

EVENT NAME: 5th World Congress of Paediatric Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery (PCCS 2009)

DATE: 21-26 June 2009

TOTAL ATTENDANCE: 2,290 registrants from 81 countries

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE ORGANISER:

Sarah Markey-Hamm, National Manager, ICMS Pty Ltd

ORGANISING COMMITTEE:

CONFERENCE CHAIR: Professor Jim Wilkinson

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN: Professor Dan Penny & Associate Professor David Winlaw

OBJECTIVE OF CONFERENCE:

The Congress was aimed at health professional involved in research and in the care of children with heart disease and of patients with congenital heart disease from fetus to childhood.

EXHIBITOR NUMBERS AND KEY SPONSORS:

Trade exhibition with 37 exhibitors with the major congress sponsors being Actelion, AGA Medical Corporation, Siemens, Abbott, Gore, Edwards Lifesciences and Medtronic.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM:

The congress has seven sub-speciality meeting partners including Paediatric Interventional Cardiac Symposium, World Society for Paediatric and Congenital Heart Surgery, The Paediatric & Congenital Electrophysiology Society, Congenital Cardiac Anaesthesia Society, International Society for Adult Congenital Heart Disease, The Paediatric Cardiac Intensive Care Society and Pedirhythm.

1,432 abstract submissions, 37 exhibitors, 412 invited oral presentations, 160 oral abstracts and 1,140 posters (shown in both poster presentation and digital formats).

DESTINATION SELECTION:

Cairns was chosen for a number of reasons. The natural environment, home to the world heritage attractions of the Great Barrier Reef, the ancient wet tropics rainforests combined with the idyllic tropical winter climate in the southern hemisphere.

PCCS Conference Chair, Professor Jim Wilkinson said as a convention city, Cairns ticked all the boxes. A highly capable convention centre, excellent accommodation in walking distance to the venue, international standard convention services, such as trade exhibition suppliers, audio visual and communications expertise, and a people that truly cared about the success of our event.

"Everyone in the city worked as a team and all knew (and cared) that there were more than 2,000 medical specialists in town, we could have not been happier with the result.!" quoted Professor Wilkinson.

CHALLENGES & TRIUMPHS:

One of the greatest challenges and achievements was bringing the seven sub-specialities together as one entity. It took years of discussion to bring all sections under the one banner at the World Congress.

The results confirmed the event's triumph with 2,290 registrants from 81 countries, 1,432 abstract submissions, 37 exhibitors, 412 invited oral presentations, 160 oral abstracts and 1,140 posters.

PCCS 2009 Scientific Committee Co-Chair Professor Dan Penny stated that holding the 5th World Congress in Australia, it not only allowed them to give the event an Asia Pacific flavour, they could also focus on the issues that had particular significance to this region such as Rheumatic heart disease. It is extremely rare in Europe or North America, but common in this region and these issues would have never been tabled if not held in Asia.

Another highlight was the new ideas and solutions in the areas of Risk Management. The program presented high profile speakers such as General Molan who lead the Australian Army Iraq campaign, Lew Short, from the Country Fire Authority on lessons learnt from the devastation of Australia's Victorian Bushfires and Qantas Airways representative, Geoff Sartori from an airline risk perspective.

"Risk management is such an important issue in today's society and to hear speakers outside our realm of expertise was inspiring, educational and a topic that every delegate from every nation could learn from," Penny added.

However, two unexpected challenges occurred quite late in the conference planning, one being the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and the latter the SWINE flu outbreak worldwide.

Penny said it was difficult to plan for the GFC, and ultimately did not greatly affect attendance, some medical institutions restricted the amount of participants from the one speciality.

"The SWINE flu was an added challenge, as several universities were insisting that participants take an additional week leave in forced isolation on their return. As this world congress is held every four years, the majority of our delegates continued with their travel plans. It is these last minute challenges that you cannot plan for and we believe there should be flexibility in conference insurance cover to secure against situations such as these," stated Penny.

THE ICMS EXPERIENCE

Professor Wilkinson said "ICMS have been with us every step of the way. The success of PCCS2009 would have been completely impossible without the ongoing support of Sarah Markey-Hamm and her team over the past eight years."

"Being a group of medical professionals, our experience was very limited in knowing 'what it takes' to host a successful World Congress of this size. We were in completely new territory and feeling seriously vulnerable, so it became quickly obvious that we needed professional direction and support of a conference manager with expertise in holding international congresses similar to ours.

"ICMS opened so many doors. Quite frankly, so many things would have not happened without the constant guidance and commitment from ICMS' expert team," quoted Wilkinson.

CAIRNS CONVENTION CENTRE EXPERIENCE:

The PCCS conference program was literally seven international speciality meetings being held over two days. The sub-speciality groups came together for the final days to discuss common topics and best treatment outcomes from their collective perspectives.

It was one of the largest conventions ever seen at the award-winning Cairns Convention Centre and the Sebel Cairns Hotel worked in parallel to offer a seamless agenda.

ICMS National Manager, Ms Sarah Markey-Hamm said, "the Cairns Convention Centre is one of my top three venues in the world. It is the 'one team' attitude that continues to impress me. From the lead up organisation, to the time we pack our last box, their level of service is impeccable".

