

Industry Workforce Priorities Industry: Hospitality and Tourism

Industry coverage: Event and Conference Management

Industry overview:

- The term ‘Events’ is used to describe an increasingly diverse and rapidly growing sector within Western Australia’s tourism, cultural, sporting and recreational landscape. Growth in this sector is being driven by multiple factors: the public’s appetite for a ‘festival’ experience, a desire for greater community connectedness, the contribution that an event can make to place-making – particularly in regional areas and the recognition by the State Government that events are a compelling attraction to domestic and international tourists that will contribute to achieving the goal of a \$12 billion visitor spend by 2020.
- The scale of events varies significantly in terms of type and volume of attendees (a wedding compared to a major sporting event), but a particular level of knowledge and expertise is required for successful implementation. Events can be split into three main groups:
 - business events (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions/ trade shows (MICE))
 - community or cultural events (local community, clubs, sporting, culinary/ food & wine, music or arts)
 - functions (including weddings, gala balls, banquets and fundraising dinners)

Current and future labour market conditions:

- Since events are short-term, and require intensive coordination prior, during and post event, people are increasingly viewing the events sector as part of the “gig economy” where employment is temporary and linked to specific projects. As such, sharing platforms are being created to connect clients wanting to outsource event work with those looking for event work.ⁱ
- Workers within the Event and Conference sector work in an office planning events, on-site at venues where events are staged or a combination of both. Tasks can include promoting events; negotiating contracts or packages with clients; coordination of services (catering, room hire, displays, audio-visual equipment, security/ crowd control, accommodation and transport); processing registrations; and overseeing work by contractors, all within defined budgets and time frames.
- Event personnel work across multiple industries and are employed by various businesses ranging from event or exhibition management companies to event venues, function centres, sporting & community clubs, stadia, local councils or businesses (where they are employed as in-house conference or event managers). Workers employed as in-house event coordinators often have joint job descriptions and undertake duties other than strictly for events.
- Additionally, a very high proportion of workers are self-employed as freelancers or contract workers, engaged for a fixed period or specific project and often by more than one employer/ client concurrently. For example, the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre (PCEC) engage independent Professional Conference Organisers (PCO’s) to coordinate conferences and exhibitions.
- The events sector is also reliant on a large casual workforce and volunteer base to provide the ancillary services that assist in implementation of an event. Representatives from the Perth Arena, TriEvents, WorldSkills, and Rugby WA report that they engage interns, students gaining work experience, casuals or volunteers for many events.
- Nationally, there are no major players in this industryⁱⁱ and larger Event Management organisations offering full-service operations are typically based outside WA, although this is starting to change with the growth in the sector. Within WA, the major venues that employ events personnel in WA include the Perth Arena (1,046 staff working at the venueⁱⁱⁱ), PCEC (up to 350 workers, depending on the event^{iv}), Crown Perth entertainment complex, and the major hotel chains. The event landscape will also be impacted when the 60,000 seat Perth Stadium is operational, requiring workers to fill a variety of roles.
- According to IBISWorld, the event sector is forecast to grow over the next five years, with more event management companies entering the market to service niche markets or wider geographic regions, and industry associations increasingly providing wider services to members through events, which is expected to lead to an increase in employment.^v
- Due to the intermittent nature of events, it is challenging for employers to take on event trainees, as they require employment for the 12 months of the traineeship. In November 2016, 2 trainees were

undertaking a Certificate III in Events Traineeship. The 2015 calendar year, saw 220 enrolments in Certificate III in Events and 202 in Diploma of Events for institutional delivery. There were no enrolments recorded for the Advanced Diploma of Events in 2015.^{vi}

- Le Cordon Bleu launched in Perth in 2016 offering a Bachelor of Business (Conference and Event Management), with the first intake of students commencing the course in July 2017.

Industry development issues:

Economic Contribution

- Events attract visitors to a particular region for a specific time period and provide an economic boost as well as add social vibrancy, particularly in regional areas. In 2015-16, Perth secured 122 conferences and 75 corporate meetings and incentive events, attracting approximately 56,600 delegates and generating a Direct Delegate Expenditure (DDE) in excess of \$110 million (against a DDE target of \$108 million).^{vii}
- The business events secured in 2016 were a mix of national and international conferences from the medical/ health, science, agriculture and education sectors and visitors in the Corporate and Incentive travel sector largely originated from Malaysia, Japan and Singapore.^{viii}
- By the end of 2016, 213 business events had been secured by the Perth Convention Bureau for the four years up to 2018.^{ix}

Event Funding

- Industry has welcomed the State Government's commitment for tourism marketing and events of \$425 million over five years.
- Through Tourism WA, \$19 million over three years was committed in the 2016 State Government Budget to attract events to the Perth Stadium.^x Once operational, the Perth Stadium will provide greater opportunities for international events and the associated visitation to WA.
- The State Government through Tourism WA and the City of Perth fund the Perth Convention Bureau (PCB) to secure large, high-yield conference events and promote Perth and the State as a premium conference destination. Contrary to previous indications, funding for the PCB was increased in 2016, where Tourism WA committed an additional \$10.7 million over four years to the existing PCB budget, thus launching a new 4-year Business Events Marketing and Promotional Services Agreement between the two organisations.^{xi}
- Tourism WA is sponsoring 94 sporting, cultural, arts and culinary events across the State in 2016-17. This support is provided through three mechanisms: Major Events Funding, the Regional Events Program and the Regional Events Scheme. Tourism WA will continue to support the major events that include the Margaret River Gourmet Escape, The Margaret River Pro surfing competition, The Hopman Cup and the World Super 6 Perth international golf tournament which all provide significant media coverage for the State and result in greater visitation.

