



BIZ
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CONFESSIONS OF A WORKAHOLIC

HOW TO MANAGE STRESS AND AVOID BURNOUT

Legacy matters

How can association meetings create legacy beyond economic impact — and how can stakeholders measure and articulate event outcomes? **Jenny Salsbury** investigates.



Stellar performance... SpaceX founder Elon Musk unveiled his lofty vision to colonise Mars at the International Astronautical Congress (IAC) 2017 in Adelaide.

The term “legacy” has become a cover-all for outcomes from running events in a specific location. But what does this look like? And how can it be measured in a way that creates value for all stakeholders?

Beyond showing monetary value to governments, there is a broad set of outcomes ranging from advance in science and healthcare impacts to creating new trade opportunities and empowering young people that far outweigh the financial impact of association meetings.

This issue goes to the heart of associations — often their reason for being, such as ‘making a significant difference’, ‘furthering outreach projects’, and ‘offering

practical assistance’. Essentially, associations have a humanitarian role to play beyond wealth creation and sharing best practice.

It is therefore important to distinguish between ‘legacy’ and ‘economic impact’ — the former appeals to more visionary or esoteric goals; the latter about providing accountability. Associations are now defining this positive impact more sharply, with stories built around outcomes.

(In)tangible outcomes

The World Parkinson Coalition (WPC), which provides the only international forum on Parkinson’s disease, is a great example. WPC runs triennial international

congresses, attracting some 4,500 delegates from more than 60 countries. Attendees are not only from the scientific and research community but also include carers, families and people with the disease.

Despite being a relatively young organisation (four congresses since its launch in 2004), WPC has already been recognised for its inclusive format and for its impactful “Parkinson’s Ready” programme, which engages the local community, trains staff (hotels, airport, convention centre, taxi drivers) and works with healthcare providers in the host city to raise awareness. People with Parkinson’s are also included in planning decisions in the lead-up to the congress.

While quantifying business and academic outcomes can be incredibly difficult, Mathias Posch, president of the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers (IAPCO) and International Conference Services (ICS), says public outreach and community engagement can help entrench conference outcomes far beyond the parameters of the events.

“Association goals are generally for the betterment of society — be it medical advances, scientific breakthroughs or humanitarian aspirations. We realise that bringing a conference into a destination leaves a legacy by itself if we work with the destinations to harvest the combined brainpower and expertise that is coming into the area,” he says.

“This can be done through obvious things like public outreach and patient days, and also by providing local professionals with access to the experts and an ongoing learning plan,” he says, adding that “long-term research partnerships and collaborations stemming from conferences could and should be another goal and legacy from a conference”.

Following the World Conference on Lung Cancer (WCLC) in Sydney in 2013, ICS together with Business Events Sydney, surveyed delegates both immediately after the event and a year later. They found that ongoing research and teaching activity stimulated by the event increased over time.

Tip of the iceberg

Leading industry bodies IAPCO, the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), and the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC) teamed up to launch ‘The Iceberg’ in 2017, an online communication platform that encourages event professionals across the association and corporate meeting sector to share stories of legacy. Event case studies can be easily accessed on the platform, to help industry professionals develop their own strategies.

ICCA has been actively involved in legacy for at least 10 years. Members have produced some outstanding projects, such as the 2011 *Beyond Tourism Benefits* report by Business Events Sydney, which examined the educational and social outcomes of events in Australia’s largest city.



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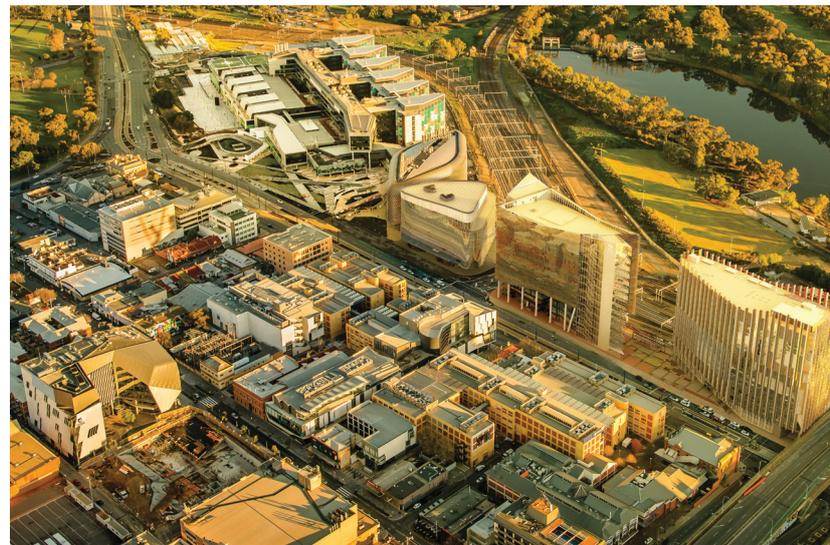
GREGG TALLEY
President and CEO,
Talley Management Group