"There were many overnight room set-up changes and complete audio-visual re-builds. Whilst this is a normal occurrence with world congresses of this size, the Centre's team have a genuine dedication to providing service excellence," added Ms Markey-Hamm.

All audio visual and technology was handled by the Centre's production team, as well as coordination of 'live-case' broadcast feeds to Saudi Arabia, Kuala Lumpur, Japan, Berlin and Melbourne.

Feeding over 2,200 delegates at one time is often daunting, however the Centre's catering team offered innovation and varied menus to suit the multitude of dietary requirements and minimise any lengthy delays.

"The Cairns Convention Centre team were absolutely spectacular, we could not praise the level of service, assistance and professionalism enough!" said Conference Chair, Professor Jim Wilkinson

LOCATION- ACCOMMODATION- CONVENTION INFRASTRUCTURE:

This is the 13th event that ICMS has held in Cairns and the relationships developed over this time really shone through. With over 2,200 delegates attending from 81 countries it was essential to provide a wide range of accommodation options. More than 4,400 room nights were sourced by ICMS using 12 properties another 4,000 rooms were booked direct.

EVENT PROGRAM ACTIVITIES:

ICMS engaged Victor Goldsztein, Victor Goldsztein Event Management (VGEM) to provide the 'WOW' factor and ensure the smooth running of the Opening Ceremony, Welcome Reception & Faculty Dinner, two delegate musical performances as well as the casual networking event at Rainforestation and associated coach transfers.

"Our role was to ensure smooth running of all events and most importantly to add a level of sophistication and professionalism whilst maintaining the relaxed casual flavour," said Victor Goldsztein.

Entertainment for the Opening Ceremony were sourced locally with a 'Welcome to Country' performance by the Djajengi Buai Aboriginal Troupe, a traditional Maori haka from the Te Tirairaka Performance Troupe and the Cairns Children's Choir.

The conference dinner was a casual 'Australiana' affair at Rainforestation complete with koalas, kangaroos, crocodiles, the chance to play a didgeridoo and ride in a WWII Army Duck.

"The uptake of the conference dinner Rainforestation was exceptional with 720 participants choosing to attend, we only anticipated 500. Additional coach transfers were promptly organised and Rainforestation were extremely flexible to cater for the increased numbers. We just love Cairns, nothing is ever too much trouble and the operators make it happen," Markey-Hamm

remarked

PRE & POST CONFERENCE TOURS:

ICMS's sister company, ICMS Travel organised a wide range of pre & post touring options for all attendees to choose from before or after their conference stay through their own dedicated website. [PCCS2009 touring options](#). More than 195 accompanying partners attended the event and a dedicated tour desk was set up at the Cairns Convention Centre for all attendees to book and confirm their tours throughout the congress.

The weather was stunning throughout the event which added to interest levels of all attendees eager to experience some of the World Heritage wonders on offer in Cairns, such as the Great Barrier Reef and Ancient Tropical Rainforests.

ICMS QUOTES:

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Ms Sarah Markey-Hamm, ICMS National Manager

CLIENT QUOTES:

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DELEGATE QUOTES:

"Considering the current economical climate and impact of the GFC worldwide, I am certainly surprised at how well has been attended. PCCS is the peak congress in your industry and is a must attend – 2009 was an excellent program. I have never been to Australia, but now I know it is not that far away and a sneak preview on what the country has to offer, I will be back!"

Dr Peter Karapwich, The Children's Hospital of Michigan, USA

"The highlight for me is meeting up with old friends and making new ones. That is one of the benefits with 7 specialities joining together. The PICS live broadcast links are always very educational. Networking and education that is what this congress is all about. It is my first time to Australia, and look forward to seeing the Great Barrier Reef during our visit,"

Professor Massod Sadiq, Children's Hospital and Punjab Institute of Cardiology, Pakistan

DELEGATE QUOTES:

"We showed the world that with a captive population, Australian specialists can do things that cannot be done overseas. I was very happy with the destination, very happy with the program and believe integrating all sub-specialities into one combined meeting produced effective results "

Associate Professor Andrew Davis, Royal Childrens' Hospital, Melbourne

SUPPLIERS QUOTES:

"The ICMS team are one of my favourite clients to work with. They understand their clients, they know what they want, and most of all – they will listen to our recommendations and suggestions to make the best event whatever the budget,"

Victor Goldsztein, VGEM - Victor Goldsztein Event Management

"AGA Medical Corporation are market leaders worldwide. Our role is to support our current clients and be visible in the market place. Being an exhibitor at PCCS2009 is an essential element to maintain our international profile of our company. Cairns provided relaxed social networking opportunities for both exhibitors and delegates alike. As an exhibitor, the communication in the lead up to the event with ICMS has been a positive experience,"

Wayne Jorgensen, AGA Medical Corporation

PHOTOGRAPHY: Received from Brad Newton

INTERVIEW BY: Rochelle Uechtritz, Convention Marketing Thu 25 June 2009

APPROVAL: Sarah Markey-Hamm