Infrastructure

- The strategy to optimise visitation through the Perth Stadium has seen a number of major events having already been scheduled for when the 60,000 seat stadium opens, thereby generating hundreds of jobs for cooks, hospitality workers, cleaners, security and operations workers. The major events planned for the Perth Stadium include the likely opening by singer Ed Sheeran, a Bledisloe Cup rugby union match (2019), Chelsea Football Club vs. Perth Glory soccer match (2018) and a Rugby League State of Origin match (2019). It is anticipated that at least 15,000 visitors from outside WA will travel to WA for the Chelsea football match.
- The Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre (PCEC) attracts approximately 900,000 visitors each year to approximately 600 conferences and events.^{xii}
- LNG 18, the largest event of its kind to be held in Australia, was the State's major business event of 2016, bringing 6,000 delegates from over 70 countries to Perth. The estimated DDE for LNG 18 was \$15.784 million in DDE. It was held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre (PCEC) which was required to construct a temporary marquee in the carpark to accommodate the volume of attendees.
- Since opening in 2012, approximately 2 million people have visited the Perth Arena which has hosted nearly 180 public events. Attendance at the Hopman Cup 2017 set a new record of 13,917 fans for a single match and over 103,000 in total attending tournament matches with an additional 6,000 fans

attending Roger Federer's open training session^{xiii}.

Risk Management and Mitigation

- After a number of global incidents, there is a rising threat to public safety and security at large-scale events in WA from terrorism. Industry stakeholders indicate that the terrorism phenomenon has already had a notable effect on several recent major events in Perth and will contribute to escalated costs and safety concerns. Going forward, the trend is unknown and unpredictable, but in addition to standard risk management issues including planning, marketing and delivery of events, the industry needs to be able to address the growing area of safety and security concerns.

Workforce challenges and issues:

- Challenges for employment opportunities exist due to the cyclical, short-term nature of events. Since employment in this sector comprises mostly of contingent workers on a contract for a fixed period or specific project, there is a lack of stable ongoing work for many people within this sector. Similarly, most students are restricted from undertaking the Certificate III in Events through a traineeship as many employers cannot provide ongoing work for the training contract's 12 month duration. To address this issue, FutureNow will investigate the opportunity that a Group Training methodology could present.
- FutureNow's Events Industry Advisory Group (IAG) report that there is an ongoing shortage of Professional Conference Organisers, due to a lack of awareness of this career pathway and events students favouring other streams such as functions (weddings and banquets) or community events.
- FutureNow's Events IAG maintain that volunteer management is crucial to the ongoing success of the sector, but report a number of issues related to volunteering. According to the Events IAG, there are instances of volunteer mistreatment where they are given limited or unsuitable training, leading to many volunteers leaving the sector and jeopardising best-practice organisations' ability in being able to access volunteers.

Additionally, while volunteering can provide graduates with the necessary on-the-job skills and gives them the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment and work ethic, there is an issue in that many graduates' possess unrealistic expectations of moving expeditiously into senior roles and are unwilling to volunteer or perform menial (although essential) tasks.

- Due to the sporadic nature of events and the large volume of freelancers, there is a lack of career progression and little support for event workers to progress towards leadership roles in the events sector. In order to grow leadership skills in the Australian events industry, Tourism Australia and Meetings & Events Australia have launched a national mentoring program, giving mentees the opportunity to connect with an experienced industry representative to discuss their career.^{xiv}
- Meetings & Events Australia also coordinates an Accreditation Program for Accredited Meeting Managers (AMM) and Accredited In-House Meeting Managers (AIMM)^{xv}.
- Large-scale events which bring large groups of people together can carry the threat of unforeseen incidents, and the skills to avoid, mitigate and address a crisis are crucial to ensure public safety. The Events qualifications in the SIT Training Package will be reviewed in year 1 of the Tourism, Travel and Hospitality IRC Training Product Review Plan 2016-17 to 2019-2020 to address this skill requirement.

Current Training Council areas of focus:

- Participate in the review of Events qualifications in the SIT Training Package 4-year work plan to include more comprehensive risk management units as well as units dedicated to business events.
- Exploration of Group Training option for the Events industry.

Attachments:

- Tourism Council WA, [The Western Australian Tourism Work Atlas](#)
- Perth Convention Bureau, [Annual Report 2016](#)

ⁱ Spice News, *New event freelancer platform set to launch*, 30/01/2017

ⁱⁱ IBISWorld Industry Report N7299 Event Promotion and Management Services in Australia, January 2017.

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.pertharena.com.au/About_Perth_Arena.aspx, accessed 24/02/2017

^{iv} Tourism Council WA, *The Western Australian Tourism Work Atlas*, accessed 04/11/2016

^v IBISWorld Industry Report N7299 Event Promotion and Management Services in Australia, January 2017.

^{vi} DTWD, Cognos, TRS Data Cube, accessed 30/01/2017

^{vii} Perth Convention Bureau, *Annual Report 2016*, accessed 10/02/2017

^{viii} Perth Convention Bureau, *Annual Report 2016*, accessed 10/02/2017

^{ix} Perth Convention Bureau, *Annual Report 2016*, accessed 10/02/2017

-
- ^x Tourism WA Industry Briefing 2016-17, June 2016
^{xi} Tourism WA Industry Briefing 2016-17, June 2016
^{xii} Tourism Council WA, The Western Australian Tourism Work Atlas, accessed 04/11/2016
^{xiii} http://www.pertharena.com.au/About_Perth_Arena.aspx, accessed 24/02/2017
^{xiv} Tourism Australia, *Essentials* newsletter, 22/02/2017