

CONTRACT RESEARCH:

Beyond Tourism Benefits

Partners

Business Events Sydney (BESydney)



Problem

It is widely known that NSW is a popular business events destination. In 2011 alone, Business Events Sydney (BESydney) secured 67 events, worth an estimated \$186.5m in economic impact. However, aside from the dollar spend impact from the thousands of delegates who visit our shores, little research had been done on the longer term impacts left on the host community. BESydney had some anecdotal evidence, but needed more quantifiable data to validate the sector. They enlisted researchers from the UTS Management Discipline Group (MDG) to help them uncover the full benefits and legacies of hosting an international event in Sydney.

Solution

Dr Carmel Foley, Dr Deborah Edwards and Dr Katie Schlenker, experts in the fields of sustainable tourism, urban precinct management, event evaluation and tourist behaviour, commissioned a research project considered a world-first in its approach and methodology.

They began with an extensive qualitative study to understand the scope of these benefits by exploring five major international congresses held in Sydney between 2009 and 2011. The study included analysis of conference websites, reports and evaluations, as well as in-depth interviews with organisers, sponsors, delegates and exhibitors.

Once the qualitative parameters were set, the research team followed up with a quantitative study to measure the extent to which these benefits were occurring.

The research findings quantified and substantiated what BESydney knew anecdotally, and more. The report, while identifying a diverse range of benefits and outcomes for the host community, revealed a distinct set of five legacies: Intrinsic, Practice, Social, Economic and Attitudinal. This report explored the benefits of international events hosted in NSW, and helped define their long- and short-term values.

The findings of the "[Beyond Tourism Benefits: Measuring the social legacy of business events](#)" research has assisted BESydney to build a stronger case for the numerous social, innovation and

knowledge benefits of hosting conferences and conventions. The results provide a new perspective on the value of this industry, and have been used by BESydney to:

- rewrite business collateral and empower staff with new industry knowledge
- identify new bid leaders for conferences
- educate existing clients for repeat business
- substantiate the value of these ventures across the entire business events sector
- foster genuine engagement with the NSW Government
- support the business case for Sydney's new international convention, exhibition and entertainment precinct development.

Business Events Sydney CEO and President of the Australian Association of Convention Bureaux Lyn Lewis-Smith was pleased to partner with UTS on this pioneer research project.

“At BESydney, we’ve long recognised that business events are a key driver of our knowledge economy. The UTS research has given us essential empirical data to support this view and champion the value of our industry.

“The Beyond Tourism Benefits research has fundamentally changed our engagement with the NSW Government and redefined how business events are valued and measured globally.

“The results gave us a solid, evidence-based platform for meaningful discussions with government and industry about the true value of business events. We are now able to prove that, when approached as part of an aligned economic development strategy, business events can help to achieve our government’s objectives and contribute to the overall health of the state and country.

“We’ve achieved a level of government engagement that is leading the way in our industry. In NSW, business events now have a vital place in discussions about industry and investment, education and innovation, and fuelling productivity across both our visitor and knowledge economies.”

“BESydney was the only Australian bureau to provide a submission to our federal government’s *Australia in the Asian Century* whitepaper, again demonstrating the value of business events to our nation.

About the UTS Research Group

The Management Discipline Group, housed within the UTS Business School, is committed to pursuing excellence and innovative methods in its research and activities. Their research expertise spans international and local governance, human resource management, organisational analysis and design, e-business and innovation, leisure and event planning, management and impacts and tourist behaviour.