

# AUSTRALIAN PAIN SOCIETY CONFERENCE CASE STUDY



Keynote presentation at APS 2015.



APS 2015 plenary session.

**NAME:** 2015 AUSTRALIAN PAIN SOCIETY 35TH ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING  
**TYPE:** CONFERENCE  
**WHEN:** MARCH 15-18, 2015  
**MANAGED BY:** DC CONFERENCES PTY LTD  
**PAX:** 810  
**VENUE:** BRISBANE CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE  
**BUDGET:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**ECONOMIC IMPACT:** \$1.8 MILLION

The only conference in Australia offering multidisciplinary insights into the complex nature of pain management from a variety of medical, nursing and allied health perspectives. Delegates include pain management physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, neurologists, psychologists, pharmacologists and many other health care professionals.

**Number of Plenary Sessions:** seven

**Number of Workshops:** four pre-conference workshops

**Topical Concurrent Sessions:** 36 streamed sessions, presented in three separate time slots

**Number of Trade:** 31 companies with booths ranging in size from nine to 36 sqm

**Number of Posters:** 70

**Speakers:** 110

International renowned guest speakers covered topics from spinal cord stimulation to cannabinoids in clinical pain management. APS 2015 was attended by more than 800 delegates including, pre-conference workshop attendees, presenters, exhibitors and trade representatives.

The four-day program included four pre-conference workshops, plenary and topical concurrent sessions, seven sponsored sessions, free paper sessions and rapid communications, poster sessions, as well as the APS AGM. The Neuromodulation Society of Australia and New Zealand 10th ASM was also held in conjunction with the Australian Pain Society Conference.

## Key features:

**Conference App** A new native app was introduced for the first time this year which eliminated the need for a conference handbook. The app was a lot more complex than in previous years and was able to support all of the information normally included in a handbook. There were a number of other advantages to using this app; it could send push notifications out to all delegates – reminding them of sessions, bus times for the gala dinner, etc.

**Expansion of Interactive Q&A** After successfully including a Q&A session in one plenary in 2014, the 2015 program included Q&A in three of its plenaries. A dedicated mobile number was provided and displayed on the screens. Delegates texted their questions or comments through a moderator to the chair. For the first time, questions were also taken through Twitter using the #aps2015. The stage was set with armchairs and the speakers were each given a hand held microphone, which helped foster a relaxed, conversational vibe. The session received positive feedback; delegates appreciated the opportunity to interact with the international speakers.

**Meet the speakers breakfast session** New to the program in 2015, a Meet the Speakers

breakfast session was offered to junior researchers, PhD students and post doctorate fellows. The aim of this session was to give younger scientists and clinicians an opportunity to ascertain career advice and guidance from the APS 2015 international plenary speakers.

**E – Posters** Electronic Posters were also introduced for the first time in 2015 as an addition to hard copy poster displays. The posters were also accessible through the conference app via a website which was set up through Paperless Events.

## Destination and venues:

Brisbane's turn to host the 2015 Australian Pain Society Conference was well overdue as the last time the conference was held in Brisbane was in 1994. Once the destination was decided the obvious choice of venue was the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre due to the conference's size and requirements.

The program included several networking opportunities; a welcome reception, held at the BCEC, and a gala dinner, held at the Brisbane City Hall. On Monday evening, plenary speakers and key sponsors were hosted at the President's Reception at Rydges Pool Deck.

To celebrate the launch of a book documenting the history of the Australian Pain Society's first 35 years, the BCEC baked a 16.5 kilogram chocolate mud cake with the icing on the cake exactly reproducing the front cover of the book. The cake was cut by the author of the book, Dr Judith Godden and the then President of the Australian Pain Society, Dr Malcolm Hogg.

## Challenges:

**Conference App** Encouraging some delegates to adopt to the use of a conference app.

## Overcoming challenges:

Delegates were sent links to the app two weeks prior to the APS conference. The organisers also ran a short 'how to use the app' video presentation during one of the plenaries for anyone having trouble using the technology. The key was to also have staff on hand to personally show delegates how to use the app if they required more assistance. Overall delegates welcomed the change, which saved 48,600 A4 sheets of paper. In the post conference appraisal 86 per cent of delegates who responded supported the introduction of the app.

## Giving back:

While managing the Australian Pain Society ASM, the DC Conference (DCC) on-site team took on the Walk In Her Shoes Challenge from March 16 to 22 - walking to support women and girls

## A NEW NATIVE APP WAS INTRODUCED FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR...

who have to travel long distances every day to access life's essentials: water, food and healthcare.

The money raised gives these women and girls the opportunity to get an education and earn an income. DCC set a goal of \$1000 and ended up raising \$1,634. The on-site team walked 300 kilometres during the week.

## Client's comments:

The executive of the Australian Pain Society was thrilled by the success of its 2015 Annual Scientific Meeting in Brisbane. Credit goes to our conference organiser, DCC, who in liaison with our Scientific Program Committee produced an innovative program with high impact. New features have been introduced and refined, including an interactive program app, "meet the speakers" breakfasts for young researchers, and question and answer sessions with audience plenary participation.

-Malcolm Hogg, President, Australian Pain Society.

DCC has more than 25 years of experience providing international best practice conference management services to associations and corporate clients specialising in medical and scientific meetings. **m**