

GP16 - The RACGP Conference for General Practice 2016

By any measure, GP16, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners conference in Perth last September/October was an outstanding success.

Three years ago Perth Convention Bureau (PCB) with Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre (PCEC) bid against two east coast cities plus three international destinations to stage the event in Western Australia.

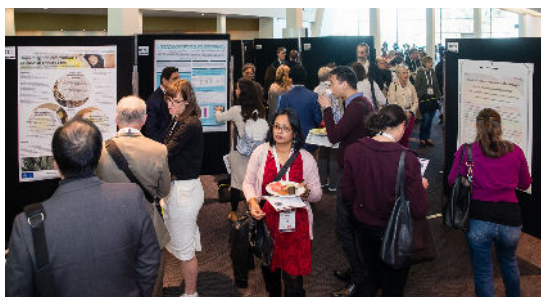
Not only did it succeed, it exceeded all expectations, attracting more than 1800 registered delegates when 1500 had been expected to attend.

According to the RACGP, GP16 was their “largest general practice conference to date”, a fact not lost on the PCB and PCEC who often hear concerns that conferences that move from the east coast to the west tend to deliver lower delegate numbers. In addition to record attendees from across the nation, the event featured 150 speakers, 210 abstracts, two plenaries, six concurrent streams plus 30 posters.

A major trade exhibition filled more than 5,000m² of exhibition space at the venue and served as an interactive hub offering a place to meet and a recharge lounge.

The conference theme of Clinical, Digital, Leadership, challenged delegates to answer the question: “How will our profession adapt to the challenges of the digital age?” Against a backdrop of GPs embracing constant and increasingly rapid change and provide the highest quality of patient care, GP16 looked at the challenges ahead. It provided guidance on how general practitioners can best be prepared to solve patient problems, while continuing to provide comprehensive and coordinated whole person health care to individuals and families in their communities.

Not surprisingly GP16 attracted political and community leaders as presenters, including the then Federal Minister for Health Sussan Ley, Shadow Minister for Health Katherine King, former Victorian Chief Police Commissioner Christine Nixon and Australian of the Year (2015) and domestic violence campaigner, Rosie Batty.



Fast Facts

Event: GP16 - The RACGP Conference for General Practice 2016

Location: Perth, Western Australia

Venue: Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre

When: 27th September to 1st October 2016

Who: Perth Convention Bureau (PCB); Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre; RACGP

Theme: Clinical, Digital, Leadership

Challenges: Complex program delivery

Highlights: Exceeding delegate numbers

Formerly handled by external professional conference organisers, the RACGP opted to bring event management in house and this team worked with PCB and PCEC to ensure its success as both a meeting and an educational event.

The educational and professional development components of GP16 included three days of workshops and sessions across six clinical, educational and business streams. There was a wide variety of active learning modules (ALMs) with ten topics for delegates to choose from and a newly introduced pre-conference ALM day served to free up time for networking and for delegates to attend more education. Helping delegates to fulfil their QI&CPD requirements were 27 CPR workshops.

Showcasing the city of Perth and major developments such as Elizabeth Quay adjacent to PCEC, the GP16 welcome reception moved from indoors to the Centre's outdoor Summer Garden. A RACGP National Faculties evening was held overlooking the spectacular Perth city lightscape from Frasers Function Centre in Kings Park, and those on the RACGP Foundation Walk enjoyed a one hour Perth Discovery Walking Tour. The social highlight was the Gala Dinner at the Forrest Centre, an historic CBD venue featuring an indoor/outdoor atrium and magnificent gardens.

GP16 was a major economic contributor to Western Australia, estimated to have generated \$3.5 million in direct economic benefit during 2016. Perth had previously hosted the event in 2009, and the path to winning GP16 for Perth began in 2014 when the PCB invited key RACGP representatives to experience a hosted Perth site inspection in mid-2015. Attendees included Zena Burgess (CEO), Craig Martin (General Manager), Melissa Jacometti and Michael Bergeron (National Conference and Events team).

Both on and offshore destinations were being considered for GP16. If staying onshore within Australia, Perth was contending against two other east coast locations. Offshore options included New Zealand, Hong Kong and Thailand.

City support included the invitation to experience Perth, travel costs and destination marketing sponsorship offered in partnership with the venue partner, PCEC. Perth was confirmed as the GP16 destination city in mid-2015 and the Bureau's convention services support team immediately moved into high gear in the lead up to the event a year later.

RACGP praised the special attention to detail and the high level of service provided throughout the



organising process from sales through to the events team. PCEC provided live cooking stations at the welcome reception and responded quickly to requests from the RACGP events team.

An RACGP spokesman praised PCEC saying "...their efforts to understand our event, demographic and desired outcomes contributed greatly to the success of this event".

"As a team PCEC were responsive and worked closely with us to ensure the event delivered against our expectations. Their staff were always willing to find positive solutions and work with us. On site they were responsive to our changes and ensured our delegates were looked after. PCEC allowed us to maximise branding and signage which not only made our delegates feel warmly welcomed but also allowed us to make their journey through the centre well sign posted and easy."

They also commended the quality of PCEC's food and beverage as "...of a high standard with only positive comments received...Everett, Steve, Tracy, Ryan and Chef Richard worked extremely hard to cater to our needs and find positive solutions for every query we raised. They made the on-site delivery stress-free for not only the RACGP team but also the delegates".

"The team at PCEC was a pleasure to work with. Despite a complex program, the delegates experienced a memorable conference which is sure to maintain a positive momentum for GP17."