

CHAPTER 1

An overview of the event field

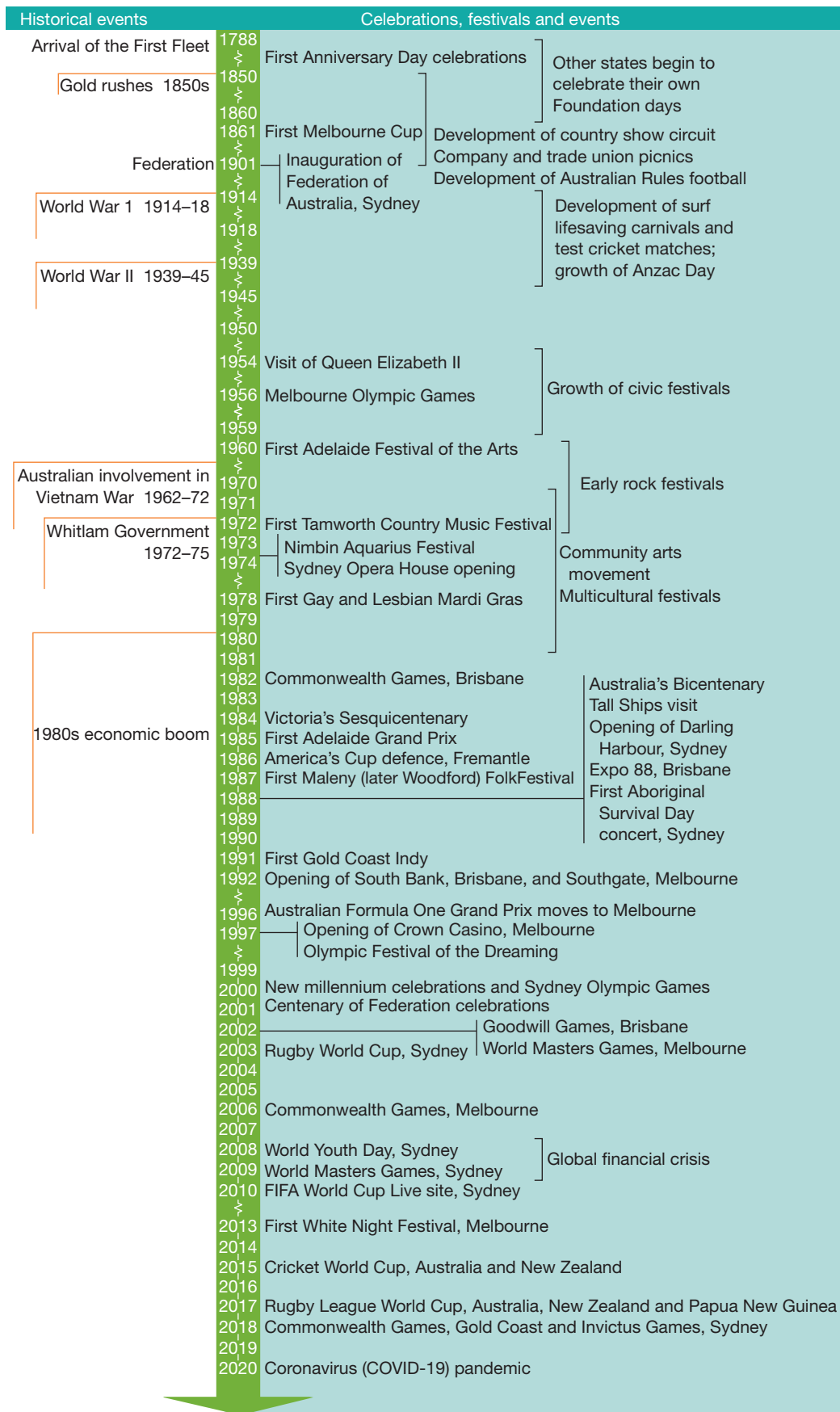
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- 1.1** define special events and demonstrate an awareness of why special events have evolved in human society
 - 1.2** describe the role of special events in Australia and the Australian tradition of special events
 - 1.3** discuss the growth of state event corporations and the emergence of an event industry
 - 1.4** distinguish between different types of special events
 - 1.5** list and describe the components of the event industry
 - 1.6** list and describe the main professional associations in the event industry, discuss the attributes and knowledge requirements of a special event manager and list the types of organisation involved in the delivery of event management training.
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FIGURE 1.1 Australian event timeline



Introduction

Today, events are central to our culture as perhaps never before. Increases in leisure time and discretionary spending have led to a proliferation of public events, celebrations and entertainment. Governments now support and promote events as part of their strategies for economic development, nation building and destination marketing. Corporations and businesses embrace events as key elements in their marketing strategies and image promotion. The enthusiasm of community groups and individuals for their own interests and passions gives rise to a marvellous array of events on almost every subject and theme imaginable. Events spill out of our newspapers and television screens, occupy much of our time, and enrich our lives.

As we study the phenomenon of events, it is worth examining where the event tradition in Australia has come from, and what forces are likely to shape its future growth and development. As events emerge as an industry in their own right, it is also worth considering what elements characterise such an industry, and how the Australian event industry might chart its future directions in an increasingly complex and demanding environment.

