

Conference & Event Management

The vibrant events calendar in Western Australia is poised for growth over the next five years.

Current Industry Environment

Events enable community participation and fulfil peoples' need for connection. The workers in this sector arrange and run the celebrations, performances and commemorations that are part of a community's social fabric and in turn help build community identity and heritage. Events help to:

- boost community health through access to physical activity (e.g. organised community sport, fun runs),
- create a sense of civic pride (e.g. ANZAC Day services),
- cultivate social inclusion (e.g. NAIDOC week events, children's festivals, PRIDE), and
- foster connections between people from different cultural backgrounds (e.g. citizenship ceremonies).

From a tourism perspective, events such as organised sporting events, festivals, fairs, cultural events, and theatre, concert or other performing arts are an important part of the visitor experience. Events are lucrative too. Visitors spent \$4.24 billion on entertainment and conferences in Australia during 2017-18, in addition to the billions of dollars spent on accommodation, food, drinks and transport.¹ Events are regularly used in destination marketing to attract visitors. Increasingly, events in Western Australia are also used as place-makers, giving people a reason to visit new locations, for example Opera at the Mill at the Jarrahdale Heritage Mill in the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale.

Industry contribution

Overall, the events industry in Western Australia experienced growth in the past year. Specific events were especially successful in 2019, namely the *Perth Festival*, *Hopman Cup*, *Field of Light: Avenue of Honour* artwork in Albany, and the Manchester United tour of Perth. Optus Stadium, which hosts an event on most days of the year², has been instrumental in contributing to the industry's growth, as the site for major music acts and sporting matches.

Perth was the host city for major tourism events, including the *Australian Tourism Exchange 2019*, and *Corroboree West*. Further afield, regional events have received a boost through the Regional Events Scheme (RES), a funding program supported through Tourism WA and Royalties for Regions. In 2019-20, 68 regional events will receive funding, including seven Aboriginal events.

Costs of event management

However, despite this growth, lowered participation and rising costs have impacted certain events. The Albany, Busselton and Geraldton legs of the *City to Surf* were cancelled in 2019. Industry feedback has also indicated a decline in large-scale trade shows and exhibitions to Perth, due to the expense of transporting consumables, stock, and trade products from Australia's east coast.

The Australia-New Zealand Anti-Terror Committee guidelines state that all events must be protected from the impact of hazards, including terrorist attacks.³ Safety measures such as security barriers and employing extra security personnel for the duration of the event can be expensive. As a result, certain community events are at risk of cancellation as the costs of fulfilling safety measures are prohibitively high.

A snapshot of Conferences & Events

Conferences & Corporate | Community | Cultural | Festivals | Sport | Private Celebrations



Events in the community:

- civic pride
- social inclusion
- multiculturalism
- outlet for physical activity

Events in tourism:

- time-specific reason to visit
- "place-making" of new locations

Diverse job roles

in event companies, Government, venues, media, security, sales, sound & lighting, construction, catering, performing

Visitors spent significant amounts on Events in 2018-2019*

\$4.15b
spent on **entertainment**



\$588m
spent on **conferences, trade shows & seminars**



2019 Perth Festival in numbers*

455,000
attendances in total

1/3 of attendees went to the opening event
Booma Waanginy: The Trees Speak

7,300
overseas and interstate visitors

\$19m
direct economic impact

\$26.4m
flow-on economic value to WA

581
Full-time equivalent jobs created

The future workforce requirements

Events Workforce Projections - Australia***

Role	2018	2023
Conference, Event Organisers	39,800	44,900
Ticket Collectors, Ushers	2,800	2,600
Ticket Salespersons	25,700	27,400
Crowd Controllers (2011-2016)	870	590

Major focus for Events workforce

patron safety, risk mitigation and risk management plans



References:
* Tourism Research Australia; International Visitor Survey YE June 2019 and National Visitor Survey YE June 2019
**Perth Festival Annual Report 2019
<https://www.perthfestival.com.au/src/uploads/2019/05/Perth-Festival-2019-FINAL.pdf>
***Australian Government JobOutlook

