



ADELAIDE CONVENTION CENTRE

CASE STUDY: 68TH INTERNATIONAL ASTRONAUTICAL CONGRESS

68TH IAC
ADELAIDE 2017



FAST FACTS

Name: 68th International Astronautical Congress

Type: Conference / Exhibition

Date: 25 – 29 September, 2017

Host organisation: Space Industry Association of Australia

Economic benefit to South Australia: \$24 million

EVENT STATISTICS

- IAC 2017 occupied every square metre of the Adelaide Convention Centre's 20,000sqm
- Beyond the conference program, IAC 2017 featured a 6,000sqm custom exhibition with 67 international exhibitors
- 3,500+ attendance at public exhibition
- 700+ school program attendees
- 300+ volunteers
- 12,000+ hours worked by ACC staff across the event week



8
Plenary
Sessions



3
Highlight
Lectures



2
Breaking
News



200
Technical
Sessions

DELEGATES

- 4,470 total registered delegates from 71 nations



- High participation by delegates from the United States, Germany, China, Japan, France and Italy, along with strong support from Australia
- 50 percent of delegates registered in the last month prior to the congress opening

IAC 2017 ROCKETS ADELAIDE INTO THE LARGE EVENTS STRATOSPHERE

Held in September 2017, the 68th International Astronautical Congress was the first major event to be held in the newly expanded Adelaide Convention Centre.

Adelaide rocketed into the large events stratosphere in September 2017 hosting its biggest ever business event, the 68th International Astronautical Congress (IAC). The world's largest gathering of space professionals, 4,470 delegates from 71 nations, joined by 700 students, 300 volunteers and several thousand members of the public, made the event one of the largest in IAC history. Hosted at the newly expanded Adelaide Convention Centre (ACC), the 2017 congress represented the event's first return to Australia in almost two decades following IAC Melbourne in 1998.

THE BIDDING PROCESS

A collaborative effort between the Space Industry Association of Australia, the Adelaide Convention Bureau and Adelaide Convention Centre, IAC 2017 was strategically timed to coincide with the completion of the ACC's redevelopment, and took place just weeks after the newly expanded Centre's official opening. The team first started researching the event in 2008, eventually winning the bid put forward in 2014 to host the 2017 event.

From the outset, key client queries focused on:

1. Did the Adelaide Convention Centre and city have the infrastructure to support such a large, complex event?
2. Would delegates travel from North America and Europe to attend?

Any initial concerns linked to the first question were quelled by the Centre's expansion, which was completed on time. The city's growing flight network and new hotel developments were also important in helping accommodate high delegate numbers.

As for the second question, final attendance of 4,470 registered delegates well-exceeded the initial estimate of 3,000, proving the distance to Australia for those travelling from the Northern Hemisphere was not viewed as a barrier.

WHY ADELAIDE?

From the ACC's perspective, IAC 2017 was a fitting event for its expanded centre as the venue and city are very much focused on innovation and future possibilities.

From the client / delegate perspective, the following factors proved attractive in helping drive attendance:

- Adelaide's great accessibility; the city is connected to more than 300 destinations around the world via one-stop connections;
- Adelaide is a compact city; perfect for walking conferences, once delegates arrived there was little need for transportation;
- Adelaide has strong destination appeal; home to award-winning restaurants and fabulous wineries, the city is just a stone's throw from world-class tourism regions, ideal for pre- and post-conference touring; and,
- Adelaide enjoys a reputation as a safe destination.



A MILESTONE EVENT

As the first major event held in the newly expanded ACC, IAC 2017 was always going to be a great test to the venue and its team. A milestone event on many levels, it represented the first time the entire complex had been used at one time, and the first full test of its new Plenary Hall. With a complex program comprising eight plenary sessions, three highlight lectures, two breaking news and 200 technical sessions, the event took up every square metre of the Centre's 20,000sqm. At any one time, there was often 20 technical sessions running in parallel.

Overall, the event was a great showcase of the Centre's highly flexible floor plan, including its new rotating seating drums which were key to enabling quick turnarounds.

Beyond the conference program, IAC 2017 featured a 6,000sqm exhibition showcasing 67 exhibitors from 16 countries. Of this count, 51 had custom stands (the largest being 218sqm in size), leading to a hectic build. The exhibition involved significant 'off menu' catering to ensure each stand had its own national flavour. This required numerous special sourcing efforts by the Centre's procurement team, which were appreciated by the exhibitors.





