



BUSINESS EVENTS  
SYDNEY



# RESEARCH

*Conferences: catalysts for thriving economies*



**Project Report – Business Events Sydney**

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# BACKGROUND

*In recent times, the focus of research into the legacy of business events has moved from more easily measurable expenditure to the evaluation of the longer-term gains that are enjoyed by industries, governments and communities.*

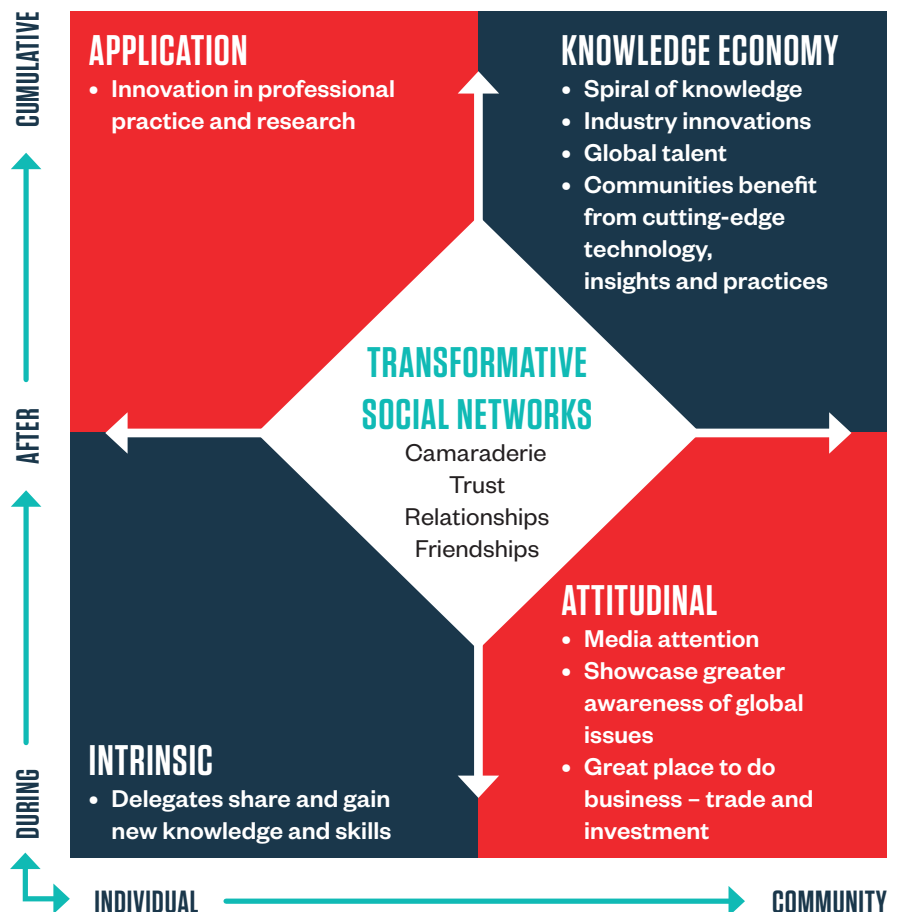
Knowledge creation is increasingly dependent on collaboration, which relies on the camaraderie, trust and relationships formed through face-to-face contact. Business events provide the platforms for this physical interaction and the foundation for the networks that then drive collaboration and innovation.

Business Events Sydney (BESydney) commissioned University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to conduct research in 2015, collecting data from delegates and organisers who attended various international business events in Sydney in 2014 and 2015. The results of this research<sup>1</sup> describe the immediate benefits experienced by delegates and the wider community, and highlight the longer timeframes over which some of these benefits are enjoyed.

Benefits may be **soft** (knowledge enhancement, ideas exchange, reputation building, relationship forming, resource influencing), or **hard** (application of new techniques/technologies, improved skills, relocation to conference destination). Whichever they are, the benefits derived from conferences have a lasting effect on delegates, governments and the local communities. Conferences are, in effect, the catalysts for thriving economies.

<sup>1</sup> *Conferences: catalysts for thriving economies*, Foley, Edwards and Schlenker, 2016.

Diagram 1: Business events – long-term catalysts for thriving economies



Findings from this research build on the results of earlier reports commissioned by BESydney on the legacy of business events.<sup>2</sup>

The studies concluded that there are four main dimensions to the legacy of business events, and each dimension comprises specific elements that were assessed in this latest research:

<sup>2</sup> *Beyond tourism benefits: measuring the social legacies of business events* - Edwards, Foley and Schlenker, 2011.

