



- Event:** 2016 Asia Pacific Lymphology Conference integrating the 11th Australasian Lymphology Association Conference and the 6th International Lymphoedema Framework Conference
- Date:** 26 - 29 May 2016
- Attendance:** 316 delegates from 19 countries
- Organiser:** ICMS Australasia Pty Ltd

Background

For the first time in their history, the Australasian Lymphology Association (ALA) and the International Lymphoedema Framework (ILF) joined together their individual conferences to create the 2016 Asia Pacific Lymphology Conference, held in Darwin from 26-29 May 2016.

Attracting 316 delegates from over 19 countries, the conference attracted more delegates than previous conferences - thanks to its location - the Darwin Convention Centre, Northern Territory.

"We set out to produce a high quality scientific conference and we definitely achieved that, with more delegates than we expected thanks to the exotic location," said Professor Neil Piller, Co-chair of the ILF Board of Directors.

The ILF has hosted its previous annual conferences in England, Scotland, France and Canada, and the ALA's biennial conferences have been located in Australia and NZ, but never before in Darwin, Australia. Darwin provided a welcome change in location for both organisations and acted as a major drawcard for both Australian and international delegates.

Conference Convenor and local health professional Shirley Preston noted that "the ALA and the ILF Boards of Directors really wanted to hold the conference in Darwin, because they wanted to attract new delegates from Asia and Darwin is seen as Australia's Asian Gateway. Overall, we had a bigger turnout than we expected." said Ms Preston.

"The uniqueness of Darwin was definitely a selling point to the Australian delegates. It was a real draw card. Most had not been here before, and many exclaimed about how modern the city was."

Conference Objectives

- To share stimulating ideas, new research and innovative solutions to the many issues faced by health practitioners who treat people with lymphatic dysfunction.
- To provide an innovative, thought provoking and quality three day conference program.
- To facilitate interactive and lively debates around contemporary research and practice issues.
- To strengthen existing links in the Asia Pacific region.

The event was themed New Networks – New Solutions and that's exactly what the event delivered with keynote addresses from prominent international lymphologists Professor Marlys Witte, University of Arizona, USA and Professor Terence Ryan, Oxford University, UK.

Other prominent delegates included Associate Professor Natasha Harvey, University of South Australia, Adelaide; Jean-Paul Begrado, University of Brussels, Belgium; Associate Professor Karen Herbst, University of Arizona, USA; Professor Jane Turner, University of Queensland, Australia and Dr Ramin Shayan from University of Melbourne, Australia.

Conference Format

The conference featured a cocktail welcome reception, opening ceremony, plenary sessions, top-quality research papers presented in four concurrent streams, symposia, poster presentations, trade exhibition, conference dinner, awards presentations, closing ceremony and pre and post conference workshops.

Darwin Convention Centre Experience

Conference Convenor Shirley Preston commented that "this was the first time we have held a conference in a convention centre as opposed to a university or hotel facility. Delegates commented on how good it was to have a 'for-purpose' venue. Everything was on hand and easy to access."

The Darwin Convention Centre is a modern, world-class venue with capacity to accommodate 1200+ delegates plus trade exhibitions in column-free spaces complete with integrated audio-visual, friendly service and outstanding dining experiences.

"It was worth holding it at a purpose-built venue because it allowed us to hold a better quality conference for our delegates. We were able to accept more abstracts. We could decide which abstracts we wanted to present, decide on the number of streams and then book the spaces accordingly. We had one extra stream so we were also able to attract more delegates. The venue allowed us to do that," said Ms Preston.

"It was also easier for delegates to get from one presentation to another because the rooms were next to each other and the break-out areas were nearby, which hasn't always been the case at previous venues."

Professor Neil Piller, Co-chair of the ILF Board of Directors commented "What a great venue to hold a combined national/international meeting. Light and airy, spacious, great facilities, perfect surrounds, which sell the uniqueness of the Top-End and Darwin. I heard nothing but positive enthusiastic comments about the venue, its location, the food and its ambience. I'll be back as will I'm sure many others from around the world."

Ms Preston also commented that "one of the challenges we had that DCC helped us solve was around the conference dinner. In order to secure registrations we had to set the prices well ahead of time. So we set the prices in advance and when we investigated the price of hosting a dinner of the standard we really wanted to achieve for our delegates over a year later, we realised that we hadn't set the price high enough. Given the scale of the event, this had the potential to have a real impact on our budget.

However, when we shared our dilemma with the staff at DCC they really went to a lot of effort to explore options and find a solution that would allow us to host the number of delegates we needed to host at the price we had already set to the highest standard possible.

They made a few tweaks to our preferred package so we could still have an impressive event within our budget. It was nice that the staff were so accommodating to assist us with solving some of those sorts of challenges.

I really felt that whatever the challenge was, big or small, the staff were so focussed on helping us make our event a great experience for our delegates.

Darwin and Northern Territory Experience

A unique open-air tropical themed conference dinner and once-in-a-lifetime post-touring opportunities including Kakadu, Litchfield and Nitmiluk National Parks, located just hours from Darwin CBD, completed the overall conference package.

"Those that did come really loved Darwin. At last they had an excuse to see the Northern Territory. Some went to Kakadu National Park and I know someone that trekked Katherine Gorge. I would say half of the delegates stayed longer." said conference convenor Ms Preston.

Conference Outcomes

- Conference registration was higher than any previous Australian Lymphology conference and sponsorship and exhibition income exceeded expectations.
- There were 11 invited speaker presentations, 76 paper presentations, 46 poster presentations, 12 workshops, 3 breakfast symposia, 2 panel presentations, as well as 9 pre and post conference workshops.
- Overall, the key outcome was a great conference which was scientifically, socially and financially successful.

Quote

"We were very happy with all aspects of our dealings with the DCC. They were very willing to assist us with changes, questions, and clarifications. We found that the staff were very friendly and bent over backwards to accommodate our needs. Our delegates even commented on how well set out and well run the DCC was and we had many people say that this was a very relaxed and friendly conference."

**Shirley Preston, Conference Convenor
2016 Asia Pacific Lymphology Conference**



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Images from the 2016 Asia Pacific Lymphology Conference

