

2015 South Australia Conference Report

Initial arrangements

Planning started in 2013 with selection of the venue. In accordance with delegates' requirements and availability it was found that the Stamford Grand was the only venue meeting the requirements. We were advised that the Grand was to undergo renovations however that these renovations would be completed by April 2015. Rooms rates quoted were \$175, \$376 & \$425 whilst these were the prices as at 2013 they were fixed for 2015. A deposit of \$3,600 was paid on the 30th July 2013.

Unfortunately from April 2013 until the conclusion of the Conference we were in the unenviable position of having had 6 different hotel consultants. This caused an extraordinary work load however did result in a reduced rate for individual delegates. In the pre-planning 5 rooms were allocated for Tuesday & Wednesday and 70 for remaining nights – a total of 265 nights booked.

We had issues with the availability of walk-in showers and disabled rooms despite having negotiated with our original consultant of the need for these to be made available. This was complicated by the late completion of the renovations and also with the lack of accurate information from Associations on the individual needs of their delegates.

In negotiating the rates it was not made clear by the Grand that these rates were on condition that OstomySA undertook the actual registration for individuals rather than what would normally occur (ie delegates booked direct with the hotel). This created a considerable amount of work, complicated by late bookings and lack of information from a number of Associations.

In making this booking we relied on the ACSA Guidelines and the Preparation Checklist – noting that this records the need to "Reserve Executive Meeting room for Thursday prior to the conference". We later found out that the Executive were to meet on the Wednesday at which time there was not room available and we had to move the Executive Meeting to OstomySA rooms. We also had to change our booking with the hotel to reflect Executives arriving on Tuesday evening.

The Checklist needs to reflect this and also the need to make sure there are rooms available for delegates wishing to exit Monday a.m. – of the 62 rooms utilised we had 23 booking rooms for additional days.

Sponsorship

OstomySA this year trialled sponsorship negotiations being made direct to sponsors by the organising committee. This allowed for earlier negotiations ensuring that suppliers were able to allocate the appropriate funding in their budgets. We also opened sponsorship up to some of the smaller organisations (ie 3M, Mitrofanoff Association, Nicepak and CH2). This resulted in 7 suppliers (\$9,100).

Conference Venue

The venue was excellent and seemed to suit both delegates and their partners – a total of 97 delegates were registered for both days and 2 one day registrations: noting that the sponsorship package allowed for 14 registrations.

We did have issues with audio/visual which resulted in us not utilising the Hotel's preferred supplier due to cost (\$3,900 against the external \$900). Additionally we were of the view that the conference room had been booked for 24 hours which would have enabled us to leave our equipment etc. in the room on the Friday night. Unfortunately this was not the case and it meant we had to totally exit the room, including the re-set of the audio/visual equipment on the Saturday morning. This did however save some costs.

The Trade area was well received by the suppliers and the addition of the Thursday afternoon trade display and well attended by both delegates and also South Australian ostomates.

Welcome Function

The Welcome Function (5.30pm to 7.00pm) was well attended with food and drinks readily available over this time. Due to the inclusion of an extended Trade area we chose to charge a nominal rate for attendees, both delegates and others. This did not cover the actual costs (\$45 per person) but ensured that Associations not attending were not disadvantaged through an increased daily registration fees. There were some concerns raised about this charge however the Guidelines do not specifically exclude the ability to do so and it was referred to the ACSA Executive Committee for a ruling prior to sending out the paperwork.

A total of 100 registered for the Cocktail Party with 15 suppliers paid as part of their sponsorship package. The actual cost per head was \$25 for food and drinks on consumption \$20. We engaged a duo to play throughout the Cocktail Party which was well received.

Friday Night

We took the opportunity to invite delegates and their partners to visit our new Adelaide Oval 38 attended at a cost of \$32 per head. All attendees seemed to enjoy the outing.

Conference Dinner

The Dinner was well attended with 117 sitting down to a 2 course dinner, entertained by Comedian/Musician and ostomate – Luke Escombe. The cost per head was \$60 per head with drinks on consumption of \$20.

Sunday Outing

We had originally pre-booked for 66 attendees at a cost of \$80 per head which would have necessitated two buses. Ultimately only 46 attended which resulted in only 1 bus needed and the actual cost was \$60 per head. The attendees travelled to Mt Lofty look-out for a view over the city; proceeding to Hahndorf for a 2 course lunch and then on to Han Heysen's cottage, The Cedars. Those delegates travelling home Sunday p.m. were dropped at the airport in time for a late departure (after 4.30pm).

There were difficulties on the Sunday, due to very late registrations and the specific needs of their delegates from one Association. Accessibility for the venues and transport should be carefully considered: a bus with "disabled drop-down" facilities was booked however this should have been a "wheel chair" access bus.

Recommendations for future committees:

- Ensure early arrangements are made for the Executive Meeting on Wednesday – Guidelines Checklist needs to be amended – currently shows Thursday.
- Ensure that the contract with the Hotel includes a specific number of available walk-in showers and/or disabled access rooms. 27 requested including 1 fully disabled access room.
- Paperwork was a problem for some Associations both in timing of return and also in ensuring that each delegate had an individual registration and hotel booking form. Consideration may need to be given to an alteration of this template to ensure all are clear that it is not a Group Booking Sheet.
- Consideration should be given to a “firm” cut-off date for receipt of bookings, and also receipt of payment on the registration paperwork. Additionally the form should include any financial implications to late booking changes.
- Ensure that the conference room is booked for 24 hours.
- Extend hotel block bookings to include availability for delegates travelling home on Sunday – recommend the Guidelines Checklist be amended.
- Microphones were again an issue. It is recommended that consideration be given to a lapel microphone for the Chairperson and that at least 2 microphones per table be allocated to alleviate the need for microphone runners and the delays that this causes in the flow of the meetings.
- Be aware that “wheelchair” access may be required for outings as opposed to “disabled access”.
- Ability for the Organising Committee to deal direct with sponsors and to open the sponsorship up for smaller suppliers and other providers utilised by Associations.
- Organising committees should consider the additional administration hours required in pre-planning the conference.
- We would recommend that the Organising Committee send confirmation of booking for all registrations/events/accommodation etc.

General

The actual organising of the Conference was ultimately left to OstomySA due to the availability of personnel from the Ileostomy Association. OstomySA experienced considerable difficulties in accessing a volunteer resource for the administration and we were forced to take on an additional staff member for the five months preceding the conference: approx. 412 hours were incurred by this person alone from early June 2015 until the conference (i.e. does not include work by the actual OstomySA Conference Committee members – OASA staff and/or volunteers).

Additionally in reporting on the finances, for the first year to our knowledge, we are able to report on the total cost of the Conference, excluding travel costs, across all Associations. At a total cost of approx. \$82k it is questionable as to whether there are gains in having an annual event particularly with advances in teleconferencing now available.

Ruth Horne
17 January 2019