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CLIENT COMMENTS

“The Adelaide Convention Centre (ACC) has demonstrated to be an outstanding venue, having logistics perfectly sorted. They put their clients’ need at the uttermost importance. The city of Adelaide itself is a perfect location for congresses with easily reachable locations, beautiful sceneries, friendly people and fantastic food. This year’s IAC has been a tremendous success having reached 5,000 attendees and the ACC has proven perfectly capable of facing all sorts of requests from the IAF Community.”

Jean-Yves Le Gall
President, International Astronautical Federation

“Adelaide was a splendid host city for IAC 2017. The city’s collaborative approach from the City Council, Library and Museum through to the Convention Centre and Convention Bureau was simply exemplary. Our delegate numbers by far exceeded our expectations proving that delegates will travel from long distances if the content is right and for the amazing experiences that Australia offers. This conference set the benchmark for IAC events and Adelaide, Australia should be justifiably proud of the legacies it leaves.”

Brett Biddington
CEO, IAC 2017

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OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

THE BIDDING PROCESS

Initial challenges centred on selling a venue that wasn't yet complete – a crucial step in convincing organisers that the ACC would offer adequate space to accommodate the event. As part of this reassurance it was critical that the construction remained on schedule – there could be no delays. The Congress organisers took full advantage of the East Building's flexibility and ease of re-configuration to make optimal use of the spaces available. If rooms had been of set sizes, the congress would have required a venue almost twice the size of the ACC. Regular communication and site inspections with the client helped address any concerns, and the installation of hinged seating, operable walls and rotating drums in the main Plenary Hall ensured a highly adaptive and transformative facility.



PRE-PLANNING

Given the size and complexity of the event, ACC event planning commenced in 2012. The long lead time posed a challenge in that it required the team to organise an event in a space that did not yet exist. This coupled with a fluid, ever-changing program, led to many long hours logged by the ACC team. Thankfully, the completion of the build went to schedule, allowing three weeks of testing and for the team to familiarise themselves with the new venue prior to the event start.

In many respects, the opening of the Centre's East Building just weeks prior to IAC 2017 acted as a dry run for critical aspects of the congress' own opening ceremony, including testing of technology, sound and logistics. Both events featured holograms as part of their presentations, as well as performances by the Adelaide Youth Orchestra. Organisers described the dry run as a "very smart risk reduction activity."

From a venue perspective, one of the greatest challenges during the pre-planning phase came from the need to manage multiple stakeholder groups. While the contract was with the local organising committee, the main client was the International Astronautical Federation in Paris. Each had their own set of priorities and expectations, and the Centre's staff had to work collaboratively with both to ensure each achieved their goals.



EVENT WEEK

Detailed planning and a close on-the-ground partnership with the local organising committee ensured the event ran smoothly. As with any event, there were a number of challenges that arose during the week which were quickly handled by the ACC team.

The greatest 'event week' challenges were simply managing the large number and scale of activities that took place simultaneously. While this made for a very busy week for the venue staff, positive feedback from organisers and delegates showed that the ACC came through with flying colours. A good example is offered by the opening cocktail reception (3,500 pax) in the Central Building, which was held concurrently with the State Dinner (150 pax) in the neighbouring East Building. It was a case of all hands on deck to ensure each was appropriately staffed, critical to upholding ACC's high level of service. Overall, the ACC team accrued in excess of 12,000+ labour hours during the week, with many, many thousands of additional hours logged during the pre-planning phase.

Security considerations were also key, particularly surrounding Elon Musk's closed keynote presentation. While Musk had his own security detail, the Centre's team worked closely with them and SAPOL to avoid a repeat of the 2016 congress in Mexico where public swarmed the venue.

The approach saw the building emptied with an airport-style security line to check delegate credentials upon re-entry.

Technology was another key component of the event. On opening day there were some issues identified with WiFi speed and connectivity. The ACC team undertook a full scan of competing frequencies to identify the cause of the issue - a couple of exhibitors had brought in their own wireless transmitters, creating interference with ACC's distribution. The ACC team worked into the late hours of the night to remedy the interruption, with normal service (high-speed, 12,000+ WiFi connections) resuming the next morning.

