

# Convention Strategy

Executive Officer Rob Oerlemans

## Background

The Multiple District Convention is a core part of the annual program for Lions. It serves the following functions.

- To provide an opportunity to conduct the Business of the Association,
- To provide an opportunity to recognise and acknowledge the achievements of the Association,
- To provide the opportunity for Multiple District Projects and activities to promote their goals to Lions, and
- To provide a recreational and social opportunity for members.

The Convention is an operational activity of the Multiple District, however the Multiple District has specific strategies to ensure that Conventions remain successful, effective and cost-effective.

## Convention Business

Convention Business sessions appeals to Lions that are interested in the leading and guiding the future of the organisation. They generally have more knowledge about the structure of the organisation and 'political' aspects of engagement. Many are past leaders or those who aspire to leadership positions.

Member surveys identify that members prefer Business Sessions that are:

1. Effectively chaired
2. Focussed on matters of substance rather than administrative or procedural matters
3. Managed in a timely way

Lions Australia will improve effectiveness of the business sessions by:

- a) Programming the Business Session as a block to enable members to exercise choice.
- b) Reviewing decision-making authorities over time to endeavour to delegate authority for administrative matters to the Council.
- c) Invest in training for the Council Chairperson to manage the Business Session, if necessary.

## Forums and Workshops

Forums and Workshops provide the opportunity for members to receive training and engage in discussions about matters of interest.

The primary vehicles for Forums and Workshops are:

- International Conventions
- ANZI-Pacific (Regional) Lions Forums
- Specifically convened forums

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Forums and Workshops will only be convened at Convention if time is available once other standing items are programmed, and subject to budget.

## Recognition and acknowledgment

This is an important part of the Convention and it relates to the presentation of awards and acknowledgement of our leaders. Presentation of awards is always compromised by the lack of attendance of the awardees. In many cases, they are not present and therefore the acknowledgement is not effective.

It is also important for our newer members that the balance between acknowledgement and more future-focussed activities is carefully managed. Our organisation needs to look forward as well as reflect on the past.

Lions Australia will improve recognition and acknowledgement of members at Convention by:

1. Requiring all awards to be displayed on-screen.
2. Grouping award presentations and scheduling them to encourage attendance and to manage the balance with future-focussed events.
3. Requiring the groups presenting awards to verify the attendance of awardees in advance of the presentation

## Promotion of projects

The MD201 Convention provides an important opportunity for Lions Projects and Foundations to report to the members on their activities and seek the support of members for their programs. Three main methods are used for the promotion of projects:

1. Displays and exhibitions
2. On- stage presentations
3. Reporting through the Convention Handbook

Project promotion activities can dominate the Convention program. Members have indicated through survey's their dissatisfaction with many project stage presentations that simply repeat the detailed information that is present in the handbook. Surveys also indicate that the quality of the speaker is important.

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Lions Australia will respond to the member's feedback for improved project promotion by:

1. Limiting on-stage presentations to those projects announcing or reporting on nationally-significant activities.
2. Requiring supporting materials be provided in advance for review.
3. Providing guidelines to speakers of the requirements for on-stage presentations.
4. Providing the opportunity for 'soapbox presentations' for non-nationally significant groups to be conducted in the display area.
5. Increasing the time available for Lions to visit displays and exhibits to consult with project proponents.

## Social and Recreational opportunities

As previously stated, these activities are very important to our members, and our organisation. Fun, friendship and fellowship build engagement, increase motivation and enthusiasm.

Convention social opportunities are often built around hospitality functions and meals, and surveys indicate the quality of meals and service affect the member's satisfaction with Convention.

