from the bottom up, as well as creating a forum for promoting and selling the resulting products.

Second, because business events are a fundamental underlying component of research and development. Economic stimulation requires new innovation, and that in turn means an exchange amongst those in the development process. New investment in formal R&D programs will only come when there is an evident potential, and by getting a good sense of what is going on world wide in any field. This is the kind of thing that takes place at meetings and conventions – those engaged in the development field can determine the directions they should be headed in a much more efficient way.

⁴ Mike Steketee, *Economic Crisis a Drain on Employee Training*, The Australian, January 8, 2009

Third, they play an important role in professional development. One of the first casualties of an economic downturn is confidence, and not just in financial structures. Individuals, too, particularly when faced with an uncertain future, start to lose confidence not only in overall institutions but often in their own ability to stay afloat. The opportunity to gain new knowledge and expertise – tools that can be put to work as conditions improve – acts as a major booster to personal confidence and that leads to improved attitudes and perspectives across the board.

Fourth, meetings, conventions and exhibitions can play a strongly stabilising role in the travel sector because they stimulate travel in a way that just doesn't seem to happen at a personal level. Following the aftermath of 9/11, when there was a virtual halt to travel in many parts of the world, it was the meetings sector that led the recovery, with delegates and exhibitors taking the initiative to hit the road long before there was any comparable rebound in personal travel. The added necessity of attending events that played a key role in people's business and professional lives seemed to be what it took to get them on the road again and, in the process, supporting hotels and other visitor infrastructure when they needed it the most.

Finally, business events are key factors in addressing an economic crisis because they promote cooperation and understanding at a time when tensions are high due to the pressures of uncertainty. Economic crises tend to promote conflict as different regions and interests struggle to come to terms with a variety of different impacts. The kind of ongoing dialogue that is supported by meetings and conventions is the best possible way to address this sort of situation, and to promote global cooperation (and in the process, understanding) on many different fronts at once.

The timing now is critical for a Federal Government investment in the Australian business events sector.

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Annexures:

- A. Examples of business events which demonstrate benefits to Australia
- B. What is BECA?
- C. National Business Events Strategy for Australia 2020
(also available for download from www.businesseventscouncil.org.au)

ANNEXURE A: EXAMPLES OF THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND LEGACIES OF BUSINESS EVENTS

Amway Greater China Seminar, Melbourne

A classic example of the huge value of Asian incentive business was the Amway Greater China Leadership Seminar held in Melbourne in April 2008.

The seminar involved 7,200 Chinese delegates spread over four waves of around 1,800 delegates each. The Melbourne Convention and Visitors Bureau estimates delegate expenditure was \$18.6 million and that the total economic impact was \$35 million. The event represented 20,000 room nights for Melbourne hotels.

Seventy-eight per cent of delegates surveyed indicated they would return to Melbourne for a holiday; 96% would recommend the city to their friends and colleagues.

The economic impact generated by Amway in regional Victoria including Phillip Island and Ballarat exceeded \$2 million. The tracked retail expenditure generated at two shopping outlets (Myer Melbourne & JR Duty Free) totalled \$65,000 (with one free day for shopping in Melbourne CBD).

As a result of the Amway event, other large incentive groups have since shown interest in hosting their event in Melbourne. The city is currently bidding to host a major Taiwanese Insurance group – 2,000 delegates for April 2009.

International Stem Cell Research Meeting, Cairns

The International Society for Stem Cell Research held its Fifth Annual Scientific Meeting in Australia for the first time in June 2007. It had never been held outside North America and proved to be a benchmark event, attracting 1,900 delegates. Some Australian politicians attended, allowing decision makers an opportunity for broader understanding of the topic.

The organisers wanted to promote information exchange on stem cell research and create an international focus for research activities in Australia. Hosting the meeting highlighted Australia's leadership position internationally in this area of research and enhanced collaborative opportunities with other countries particularly in North America and Europe. As a result, three leading Australian scientists have had funding opportunities opened to them in North America.

