

FutureNow.

Event Industry Snapshot

FutureNow is an independent body that provides industry informed advice to influence skills development strategies across the Creative, Leisure and Technologies sectors. Our work assists Western Australia to be prepared with the new order skills required by the evolving economy and our changing society.

The Events Industry represent a diverse range of business, community and social gatherings such as trade and consumer exhibitions, festivals, concerts, charity races and private weddings and celebrations. Events are a driver for visitor engagement and give people a time-specific reason to visit an area and are important way of supporting local businesses and the economy.

The events sector labour market, like many others across the economy, has been significantly affected by the current labour shortages.

The sector's current challenges

Event Costs

Industry report that costs for running events have significantly increased. The cost-per-delegate for meetings and events was 25 per cent higher in 2022 compared to 2019, with another 7 per cent rise anticipated for 2023.

For meetings and events, the much lauded pent-up demand, coupled with a desire for companies to build company culture – supercharged after two years of lockdowns and remote working – and the uncertain economic outlook is thought to be driving price increases. Competition for event space, due to companies with downsized offices now requiring external meeting space and events postponed during COVID 19 being delivered in 2022/2023, may be driving price increases too.¹

Industry Reputation

The events industry along with tourism and hospitality has suffered huge occupational scaring as a result of COVID (event cancellations) and it will take some time for the positive perceptions about the industry to return. The numbers of students enrolling in event management courses are low. Stakeholders feel that the industry will have to embrace diversity in the workforce. Industry needs to consider how adaptable the industry is to a changing workforce, including attracting older people back into the workforce.²

Where is the sector now?

The sector has been busy with often, short lead time events and activations. In addition, there have been some larger events staged.

Sporting Events

In June the second State of Origin game was played at Perth Stadium for the first time since 2019 and brought around 11,000 interstate visitors.

In July the stadium hosted Perth's Festival of International Football, with Premier League clubs Manchester United taking on Aston Villa in one of the fixtures.

The inaugural United Cup, a new global mixed team tennis event was held at RAC Arena during December/January and marks the return of top-level professional tennis to Western Australia for the first time since the last Hopman Cup three years ago.³

The World Transplant Games will be held in Perth in April this year. Approximately 2000 participants including organ donor and transplant recipients from around the world will compete in the Games over seven days.⁴

World Indigenous Tourism Summit

The World Indigenous Tourism Summit, (originally scheduled for 2020 and postponed due to COVID 19) will be held in March 2023. The international forum co-hosted by the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC) helps to advance opportunities for First Nations people in the tourism sector.⁵

The Arts

Both Fringe and the Perth Festival are running full programs of events in January and February this year.

Government Recognition of Events

The City of Perth Council has approved a revised budget of \$3 million for the City of Perth's Major Events and Festivals Sponsorship Program for 2022/23.⁶

Regional Events

Eight organisations will share in more than \$360,000 from the state government to bring arts and cultural activities to festivals in regional and remote Western Australia for 2023. The Regional and Remote Festivals Fund makes up to \$50,000 available to eligible initiatives that increase arts and cultural activity, provide employment opportunities, and contribute to tourism growth in regional and remote WA.⁷

The Kimberley

The West Kimberley's premier cultural celebration, Shinju Matsuri - Festival of the Pearl, has secured State Government sponsorship until 2024. The festival showcases the Kimberley region's rich cultural diversity, unique pearling history, vibrant community and extraordinary natural landscapes.⁸

Great Southern

Taste Great Southern secured State Government funding for the next three years. The annual event, in May each year, celebrates the lifestyle, premium food and award-winning wine of WA's Great Southern region. More than 20 leading chefs from across the State participate in over 30 events that showcase the produce of the region.⁹

South West

The 2023 Cabin Fever Festival in Margaret River and the South-West region will be held in July, during the off-peak season. The 10-day food, wine and entertainment festival will host key events in Margaret River and Busselton, and further pop-up events spread across the region.¹⁰

Kalgoorlie

The 2022 Diggers & Dealers Mining Forum hosted a record number of attendees and presenters, with 2620 people registered for the three-day event. The removal of COVID 19 border restrictions allowed interstate and international delegates to return to the conference for the first time since the global pandemic began. Stakeholders report that the forum allowed delegates to build networks in person, one of the main attractions of the conference. Kalgoorlie overcame

their accommodation crisis, after regular accommodation of hotels and motels were fully booked, with a number of people in Kalgoorlie making their private houses available for short term rental.¹¹

More than financial benefits

Some event industry stakeholders argue that there is a need to re-think why Governments invest in events. There is a belief that it is time for governments to stop seeing events purely as part of “tourism and economic development” and start seeing them first and foremost as contributors to community wellbeing as research suggests that communities are stating that this what they value most.¹²

Event Industry Workforce

Industry report that there is a shortage of experienced event managers, particularly in the business events field and this occupation has been identified in the current West Australian Jobs, Education and Training (WAJET) survey.

Stakeholders report that the events industry is very short of technical staff such as audio visual operators. Stakeholders have stressed the importance of attracting students to the technical side of events, i.e., lighting, sound, production.

There is currently a lack of volunteers in the events industry. TAFE students are often offered work placement/intern programs, however most of them are working in paid positions in the industry so as a result they are not accepting volunteering roles.¹³

Long Term Succession Planning

Career Development

The event industry will be showcased as part of an annual program of in-school career information sessions which will support longer-term initiatives aimed at encouraging young people to consider careers in the sector thereby creating a sustainable pipeline of local skilled workers.

Year 9 Career Taster Program

The year 9 career taster program commenced in 2022, enabling students to discover potential careers in the event industry either via incursions to TAFE campuses and/or visits to event venues. The program supports students to become ‘career curious’ and extend their thinking through practical activities and meaningful experiences with the world of work.¹⁴

Career Promotion

A suite of occupational guides and case studies co-developed by Tourism WA and FutureNow continue to be used to present career pathways information to prospective learners interested in employment in the event industry. FutureNow has distributed this collateral through industry and at various career expos and presentations as well as through the West Australian Jobs and Skills Network.

Skills Training Programs

In November 2022, the Australian and Western Australian Governments signed a 12-month Skills Agreement to address the current skills shortage. The course list, based on last year's enrolments, is estimated to see 1,400 places allocated to hospitality, tourism and events sectors. The funding supports the new FREE IN 23 initiative, which is designed to reskill and upskill people for work and covers the 12 month course, Certificate III in Events which will be 100% course fee-free as of 1 January 2023.¹⁵

National SIT Training Package

In September 2022 upgrades to the Tourism, Travel, Hospitality and Events, Training Package were approved.¹⁶

Western Australian Jobs, Education and Training (WAJET) Survey

FutureNow is currently undertaking work on The Western Australian Jobs, Education and Training Survey (WAJET) Industry Advice Reports and this will inform the State Priority Occupation List (SPOL) for 2023. The occupation of Conference and Event Organiser (ANZSCO code 149311) will be surveyed for this report.

We would like to hear from you

FutureNow is continually seeking input from stakeholders in the Western Australian hospitality sector. If you are interested in providing further information about the workforce in this sector, please get in touch with the Industry Development Manager:

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