

Conference Check List

ANZSI 2007 Conference Committee
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The Victorian Branch of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers has hosted four ANZSI conferences in recent years – in 1995, at Marysville; in 1999, Hobart, in 2005, Melbourne and in 2007, Melbourne. During the planning and organising for these conferences, procedures have been developed and refined, and then further refined. The following checklist has been drawn up as a result of this work.

1. Select a Conference Committee of 4-5 people
 - Specify roles, eg Convenor, Treasurer, venue liaison, trade exhibit, publicity, etc.
2. Establish liaison with national body
 - Obtain preliminary approval to organise the conference
 - Branch/Chapter President to sign Contract.
 - Negotiate and refine conference arrangements and requirements in line with the terms of the Contract.
 - Request seeding funding if required.
 - Determine progress reporting.
 - Does your national body have a "schedule of conference obligations" or operational guidelines for branches organising conferences, meetings etc.?
3. Venue – select and book early
 - Book up to 18 months in advance.
 - Will probably need to pay a deposit.
 - Is accommodation available within venue and/or nearby?
 - Is there transport and parking facilities?
 - Is there room for trade exhibition?
 - Will it host the conference dinner?
 - Will the workshops require a computer lab?
 - Does the venue have the equipment necessary or does this need to be hired from somewhere else?
4. Date and length of conference
 - What is on at the same time? Consider other related societies (eg. librarians, editors, archivists, database developers) programs which could affect participation, as well as sporting or cultural events on in the town.
 - Consider other indexing societies' programs /calendars
 - Do you have to have it on a weekend or weekday or combination of both?
5. Establish aims and objectives of conference, for example
 - Networking with other indexers
 - Keep up to date with current trends in indexing
 - Learn about the range of different ways indexers apply their skills
 - Hear about developments in indexing software
6. Audience
 - Book, database or web indexers?
 - Professional indexers (ie professional development for experienced indexers) or new / novice indexers (ie training sessions)
 - Librarians
 - Editors

- Archivists
 - Technical communicators
7. Choose a theme / title for Conference
 - Specify a number of broad topics to be covered.
 8. Trade exhibition
 - Decide early, as many publishers / sellers etc, need to know one year in advance for their own budgetary planning.
 - Great opportunity for sister societies to promote their organisations.
 - Consider having a table for local crafts, jewellery or other items of interest.
 9. Budget
 - Guided by cost of venue
 - Determine break even point in terms of number of registrations.
 - Who is eligible for discount registration?
 - Are you having an early bird registration?
 - Is your national body prepared to cover losses and to what extent?
 - What percentage of the profit is payable back to National body as this will need to be taken into account in the financial planning?
 10. Sponsorship
 - Do you need to seek sponsors for the Conference?
 - Are you going to sponsor someone to come to the conference eg. representatives of overseas societies, students/ new members?
 - Decide conditions of sponsorship, eg conference fees, travel, then involvement in conference by sponsored member and post conference reporting.
 11. Invite keynote speakers
 12. Conference format – papers / sessions / workshops
 - Decide on format of conference. Will there be a mix of papers and panel sessions?
 - Will you have workshops? Will they be on a separate day(s)?
 - Consider theme based panel sessions, for example on indexing and cooking or gardening.
 - Have panels on a subject that promotes discussion eg format of subheadings, ethics in indexing or efficiency of XML indexing.
 - Spend some time in planning to ensure that the conference format and programme will meet the current needs of indexers. Ensure that the diversity of the conference will interest indexers in all areas of the profession. The conference should be interesting, friendly but also challenging.
 13. Call for papers
 - Send out notices 9 months in advance
 - Ask for papers relating to the specific topic of the conference.
 - Provide specifications concerning format, length and date for receipt of abstracts.
 - Request biographic details of all speakers for programs and session chairs.
 14. Visits
 - Will you offer visits to organisations / places of interest?
 15. Promotion
 - Promotion starts with the Call for Papers and is ongoing.
 - Promote to as many appropriate organisations / societies / publishers / email lists as possible.
 - Society Newsletter, Society website
 16. Speaker requirements
 - Contact all speakers and ask for requirements regarding day to speak and / or equipment required.
 - Reconfirm place, date and time 3 weeks before conference to ensure attendance.

17. Conference program
 - Have you got the range of papers and topic you require?
 - What is missing?
 - Do you need to organise additional papers or panel sessions?
 - Have you allowed for some different sessions eg exercise session or Indexes Roadshow, providing one-to-one feedback on indexes.
 - Identify possible chairs for sessions; invite and provide requirements for chairing.
18. Meetings sessions
 - Do you need to allocate time for Society general meetings, special interest group meetings or award presentations?
19. Conference satchels or tee shirts
 - Will you need to have tee shirts or conference satchels printed?
20. Abstracts
 - Collate all papers and panel abstracts.
 - How will these be circulated?
21. Conference proceedings
 - Will full papers be published in paper or electronic format?
22. Registrations
 - Have you reached break-even point?
23. Speaker gifts
 - Will you be giving the speakers anything to thank them for their time?
24. Recruit volunteers / ambassadors for
 - chairpersons for all sessions
 - welcoming visitors from interstate / overseas
 - being on the front desk
 - taking photographs
 - Ensure that first time delegates and delegates not on committees, etc are made welcome and encouraged to participate during the conference.
25. Special branding (labels or badges) for Committee members
 - To assist delegates who may have queries
26. Organise group dinners for first and last nights of conference
27. Welcoming table / front desk
 - Need to have a roster for the whole time of the conference not just registration
28. Venue liaison during conference
 - Have one person responsible for liaison with venue staff over room layout, equipment, etc.
29. Conference dinner / drinks / entertainment
 - Will there be an after dinner speaker / music / other forms of entertainment?
 - Place conference organisers and committee members at different tables to ensure all participants are individually welcomed
30. Acknowledgement and thanks to Conference Committee
 - Ensure that the individual members of the Conference Committee are introduced at the beginning of the Conference and thanked at the end of the conference, probably by National President
31. Feedback forms
 - Ensure feedback forms are available for delegates on the last day of the conference
32. Reporting on Conference
 - For Newsletter / web site
 - To national body
 - Take care over content of report, include notes, ideas for the organizing Committees of future Conferences.