Hosting this event in Australia provided special benefits for the Australian research community, particularly students who don't have the opportunity to travel overseas to conferences. School groups from the local community were invited to attend special sessions.

A large number of travel subsidies were granted to delegates from developing nations. Extensive international and local media coverage disseminated the latest news on stem cell research.

The local spend of delegates was estimated to be almost \$9 million with over 18,500 room nights booked. In addition there was considerable regional dispersal through pre and post touring. Four hundred delegates booked a post-conference trip to the Barrier Reef.

Further dispersal throughout Australia occurred with satellite meetings. International speakers also presented in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney.

It is significant that this meeting received support from the Queensland Government and Australian Stem Cell Centre, without which the event would not have been held in Australia.

World Neuroscience Congress, Melbourne

The Seventh World Congress of Neuroscience (IBRO) was held in Melbourne in July 2007, at the invitation of the Australian Neuroscience Society. The 2,289 people who participated in the event booked 17,170 room nights, spent over \$12 million, with a resulting overall economic impact of over \$23 million.

The conference addressed new frontiers in human brain research and function, and the biological base of nervous system disorders that affect millions of people around the world. This event was held at a landmark period for neuroscience in Australia, which has seen the establishment of the Florey Neuroscience Institute in Melbourne through an amalgamation of the Howard Florey Institute, the Brain Research Institute and the National Stroke Research Institute.

Melbourne may have won the bid, but Australia was the beneficiary. There was extensive pre- and post-touring in regional Victoria, including Phillip Island, the Dandenong Ranges, Yarra Valley and Great Ocean Road. A number of satellite meetings highlighted the added benefits which can occur as a result of hosting a major international congress. Twenty different scientific meetings involving Australian and international speakers were held around the country – from Victoria and South Australia to Sydney, Darwin and Cairns.

The International Boat Show, Sydney

Australia's largest boat show is staged by the Boating Industry Association of New South Wales to promote and boost the industry in the mid-year "down time" of August. Many leading marine companies use the show as a launching pad for new products. Other

boat shows are held around Australia in Adelaide, Perth, Darwin, Melbourne, Sydney and Sanctuary Cove.

The Sydney Boat Show typically drives sales of \$300 million plus another \$200 million in sales post-show. The Australian annual boat industry turnover is estimated to be \$7.8 billion, \$2.1 billion of which is generated in New South Wales.

An estimated 5,500 people are involved at some time in the preparation and delivery of the annual show, which was visited by 81,958 people in 2007, 3,278 of whom were from overseas.

The Sydney Boat Show receives no State or National Government support. It occupies 100% of the available undercover exhibition space at Darling Harbour (28,000 square metres) and is complemented with a specially built extension to the existing marina in Cockle Bay with a capacity to exhibit over 305 large vessels.

A significant opportunity exists to boost international visitor numbers and export trade for this industry with assistance of appropriate Australian Government departments and/or agencies such as Austrade.

World's best practice for Surgeons in Townsville

James Cook University in Cairns hosted the 2008 International College of Surgeons Conference, attended by 100 overseas and 40 local delegates.

The focus was to bring together renowned international and regional experts in the fields of minimally invasive surgery of relevance to general surgical specialties. The cutting edge state of the art knowledge, skills and technologies was discussed with emphasis on day-to-day practice. Both international and national speakers participated.

A trade display at the event gave pharmaceutical companies exposure to the international market. Networking gave Australian delegates opportunities to make new international collegial contacts. Study tours associated with the event included demonstrations of live surgery at the local Mater Hospital, providing locals a unique exposure to international surgeons.

17th World Hydrogen Energy Conference 2008, Brisbane

Held for the first time in Australia in 2008, this biennial event attracted 692 delegates from around the world, putting Australia squarely on the map as a player in this vital energy sector.

Because the conference was held at a time of record high oil prices, and when climate change and unprecedented urban growth in developing countries

were profoundly important issues, conference chair Dr Andrew Dicks said the event was: "perhaps the most important World Hydrogen Energy Conference yet".