The event also provided the opportunity for the ACC to demonstrate its live-streaming capabilities. Key events, such as the opening ceremony and Elon Musk's closing presentation, which drew a full plenary, were streamed to overflow rooms to accommodate large crowds.



SPECIAL FEATURES

The ACC's commitment to showcasing South Australia was illustrated via the terrific range of local produce served up at the opening cocktail party. Live cooking stations, including oyster shucking and a giant paella pan, added theatrics to make the reception all the more memorable.

In keeping with the Centre's sustainability efforts, any unused food from the public catering stand was donated to Oz Harvest.

South Australian Produce Snapshot Opening Cocktail Party



615 dozen
Smoky Bay oysters



3,500 Spencer Gulf
prawns



100 dozen bottles of
local South Australian
wine



15 kegs of local
South Australian
beer



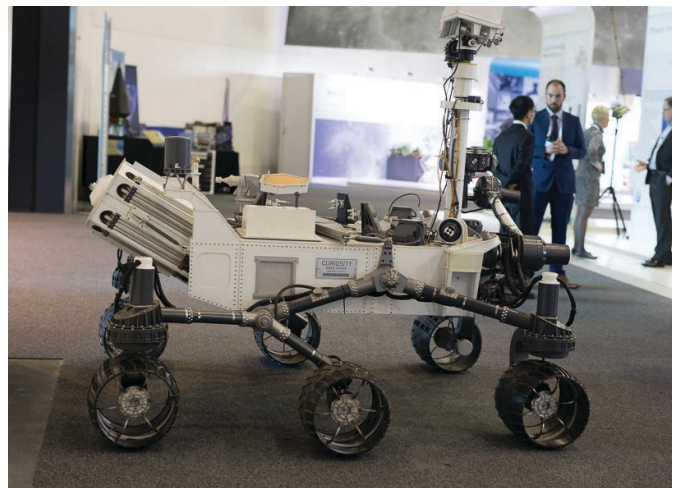
132 litres of Riverland
orange juice

DESTINATION & COMMUNITY

IAC was a fantastic illustration of the 'Team Adelaide' approach for which the city is known. Led by the Adelaide Convention Bureau, this strong, city-wide collaboration saw the whole local community immersed in the event to create memorable, lasting impressions.

From the moment guests arrived they were greeted with welcome signage at the airport, with additional street banners displayed throughout the CBD, along with "takeover" branding at the ACC. Space-themed exhibitions and lectures were held at the State Library and Museum for public engagement, with visitation at each venue up 50 percent on the week prior. The Woomera retrospective at the Library was a particular highlight, attracting 60,000+ visitors during its run.

The event had a very strong focus on educating the next generation – the future of the industry. Beyond programs at the Museum and the Library, several astronauts visited select schools across the week, and more than 700 local primary school students participated in a carefully designed educational experience at the ACC which involved coding a small robot.



RESULTS

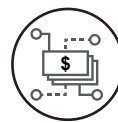
With high praise from organisers and delegates alike, IAC 2017 was not only a 'win' for the Centre, but the city at large, proving that Adelaide now has the capacity and expertise to host complex, large-scale events.

From a venue perspective, the event provided opportunity to demonstrate the full capabilities and functionality of the newly expanded ACC. As the first major conference following the Centre's nine-year redevelopment, it was extremely rewarding for ACC management to see the building work as it was intended.

From a client perspective, Michael Davis, chair of the Space Industry Association of Australia, declared the event had been universally judged as one of the most successful ever. The comments were echoed by Brett Biddington, CEO, IAC 2017, who said that the organisers had received unqualified praise from delegates on everything from the opening ceremony to the venue's technology and its first rate food and beverage.

IAC 2017's success can be further measured by its numerous lasting legacies. The highlight of the week was undoubtedly the Federal Government's announcement at the opening ceremony that it plans to establish a national space agency. This news was met with a standing ovation. In addition, numerous MOUs were signed throughout the week that represent major development opportunities for companies based in South Australia.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ECONOMIC BENEFIT SNAPSHOT



\$24 million in economic benefit



32,000 hotel bed nights



\$1.2 million+ spent on local tours