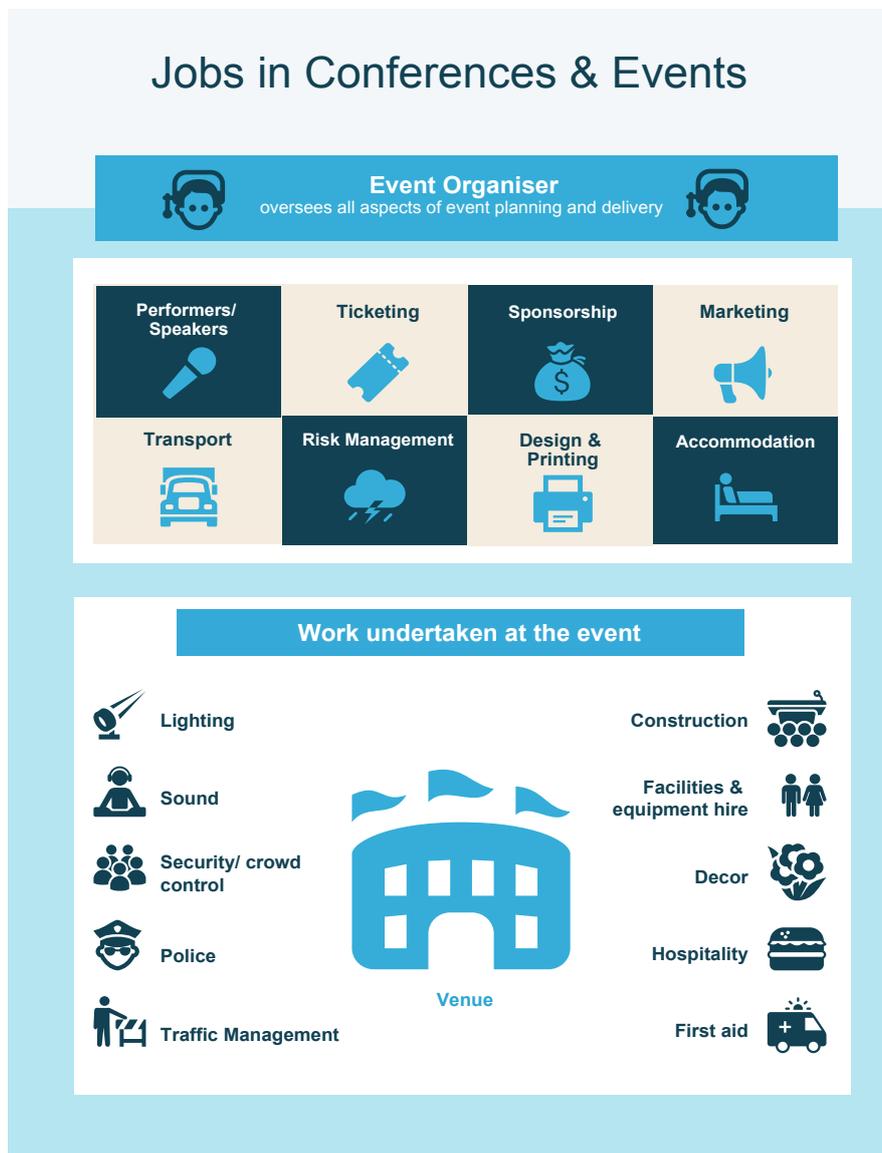
Industry Developments and Prospects

The events industry is highly labour-intensive and because many of the associated services and suppliers require an onsite presence, much of the activity cannot be outsourced. Furthermore, since events mostly take place on the weekend, overtime is common for many event management employees. Wages are thus a major industry expense.

It is expected that employment in this sector will grow over the next five years. However, increased numbers in employment are likely to impact profit margins and wages are therefore likely to decline.⁴

The organisation and management of an event is mainly focused on planning and attention to ensuring the event's financial viability. The event organiser performs predominantly administrative services, having responsibility for all aspects of the event while meeting the client's brief and staying within the budget. However, the event industry's workforce in fact expands across the range of suppliers and stakeholders that participate at different points in the event planning and execution process, in addition to significant numbers of volunteers.

Within large, established events management companies, the pathway into the Conference and Event Manager position is through considerable experience gained over several years. However, due to the nature of events being episodic, work for lower-level events' workers is often discontinuous and the use of formal qualifications is limited.



Sporting events

Participation in organised sport is a major part of the West Australian lifestyle. This can include partaking in community sporting, or mass-participation events, which each have differing job roles for the events worker.

Mass-participation events, such as the Rottnest Channel Swim, Busselton Jetty Swim, Busselton Ironman, HBF Run for a Reason or the City to Surf, are typically organised by professional event production companies that may engage volunteers.

At a local level however, community sporting events are organised almost entirely by club volunteers. Participation includes playing, coaching, or officiating. These events are played at community cricket pitches, bowling greens, netball courts, tennis courts, football ovals and indoor sports centres across the State.

Festivals

The festival sector is serviced by thousands of workers putting on a broad range of festivals, including music, food and drink, sporting, or arts and cultural (such as comedy, film, writing, performing arts, family-specific, and multi-cultural) festivals.

In Western Australia, the festival sector is well-established and continues to report growth. Festivals that attract significant numbers of attendees include the *Perth Festival*, *FRINGE WORLD Festival*, *Disrupted Festival of Ideas*, *AWESOME International Festival for Bright Young Things*, *Revelation Film Festival*, and the *Western Australia Gourmet Escape*.

Discussions across the country about health and safety issues such as personal safety and illicit drug use, led to the creation of a dedicated conference for organisers and suppliers to the festival sector. The inaugural Australian Festival Industry Conference (AFIC) took place in October 2019.

