

ASFA 2015 Conference, 25-27 November 2015

A stellar line-up of celebrity high achievers, a powerful and challenging program and maximum delegate attendance, combined to catapult the ASFA 2015 Conference to new heights of success.

According to Nicolette Hughes, ASFA's Director Conference and International Events, the Conference now considered to be the largest pensions' event in the world, ticked all the boxes to be the most successful event in recent history setting new records with delegate attendance, sponsors, exhibitors and highest satisfaction rate among exhibitors and delegates. This event now competes on the world stage and the feedback from delegates confirms its world class status.

Overview / profile of the event

This annual event is ASFA's flagship product that brings the world of super together, attracting close to 2,000 industry professionals from across 15 countries including virtual attendees, with the majority of the audience being senior representatives from across the various Australian superannuation sectors. This year's event also saw the highest number of international delegates.

Through a range of thought provoking keynote sessions and topic-specific parallel sessions, the three-day conference constantly challenged the status quo, exploring trends in investment, digital disruption, financial advice, data analytics, post retirement and leadership both inside and outside the super industry to expand thinking.

This year organisers launched new branding which will continue for the next few years under the ASFA Conference brand with the tagline "inspiring superannuation excellence."

Prime objective of the event

The event's program aims to inspire and ignite great leadership, challenge the industry's thinking and build resilience and knowledge amongst attendees to ensure they can thrive and deliver retirement incomes in a changing and volatile environment.

The conference is always held in November, appropriately scheduled to discuss the year in review, predict the future's short and long term trends whilst allowing one of the last opportunities in the calendar year for the whole of industry to come together before the Christmas break and plan for the upcoming year.

Outstanding features of the event

The scale of the event and its offering to first timers and experienced leaders of industry is a key factor in its success.

This year the learning platform entailed:

- A record number of sessions: Over 30 professional development sessions including keynotes, parallel, starter sessions, workshops and think-tanks

- A record number of international and national speakers: Over 100 specialists representing 10 countries

Event Highlights

These would have to include the very high calibre of the speakers and celebrities who attended and the response to these identities.

There were a number of subsidiary events catering to specific industry communities, plenty of time for networking and high quality food.

The conference included presentations by award-winning British actor and author Stephen Fry, space pioneer Dr Buzz Aldrin and more than 100 international and local thought leaders in the superannuation and pension space.

Feedback from delegates and participants also indicated that the conference dinner was a popular highlight with a theme “ASFA unplugged” with live performances from Aussie rock legends – Mark Seymour, James Reyne and the Hoodoo Gurus, delighting guests.

Special highlight of the event was *Hologram in 2015*.

ASFA presented Kevin Spacey via hologram - in an Australian association first, ASFA beamed Academy Award winning actor Kevin Spacey into the first day of the annual ASFA Conference via hologram.

Spacey addressed more than 2,000 local and international on the topic of digital disruption, drawing on the Netflix case study to provide an insider’s view on adapting to meet the needs of a rapidly-evolving digital world.

“What better way to illustrate pushing boundaries and expectations than via 3D projection,” said Pauline Vamos, CEO, ASFA.

“Netflix is a prime example of the way technology has enabled brands to evolve based on their customers’ preferences and consumption habits. This trend is not isolated to the entertainment industry – the superannuation and financial services industries are also evolving. Kevin’s address promises to be an unforgettable insider’s view into taking the lead in a rapidly changing approach to consumer engagement.”

Challenges in delivering such a high profile event for a key sector

Nicolette Hughes who headed up the project and led the organising team said it is very competitive in the event space of superannuation. “Retaining market position as the largest and premier event becomes harder each year. Innovation is key and this year we trialed new technology including digital technology in keynote sessions, voting via the app, a new pre event leadership symposium for industry leaders and more networking for sub groups of the conference. Essentially, we had more on offer than ever before,” she said.

“Intimate learning and networking opportunities are key to the success when delivering such a large scale event when sometimes delegates can feel a little lost and overwhelmed by the numbers. We had access to a number of rooms at BCEC which assisted our capacity to have so many things on at the same time. The flexibility of BCEC to work with us in developing our program and room allocations was outstanding.”

Outcomes

Record delegate numbers were achieved. Other records achieved:

- Highest total delegates registered = 1,685
- Highest total participants = 1,900
- Highest number of exhibitors = 38 companies / 57 booths
- Highest satisfaction rate from exhibitors, with 83% rating it very good
- Highest number of international delegates = 82

Awareness and coverage of the event and ASFA was unprecedented with the media strategy for the event yielding the following results:

- 345 media mentions across the Conference (as of 1/12/15), including:
- 22 media representatives attended in person
- 16 digital media registrations

Social media

Building on the success of ASFA's social media at the 2014 conference, organisers this year embarked on a strategy to increase Twitter presence, publicise and encourage use of the #ASFA2015 hashtag and build Twitter and Instagram followings which they achieved with great results.

The Venue

Nicolette said BCEC as a venue worked well for the conference, congratulating the Centre for their collaboration, ideas and teamwork in helping to achieve a hugely successful ASFA Conference.

"The ASFA delegates rated this event amongst one of the best conferences they have attended. From the very special opening by Buzz Aldrin, the hologram of Kevin Spacey, closing lunch with Stephen Fry and then all the sessions in between, I truly believe this was an unprecedented experience for our delegates and we gave them a journey of going places they have never been before.

"But with the program aside, we need to acknowledge hosting the event at a world class venue such as BCEC contributed highly to the overall success."

"Our Event Manager, Merryn Jones looked after ASFA in 2011 and this continuity of our relationship and her knowing the ASFA conference, was a recipe for success in our minds," she said.

Brisbane

Participants were just as enthusiastic about Brisbane with its easy access for interstate delegates, community feel being down in South Bank with a variety of restaurants for night times and the excellent weather.

CASE STUDY



Delegate feedback was extremely positive with the conference favourite:

"How on earth are you going to beat this conference in future? An experience I will always remember."

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