

CASE STUDY

4TH INTERNATIONAL AIDS SOCIETY CONFERENCE ON HIV PATHOGENESIS, TREATMENT AND PREVENTION (IAS 2007)	
TYPE OF EVENT: International Association Conference	DATE OF EVENT: 22-25 July 2007
EVENT DESTINATION: Sydney, Australia	EVENT VENUE: Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre (SCEC)
ORGANISER/HOST: International Aids Society (IAS) /The Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM)	PCO/AGENCY: K.I.T & Tour Hosts
PROJECTED ATTENDANCE: 3000 Delegates	
ACTUAL ATTENDANCE: 6700 participants from a total of 140 countries	

PROFILE/OBJECTIVE OF CONFERENCE:

This international conference is held biennially to address the global issue of AIDS & HIV and provide new insights into HIV disease development, prevention and care. It attracts scientists and clinicians/physicians from around the world.

REASONS FOR DESTINATION/VENUE SELECTION:

- Australia's ongoing leadership in the global response to AIDS and the contribution of its scientific and medical community to HIV research were significant reasons behind its selection as the host destination for this event.
- The destination's capability to offer a well-located, world-class venue with cutting edge technology was also important.
- With the conference seeking to attract delegates from developed and developing countries, the conference geographic location was important in determining attendance for many participants

LOCATION/VENUE/ACCOMMODATION INFRASTRUCTURE:

- IAS 2007 occupied all of the SCEC's meeting venues due to the significant size of the event.
- The convention centre's central location at Darling Harbour added to the success of the event. Delegates were very appreciative of the ease with which they could stroll to the Centre from their hotels and apartments located within the Darling Harbour Precinct, as well as its proximity to quality restaurants and attractions.

EVENT TRIUMPHS:

- Final attendance exceeded all expectations. IAS 2007 attracted the largest number of participants, delegates and broadest country representation of the four IAS Conferences held to date. Figures showed a 10% increase over IAS 2005 for participants, delegates and countries represented, with more than 1000 delegates coming from Australia
- The media presence at IAS 2007 was double the number at the previous event - 446 Media representatives from 61 countries provided coverage for all regions of the world
- The Australian conference provided the setting for the "Sydney Declaration" which was a formal statement calling for the scale up of HIV research. This statement received worldwide media coverage including the distinguished international medical journal "The Lancet".

SPECIAL TOUCHES:

- Delegates were offered the opportunity of attending Opera Australia performances at the iconic Sydney Opera House
- A unique Australian indigenous welcome was provided which included a "Welcome to Country" greeting, "Smoking Ceremony" and indigenous performance.
- The Australian Government's Federal Minister for Health officiated at the conference opening.

CHALLENGES:

Challenge One: The conference had very complex audio-visual and IT requirements to address the needs of hundreds of individual speakers, to cater for a large media centre and facilitate a very interactive website

Solution: The Centre's excellent IT infrastructure handled all the demands, including the daily uploading of webcasts, podcasts, images and transcripts to the conference website, to enable a global audience to follow the meeting proceedings.

Challenge Two: Final attendance was well in excess of estimates made when the bid was won back in 2003

Solution: The central location of the SCEC provided access to a wide range of accommodation options, as the delegate figures increased

QUOTES/FEEDBACK:

"Scientific interest and overall attendance in this conference has exceeded our most optimistic expectations. Over 3100 abstracts were submitted to IAS 2007, an increase of more than 50% over the last IAS Conference in Rio, and we had 6700 participants."

IAS President – Dr Pedro Cahn

www.conventionsaustralia.com.au

Conventions Australia is a partnership between the 14 leading Australian convention centres and bureaux which are active in the international market, specifically in relation to international association meetings.

QUOTES/FEEDBACK:

“The downtown location of the Centre and its state-of-the-art facilities, the breathtaking views of the harbor, the friendly and easy-going people and the mild and sunny climate are only some of the advantages of holding a conference in the beautiful city of Sydney.”

IAS Executive Director – Craig McClure

“The IT infrastructure of the Centre should be considered as the level all others should aim for.”

IAS IT Systems Manager – Florin Costea