

CASE STUDY

**BRISBANE CONVENTION
& EXHIBITION CENTRE**



WORLD OF DRONES & ROBOTICS CONGRESS (WoDaRC)

BRISBANE CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE (BCEC)

12-13 NOVEMBER, 2020

EVENT SNAPSHOT



Global virtual
audience of 425



450 delegates
on site



Over 19 virtual
exhibitors

OUR CITY, YOUR CANVAS.

BRISBANE'S HOME-GROWN DRONES & ROBOTICS CONGRESS ADAPTS AND EXPANDS AMID A COVID ENVIRONMENT



"It exceeded all expectations. 450 delegates on site, a further 425 virtual delegates from 20 countries, from Arizona to Zimbabwe, along with 19 virtual exhibitors from the UK delivering the strongest international engagement ever in the history of the event."

Carillon's Ashley Gordon.

OVERVIEW

COVID-19 caused the cancellation and postponement of nearly all major conferences in 2020, but against that backdrop, the largest drone congress in the Asia-Pacific region adapted to a combined virtual and face-to-face event, bringing together global leaders in the drone and robotic space.

Defying all odds, what was previously the World of Drones Congress expanded in 2020 to include robotics along with drones and autonomous systems under the one conference banner with record results.

The Congress featured 76 expert Australian and international speakers and an accompanying exhibition with displays by drone and robotic manufacturers and developers, and organisations including the Australian Army and the Civil Aviation Authority.

The growth of the World of Drones & Robotics Congress acknowledges the global uptake of drones and their increasing role in our lives.

The Congress Program also reflected the times. The opening session 'Pandemics, Emergencies and Disasters: deployment of drones and robots to save lives,' set the tone of the Congress.

According to Ashley Gordon from Carillon Conference Management, another determining factor in the event's success was the delegates' unswerving trust in the venue to deliver the best possible COVID safe environment in which to hold the event.



HISTORY

The World of Drones & Robotics Congress is a remarkable example of the power of initiative and creative thinking.

In 2017, ASM Global Asia Pacific, managers of the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, brought together leading drones expert, Associate Professor Dr Catherine Ball and Brisbane based Carillon Conference Management (CCM) to create the very first international conference about the business and application of drones.

The Congress, now in its fourth year, is a striking example of a results-driven collaboration. The inaugural event delivered immediate benefits for the business of drones and their impact on society and established Brisbane and Queensland as important players in a developing global industry, facilitating trade and investment opportunities.



STAGING AN EVENT IN A COVID ENVIRONMENT – CHALLENGES, LEARNINGS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Congress Co-Founder, Gordon says the biggest challenge was the extra time required to organise the event. “We estimate a hybrid event adds 45% more in organisational time. That and getting the technology right and fit for purpose. To present the virtual component professionally takes skilled technicians, specialist equipment and the right software.”

WoDaRC saw the unveiling of new and more reliable technology in ‘Confercast’ – a fusion of TV studio broadcast and conference live broadcast designed to deliver superior engagement experiences for delegates.

Other learnings from what was one of the few very successful conferences to be held during COVID; late registrations, with 30% of delegates registering in the last 48 hours; and being realistic about what you can deliver, both physically and digitally. Organisers also advocate finding ways to provide extra value to the physical delegates who have made the effort to support the event and attend in person.

The Congress received positive feedback from multiple delegates during the event, with the overwhelming response being that the main contributor to its success for virtual delegates was that the content was delivered from a real live congress staged at a central venue. Virtual delegates reported the hybrid format delivered a vastly superior experience than the all-virtual events they had been attending.

Gordon tells of one such delegate from Florida who was so excited to see real people and be part of a live conference, she stayed connected throughout the night during the peak of a hurricane.

WORKING WITH THE BCEC TEAM

"The partnership with the BCEC team cannot be overstated. The Centre is a true partner in this enterprise," says Gordon.

"Under the Centre's Site Specific COVID Safe Plan they took care of many of the COVID administrative issues, providing ongoing assistance during the event. BCEC also operates under VenueShield, one of the world's most advanced hygiene safeguards which offers a great feeling of security to delegates."

"Delegates at the Congress actually expressed to us that they trusted BCEC to deliver the best possible COVID safe environment – and that can only come from a longstanding reputation as a well-managed venue."

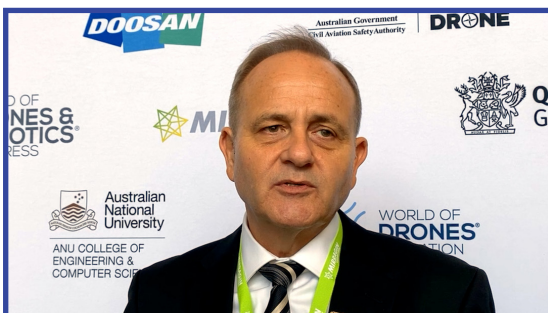


LEGACIES

Organisers say they managed to seize the opportunity to expand the relevance of the Congress into entirely new markets and will work with some of those new connections to bring them physically to future editions or as repeat virtual delegates. "We have started a new marketing dynamic", says Gordon, with a number of those indicating they will register again and recommending to others in their respective fields.

Among these committed converts are members of the US Air Force stationed in Guam and park rangers in Zimbabwe who are looking at drones to monitor poaching.

The Congress remains available on-demand for the next few months making it possible for delegates to re-visit the Congress after it has concluded.



ASHLEY GORDON
DIRECTOR | CARILLON CONFERENCE MANAGEMENT



WATCH VIDEO