

ACSA Conference 2018 - Review of Organising Committee

4th December 2018

Committee:

Carol Quast (NSW Stoma), Eugene Tomczyk (NSW Stoma) and Stephen Lardner (Ostomy NSW)

Consultants to the committee:

Geoff Rhodes (ACSA), Tom Flood (Ostomy NSW) and Greg Doyle (Ostomy NSW).

Event Travel Management:

Melissa Waller (Account Manager)

General Information:

Total Registrations: 76

Friday registrations: 73 Saturday registrations: 66 (less, without suppliers)

Welcome function: 57 Dinner: 76 Harbour cruise: 19

Costs: \$47,938 Revenue: \$59,570 (Assoc. \$40,570; suppliers \$19,000)

Summary of activity:

The organising committee was formed on 20th December 2016, almost 2 years prior to the conference being held, and shortly after the ACSA Conference 2016 in Canberra. We decided to meet monthly and were successful at maintaining this regular contact. The committee decided in the early stages to hold costs as close as possible to prior conferences based on the financials from their reports. On 27th March 2017 the committee met at three Sydney Hotels and following these visits, Rydges Sydney Central Hotel was chosen as our preferred venue. In May 2017 the committee accepted a quote to appoint Event Travel Management to organise the event on behalf of our two associations. This decision followed consultation with the Melbourne organising committee who had similarly appointed a conference organiser. This decision proved to be very worthwhile and we recommend this to other organising committees. We also had access from ACSA to past meeting budgets and reports which assisted our activity.

We chose the theme "Youth Inclusiveness" which formed the background to our decisions on speakers at the conference. This theme was shared with NSW STNs via the AASTN in the hope of finding support and appropriate speakers. The three speakers we eventually used were members of our associations who we approached to talk about their experiences, plus one person who we heard on ABC radio. Our committee formed an agenda item of three brief presentations and a Q&A session. We briefed the speakers, and were very happy with the topics presented.

The activity of Event Travel Management (ETM) was guided by our committee and they worked closely with us at each monthly meeting. We created a separate joint bank account under NSW Stoma's existing facility and deposited \$20,000 up front to cover costs. ETM developed the budget for all aspects of the conference; room hire, lunches, morning and afternoon teas, dinner, welcome function, special accommodation rates and liaised continually with the hotel. Their ability to negotiate was our main benefit, with significantly lower costs than the committee was able to negotiate prior to ETM being appointed. ETM developed the website interface for registrations which was used to update the numbers prior to the conference. ETM sent a Conference Survey to all guests for their feedback. The feedback is added at the end of our report.

Recommendations:

1. We agree with past reports that this specialist function is best handled by ACSA each year. Further, we recommend a national event organiser be appointed to run the event, in consultation with local associations.
2. Capital cities (especially Sydney and Melbourne) are expensive room hire and accommodation venues. We used a lower cost venue and had to compromise on the room layout – however we felt this did not impede the running of the event.
3. We originally budgeted for 120 delegates and guests, revised this to 80 and finally 76 attended. This put strain on the original budget and without supplier support, a deficit of \$11,600 would have been recorded by the NSW associations. Fortunately, supplier sponsorship and the member days has contributed to a \$5000 surplus.
4. The Sunday event is becoming less important and we recommend the Saturday dinner is the final event, keeping Sunday free for delegates and guests to do their own thing.
5. Suppliers were **reluctant** to sponsor the conference, although we received an offer from the Stoma Industry Group on behalf of their members (Ainscorp, Coloplast, ConvaTec and Liberty Medical) and additional support from Omnigon. This money was less than we had expected.
6. Suppliers were **prepared** to support our Member Access Days that ran alongside the conference. This was advertised via a flyer to around 10,000 members across NSW over the two months prior to the conference. Suppliers paid additional funds which enabled a separate room to be hired.