“What is really gratifying is how this whole area has become mainstream. If you’re not doing this now, then you’re in the minority,” stated then ICCA CEO Martin Sirk at the ICCA Congress in Prague in 2017.

Convention bureaus regularly survey the revenue and job creation generated from meetings in their city, but often, it’s the hard-to-find, wider-reaching benefits that tell the bigger story around knowledge transfer and intellectual capital. The Iceberg ensures these hard-to-find stories are told.

Making the case for evaluation, and indicating future direction, Greg Tally, president and CEO of Talley Management Group, and ICCA board member, says: “Until we get to the point of being able to actually measure some of these components of value or impact beyond tourism, we’re still not going to be able to convey the real power of this.”



Long-term investment

Some destinations have invested heavily in developing the right environment to attract convention business. The decision to build one of the largest life science hubs in the Southern Hemisphere in Adelaide is already paying dividends, attracting a number of international medical and scientific conferences to the city.

The AU\$3.6-billion Adelaide BioMed City incorporates the new Royal Adelaide Hospital and South Australian Health and Medical Research



“Legacies are a huge asset in garnering support from industry and government to assist in promoting the benefits of hosting events.”

DAMION KITTO
CEO,
Adelaide Convention Bureau

City-wide approach

Adelaide's new BioMed City (below left) has helped to attract medical and scientific conferences, such as IAC 2017 (far left), where plans to launch an Australian space agency were announced (left).



Institute, University of Adelaide Health and Medical Sciences Building and University of South Australia Cancer Research Institute.

According to Adelaide Convention Bureau CEO, Damion Kitto, 40 per cent of all events won within the last 12 months fall into the life sciences field.

Thanks to this level of investment (and the imagination of the city), the International Union for Physical and Engineering Science in Medicine recently announced that the World Congress on Medical Physics and Biomedical Engineering will be held in Adelaide in 2024, with some 2,500 delegates.

The six-year lead time will also allow the local medical physics and biomedical engineering industry an opportunity to invest in and leverage business and knowledge-sharing opportunities in the lead-up. This is expected to be particularly impactful in the areas of artificial intelligence, robotics and data analytics — primary growth areas in healthcare and medicine.

Besides the hardware, Kitto says the collaborative, city-wide approach of the bureau has helped to bolster legacy outcomes of recent events such as the 68th International Aeronautical Congress (IAC), which took place in September 2017.

“Working with Team Adelaide partners at every level is the beauty of working in a city

small in size but large in infrastructure,” he says. “The size of Adelaide and our ability to assist event owners with local networks, from grassroots to the highest levels, enabled the organisers to feel their event was truly valued.”

Not only was the IAC the largest conference ever held in Adelaide, but it was also the largest congress in the organisation’s history, attracting 4,470 delegates from 71 nations.

The conference has already created some long-term legacies; the Australian Federal Government used the conference to announce plans to establish a national space agency. Adelaide SPACE start-up Fleet and French space agency CNES will track and support nanosatellites. Italy’s largest privately-owned space company SITAEL signed a letter of intent with local start-up Inovar to jointly establish a multi-million-dollar company in South Australia to develop and integrate nano-micro satellites. Interestingly, applications for aerospace engineering and technology at universities across the state are up by close to 20 per cent this year.

Kitto adds: “For the bureau, legacies are a huge asset in garnering support from industry and government to assist in promoting the benefits of hosting events — we hope they also entice other individuals and organisations in Adelaide to act as a future bid leader.” ■