**Table 1: The dimensions of business events' legacies**

DIMENSION	LEGACY ITEMS
<b>INNOVATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideas</li> <li>• Knowledge</li> <li>• Techniques</li> <li>• Technologies</li> </ul>
<b>COLLABORATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for the development of global research and business collaboration</li> </ul>
<b>SECTOR DEVELOPMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of knowledge and capabilities of early career delegates in Sydney</li> <li>• Development of professional practices that have enhanced outcomes for the community in Sydney</li> <li>• Improvement of the overall skills and ability of the sector in Sydney</li> <li>• Opportunity for the local sector to showcase their expertise to a global audience</li> <li>• Elevation of the international profile of Sydney</li> </ul>
<b>ATTRACT GLOBAL TALENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desire to live and work/study in Sydney</li> <li>• Application for a position to work/study in Sydney</li> <li>• Knowledge of others who have relocated to Sydney</li> </ul>

# FINDINGS

## INNOVATION

91% & 93%

agreed that the conference immediately exposed delegates to new and innovative ideas

to new and innovative knowledge

## SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

83% & 68%

agreed that the conference enabled the local sector to showcase its expertise to a global audience

agreed that the conference developed knowledge and capabilities of early career delegates

## COLLABORATION

76%

agreed that the conference supported the development of global research and collaboration

## ATTRACTING GLOBAL TALENT

41% & 7%

would like to live and work/study in Sydney as a result of attending the conference

had applied for a position to work/study in Sydney

## SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

52% & 51%

agreed that the conference would develop professional practices to enhance community outcomes in Sydney

agreed that the conference would improve the skills and ability of the sector

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRADE

25% & 41%

of exhibitors said that they increased sales

of exhibitors made international sales contacts

*This new information is further supported by the findings of additional research into some individual events that have taken place over the last few years. Together, this data provides clear evidence of the enormous legacy of business events and long-lasting effects of the outcomes they have facilitated.*



Charles Perkins Centre

## 105<sup>TH</sup> ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Sydney, June 2014

Rotary International was able to identify some very clear and measurable outcomes from the event that secured worldwide attention and the support of generous donors and the Australian Government.

### Ongoing outcomes and measurable impacts

- Delegates at the convention helped raise A\$120,000 for the global eradication of polio.
- Generous support was received from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Sydney Harbour BridgeClimb, who donated 50 per cent of the cost of BridgeClimb tickets to Rotary, the proceeds to be used to purchase polio immunisation vaccine for 240,000 children.
- At the time of the event, the then Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott, pledged A\$100 million over the next five years to assist Rotary in its End Polio Now campaign.
- The event drew worldwide media attention for Rotary and the End Polio Now campaign.

**For specific examples of the impacts that conferences have on associations, governments and community, visit these links:**

[Associations](#) / [Government](#) / [Community](#)

## 10<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON OBESITY

Sydney, September 2006

The International Congress on Obesity (ICO) targets global medical and health professionals and scientists working to advance the knowledge of obesity through research and dialogue, and provides a platform to present breakthrough scientific news on the global obesity epidemic. The outcomes of the congress demonstrate how business events facilitate international collaboration in the fight against universal problems.

### Ongoing outcomes and measurable impacts

- Following the congress, obesity became even more of an issue for governments (the incidence of obesity worldwide has doubled since 1980).
- The University of Sydney received funding for a new Centre for Obesity, Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease, the Charles Perkins Centre.
- The centre, which opened in June 2014, is dedicated to easing the burden of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease and their related conditions - the leading causes of death, disability and reduced quality of life in Australia - through innovative research and teaching.
- The centre has adopted an innovative cross-disciplinary, cross-functional approach to solving these complex problems, bringing together scholars from a range of disciplines to explore the interconnectedness of our environment, our food and our health.

# CONCLUSIONS

*The benefits business events provide to delegates, government, destinations, sectors, communities do not start and stop with the event itself. The collaboration that commences before the conference begins, continues during the conference and then extends beyond the timeframe and location of the conference, is testament to the enduring legacy of these events.*

Findings indicate some of the most significant social outcomes from international conferences have culminated years, and even decades after the event was held.

Importantly, the value of business events is not restricted to the delegates alone. While delegates gain new knowledge, technological expertise and grow their professional networks, local communities now have practitioners who have better knowledge and technology to use in their practices. Additionally, the industry sectors are revitalised, exhibitors/businesses experience increased sales, and local retailers enjoy business tourism expenditure that would not otherwise have occurred.

The Australian Government is committed to encouraging Australia's world-class researchers and businesses to collaborate to shape future industries and generate wealth, as evidenced by the National Innovation and Science Agenda: "The National Innovation and Science Agenda drives smart ideas that create business growth, local jobs and global success".

Business events are the perfect vehicle for this collaboration providing transformative social network platforms, and attracting global talent to further enhance the co-creation of value for the community at large.



**"THE WORLD-CLASS (CHARLES PERKINS) CENTRE WILL CREATE JOBS AND ATTRACT LEADING RESEARCHERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD AS WELL AS PROVIDE ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES WELL INTO THE FUTURE."**

— Professor Ian Caterson, Foundation Director of the Institute of Obesity, Nutrition and Exercise, University of Sydney



**"CONFERENCES ARE ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL FOR LEARNING ABOUT THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN YOUR FIELD. BUT THEY ARE ALSO CRITICAL FOR NETWORKING WITH OTHER SCIENTISTS AROUND THE WORLD AND BEING ABLE TO DEVELOP NEW COLLABORATIONS."**

— Professor Richard Payne, School of Chemistry, University of Sydney



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