It gave Australians involved in this sector unparalleled networking opportunities and direct access to the latest information on all matters concerning hydrogen – such as the leading-edge work being done by the California Fuel Cell Partnership on fuel cell technology.

As a result of conference meetings, an Australian institute will join a global partnership between the leading hydrogen organisations, providing an opportunity to raise Australia's international profile in this area.

Potential research alliances between the University of Queensland and CNR-TAE (Italy) on reforming of ethanol are being pursued, and a potential research alliance between RMIT and the Gas Technology Institute on unitised regenerative fuel cells is also proposed.

Media footage from the conference will be used to create an educational documentary. And fuel cell educational kits provided for the education forum are to be retained in Australia by the Institute of Energy for educational activities.

A post-conference satellite meeting was held at Couran Cove, at which three presentations were made by Australians. Another post-conference meeting – of the International Energy Agency (IEA) Hydrogen Implementing Agreement – was hosted by the CSIRO.

World's Best Practice in Clinical Competence

An International Conference on Clinical Competence (Melbourne, 2008) assembled health care educators from around the world to share educational experiences and to improve evaluation instruments used to assess health care professionals.

The conference was the first and largest international Medical Education conference ever to be held in Australia. With recent rapid developments in Medical Education, Australia is currently a huge consumer of international medical graduates. Australia's undergraduate courses rely heavily on student centered learning methods and there is intense interest in rural and remote healthcare delivery. The conference worked towards bringing about positive changes for Indigenous communities, communication used by healthcare teams in clinical settings, assessment of professionalism in medical students, training clinicians in patient self-care skills, work-based learning and assessment as well as patient and colleague feedback to clinicians.

Commenting after chairing one of the keynote sessions Professor David Prideaux, Chair of the

Scientific Program said “We really pushed the patient/clinician interaction in a new direction today. Putting the patient in the picture, assessing the way people interact and how they receive information is an extremely multi-layered process. Patients today are much more knowledgeable and prepared to speak up – we need to be training the medical educators and teaching professionals how to deal with this new approach and demand for information”

Profits from the conference contributed towards closer collaboration between the medical schools of Monash University and The University of Melbourne.

The conference Co-Chair felt that the event would have further benefited from greater multi-site promotion between the three university hosts.

The Department of Health and Ageing contributed \$25,000 in funding. However, further government funding would have benefited the event in terms of delegate boosting and to create more international sponsorship opportunities.

Australian Leadership at Human Genetics Conference

The 11th International Congress of Human Genetics held in Brisbane in 2006 was attended by 1,700 delegates. The congress showcased Australia’s leadership and innovations in the field of science and medicine and placed Queensland on the world genetics map.

Several new research collaborations were established. Australian members of the congress organising committee have since been invited to be members of organising committees for forthcoming

international meetings in Canada and Europe, a tribute to their efforts for the Brisbane event.

Brisbane organisers have also been invited to be on international working parties on developing standards/policies in the field of genetics. Both initiatives provide opportunities to raise Australia’s international presence in the human genetics field which would not have otherwise occurred without the hosting of this congress.

Neither State nor Federal Governments were involved in the congress, which was disappointing given the importance of biotechnology/genomics in health care and the opportunities to further promote Australia’s international role in this area.

International AIDS Conference boosts Australian research

The International AIDS Society Conference held in Sydney July 2007 enabled leading scientists, clinicians, public health experts and community leaders to examine the latest developments in HIV-related research, and explore how scientific advances can inform the global response to HIV/AIDS.

Professor David Cooper from the University of NSW said the passing of the “Sydney Declaration” at the conference, calling for increased international funding for AIDS research to evaluate treatment programs in developing countries, also had a positive impact on the profile of Australia’s work in the AIDS field, and was a factor in the subsequent increase in Australian Government funding for HIV AIDS research.

The conference attracted 5,700 participants.

ANNEXURE B: WHAT IS BECA?

The peak body for the BE industry in Australia is the Business Events Council of Australia Inc. (BECA) which was established in 1994 to provide a single unified voice on common issues for the various key BE industry associations.

BUSINESS EVENTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS AND DESCRIPTION