Lions Australia will improve the social and recreational activities at Convention by:

1. Considering carefully the number of social and recreational events and their cost to provide an appropriate experience to Conventioneers.
2. Providing 'event –order' templates to specify meals and ensure that meals are specified and tested in advance of the Convention to manage value and quality.
3. Require a Convention Committee member to attend each hospitality function arranged by the Committee to ensure service standards are met.
4. Extend the lunch break to ensure that service can be managed reasonably, including consideration of multiple meal sittings to enable reduced queuing.
5. Providing opportunities for delegates to bring their own lunch to reduce cost and/or personal preference.

## Environmental Sustainability

"Environment" is on the principal international causes supported by Lions and is appropriate that everything we do addresses environmental sustainability. In order to do better, Lions Australia will:

1. Require Convention Committees, venues operators and contractors to identify how they will:
  - a. Reduce and manage waste, and
  - b. Conserve water and energy
2. Eliminate the unwanted provision of documentation and brochures by enabling conventioneers to select information from presenters.
3. Provide choices to conventioneers to receive of Convention materials in digital formats.
4. Review and control catering services to reduce waste and increase use of materials that can be recycled or re-used.

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## Continuous improvement

Lions Australia will continually review Convention activities, program and locations through discussion and survey to ensure that the Convention experience meets the needs of members.

This review will consider the differing segments of the Lions organisation – member experience levels, gender and cultural diversity and geographic diversity, recognising that members have different views and expectations.

## Convention purposes

The Convention is an operational activity of the Multiple District. The policy, constitution and procedure guide the convention operation to ensure that it is effective, financially responsible and that it supports the legal and policy obligations of MD201.

The organisation invests heavily in the Multiple District Convention both in terms of human and financial resources and though it meets the internal needs of the organisation, there are few examples that this investment helps to promote the organisation.

Successful conventions and conferences draw attention to the organisations and associations conducting them. The Convention itself provides an excellent opportunity for non-Lions to discover the value of our organisation and this strategy focusses on this objective.

The public should be invited to visit the displays and exhibitions, keynote addresses and presentations by Lions projects.

Scope should also be considered to focus the gala dinner on a philanthropic or charitable cause and invite members of the public book tables and attend.

## Future directions – flexibility

Lions Conventions provide a considerable economic and social benefit to towns that host a Convention. Estimates of the economic value of a Lions Convention range from \$3mill. to \$8mill. depending on pre and post-Convention touring.

Lions Clubs members that enjoy attending Conventions appreciate a diversity of destinations as many of them coordinate social and recreational travel with the Multiple District and District Convention.

Conventions destinations are currently restricted to cities that have a plenary venue that can host 1,500 attendees.

Lions Australia will continue to explore ways of improving and modifying the Convention experience to enable more destinations, including regional and rural centres, to host a Multiple District Convention.

This may include alternative approaches such as:

- Video-streaming proceeding to alternative rooms.
- Providing priority of access to early registrations.
- Surveying member expectations regarding limited access to sessions

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## Standing Items

1. Council endorses the principal purposes of the Multiple District Convention as being:

- a) Convention Business
- b) Recognition and Acknowledgement
- c) Promotion of Projects, and
- d) Social and Recreational Opportunities

2. Council resolves that the program of Conventions ought to be flexible and responsive to best meeting the purposes outlined above, subject to the following standing items being accommodated:

- (a) The Opening Ceremony
- (b) Flag Ceremony
- (c) Remembrance Ceremony
- (d) Business Sessions
- (e) Leo of the Year Final
- (f) Youth of the Year Final
- (g) Convention Luncheon
- (h) Closing Ceremony
- (i) First Conventioneers Function
- (j) Gala Dinner
- (k) Introduction of the Council.
- (l) Introduction of the incoming Council.

3. Council resolves that the Convention Program and events be developed to maximise the opportunity for the public to attend.

## Supporting Documents

- 1. Convention Policy
- 2. Convention Procedure
- 3. Template Program
- 4. Convention Bid documents

## TABLE OF REVISIONS

Rev #		Description of Change
1.0	April 2014	New document
2.0	October 2019	Revision following Long Range Development Committee review

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