Art and Cultural Events

The *Field of Light: Avenue of Honour* artwork was an installation, commissioned by cultural organisation FORM in partnership with the City of Albany, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1 and honour the Anzac legend. The artwork attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors to the South West between October 2018 and April 2019, and generated visitor spend of \$17 million across the South West region. Almost 29,500 people visited the region specifically to see the *Field of Light: Avenue of Honour*.⁵

Almost 455,000 attendances were recorded for the *Perth Festival* in 2019, with a third of those attending the free opening event *Boorna Waanginy: The Trees Speak* in Kings Park, which required the services of 70 volunteers. The Perth festival generates 581 full-time equivalent jobs.⁶

Business Events and exhibitions

During 2018-2019, business secured by the Perth Convention Bureau (PCB) for Western Australia represented Direct Delegate Expenditure (DDE) that exceeded the annual target. The business secured will bring an estimated 62,729 delegates to Western Australia for 264 business events to take place between 2019 and 2022. Significant business events secured include a mix of national and international conferences representing high yield delegates from the medical/health, science and education sectors.⁷

Of relevance to this industry, the *Australian Event Awards and Symposium* was hosted in Perth in 2019 for the first time. It was one of the business events secured by the Perth Convention Bureau.

Furthermore, the WA Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC), with support from the Perth Convention Bureau (PCB) and Tourism WA Western Australia will host the *World Indigenous Tourism Summit* in Perth in April 2020. The summit is expected to attract hundreds of delegates from around Australia and the world.

Current and Future opportunities

Time management and planning skills are a critical component of the Event organisation and operation skill set.

Networking and negotiation skills are also highly sought after due to the range of stakeholders, performers, suppliers, delegates or attendees with which the events worker is required to interact. For example, the Events team within a local government authority may work together with many different departments, that each consider different aspects of events hosted in the town or city, such as Environmental Health, Risk Management, Traffic Management, Emergency Management, Rangers, Stakeholder Management, Reserves, and Communications.

Sustainability knowledge that is related to how events can reduce their environmental footprint are increasingly becoming essential skills that event managers must possess.

Current skills gaps

Industry report that skills gaps are linked to the appropriate use of event management plans, maintaining business relationships, monitoring budgets, compliance with regulatory requirements, mitigating risk, as well as supervising and leading people, and managing conflict.

There is a reported shortage of certified Professional Conference Organisers (PCO), despite strong demand from Industry. This may be due to a general lack of awareness about career pathways related to arranging conferences, as students reportedly indicate preference for arranging social events such as weddings.

Risk management for event holders

Problem-solving skills and the ability to consult with relevant partners or implement contingencies in the case of an emergency are crucial. The emerging threats to events from a variety of incidents is progressing the conversation about risk and the need to implement plans to avoid catastrophic impacts.

Tourism WA requires event holders to produce a risk management plan that complies with the latest Australian standard for risk management and the appropriate insurance requirements. To support event organisers, Tourism WA has developed the following resources:

- *An Introduction to Risk Management for Event Holders in Western Australia* is a practical guide to help event holders manage risks associated with events. This resource aligns with the Australian Standard: Risk Management - Principles and Guidelines (AS ISO 3100:2018).
- *Managing your event risks* is a video presentation that provides an overview of event risk management and information on the importance of risk management to ensure a successful event.
- The *Resource for Events in Western Australia* contains important information, contact details, and advice for event holders.

Skills and training strategies

Issues relating to skills gaps for event organisers exist due to a lack of participation in formal training. This is because the events sector is unregulated, the work is intermittent, and the scope of the training curriculum is not seen as diverse enough to address variations between different types of events (for example, business events, festivals, private events, cultural celebrations or community events).

The lack of regulation means barriers to entry are low. A qualification or experience is not necessary to launch an events management business. However, risk management is paramount, which means that significant experience is fundamental.

Employers therefore rely on workers that learn on-the-job and gain experience over time. Occasionally, employers access short-course training to address specific skills, such as the Event Essentials Program created by Meetings

& Events Australia (MEA) to upskill people without formal qualifications or experience in the industry. The course is aimed at those looking for an entry point into the meetings events sector, early-career workers building a foundation of skills, or workers upskilling for a new job in events. Event Essentials is an accredited course including two units: SITEEVT001 Source and Use Information in the Events Industry and SITEEVT005 Plan in-house events or functions that can be applied to many other VET programs, including the SIT50316 Diploma of Event Management.

Perth Festival has partnered with several stakeholders on the *Arts Passport* project. This employment scheme is designed to generate a network of participating arts organisations to grow capability in businesses and improve employment opportunities in the sector. It addresses the issue of the temporary project-driven nature of work in the Events and Performing Arts sectors by establishing a sustainable employment database.

Please get in touch

FutureNow is seeking regular input from stakeholders about workforce matters in the Western Australian Accommodation Industry. If you are interested in providing further information about the workforce in this sector, the Industry Manager would like to hear from you.

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References

1. State of the Industry 2019, Tourism Research Australia, Canberra, April 2019
2. FutureNow industry stakeholder consultation
3. Australia-New Zealand Counter-Terrorism Committee (ANZCTC); *Australia's Strategy for Protecting Crowded Places from Terrorism*; 2017; accessed October 2019
4. IBISWorld Industry Report; N7299 Event Promotion and Management Services in Australia; February 2019; accessed 25 October 2019
5. Media Statement; Tourism Minister Paul Papalia; *Albany artwork a shining light for South West tourism*; 27 June 2019
6. Perth Festival; Annual Report 2019
7. Perth Convention Bureau; Annual Report 2019, accessed November 2019