1.1 Special events as benchmarks for our lives

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1.1 Define special events and demonstrate an awareness of why special events have evolved in human society.

Since the dawn of time, human beings have found ways to mark important events in their lives: the changing of the seasons, the phases of the moon, and the renewal of life each spring. From the Aboriginal corroboree and Chinese New Year to the Dionysian rites of ancient Greece and the European carnival tradition of the Middle Ages, myths and rituals have been created to interpret cosmic happenings. To the present day, behind well-known figures such as Old Father Time and Santa Claus lie old myths, archetypes and ancient celebrations.

The first Australians used storytelling, dance and song to transmit their culture from generation to generation. Their ceremonies were, and continue to be, important occasions in the life of the community, where cultural meaning is shared and affirmed. Similarly, in most agrarian societies, rituals were developed that marked the coming of the seasons and the sowing and harvesting of crops.

Both in private and in public, people feel the need to mark the important occasions in their lives, and to celebrate milestones. Coming of age, for example, is often marked by a rite of passage, as illustrated by the tribal initiation ceremony, the Jewish bar and bat mitzvahs and the suburban twenty-first birthday.

At the public level, momentous events become the milestones by which people measure their private lives. We may talk about things happening ‘before the new millennium’, in the same way that earlier generations spoke of marrying ‘before the Depression’ or being born ‘after the War’. Occasional events — Australia’s Bicentenary, the Sydney Olympics, the new millennium, the global financial crisis (GFC) and the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic — help to mark eras and define milestones.

Even in the high-tech era of global media, when many people have lost touch with the common religious beliefs and social norms of the past, we still need larger social events to mark the local and domestic details of our lives.

1.2 The modern Australian tradition of celebrations

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1.2 Describe the role of special events in Australia and the Australian tradition of special events.

Australian Aboriginal culture had a rich tradition of rituals and ceremonies prior to the arrival of the first Europeans. This rich tradition continues to this day. There has also been a continuing protest at what many see as the invasion of Australia by Europeans in 1788, with an Aboriginal boycott of the centenary celebrations of the arrival of the First Fleet in 1888, and a Day of Mourning protest and conference at the sesquicentenary celebrations in Sydney in 1938. This protest continued at the Australian Bicentenary celebrations on 26 January 1988, when 40 000 people participated in the March for Freedom, Justice and Hope in Sydney, and the first National Sorry Day held on 26 May 1998. Corroboree 2000 took place in Sydney during Reconciliation Week in May 2000 to mark the end of the ten-year official reconciliation process, and the Bridge Walk for Reconciliation and similar events that took place around Australia in the weeks following were collectively the biggest demonstration of public support for a cause that has ever taken place in Australia (National Museum of Australia 2018). Finally, after a long wait, one of the first

acts of the newly elected Rudd Labor Government in 2008 was an official apology to the Aboriginal people for the perceived injustices of the past; however, many issues still remain unresolved as witnessed by the ongoing ‘change the date’ movement with regard to the date of Australia Day.

In the cultural collision between Aboriginal people and the first Europeans, new traditions were formed alongside the old. Probably the first ‘event’ in Australia after the arrival of the First Fleet was a bush party to celebrate the coming ashore of the women convicts in 1788:

Meanwhile, most of the sailors on *Lady Penrhyn* applied to her master, Captain William Sever, for an extra ration of rum ‘to make merry with upon the women quitting the ship’. Out came the pannikins, down went the rum, and before long the drunken tars went off to join the convicts in pursuit of the women, so that, Bowes remarked, ‘it is beyond my abilities to give a just description of the scene of debauchery and riot that ensued during the night’. It was the first bush party in Australia, with ‘some swearing, others quarrelling, others singing’ (Hughes 1987, pp. 88–9).

From these inauspicious beginnings, the early colonists slowly started to evolve celebrations that were tailored to their new environment, so far from Georgian Britain. Hull (1984) traces the history of these early celebrations, noting the beginnings of a national day some 30 years later:

Governor Macquarie declared the 26th of January 1818 a public holiday — convicts were given the day off, a ration of one pound of fresh meat was made for each of them, there was a military review, a salute of 30 guns, a dinner for the officers and a ball for the colony society.

This may have been the first festival celebrated by the new inhabitants of Australia. Although ‘Anniversary Day’, as it was known, was not to become a public holiday for another 20 years, the official celebration of the founding of the colony had begun with the direct involvement and patronage of the government that continues to this day. In contrast to government-organised celebrations, settlers during the nineteenth century entertained themselves with balls, shows and travelling entertainments as a diversion from the serious business of work and survival. The rich tradition of agricultural shows such as the Sydney Royal Easter Show and race meetings such as the Melbourne Cup still survive as major events in their respective cities today.

At the turn of the century, the celebration of Australia’s Federation captured the prevailing mood of optimistic patriotism:

At the turn of the year 1900–1 the city of Sydney went mad with joy. For a few days hope ran so high that poets and prophets declared Australia to be on the threshold of a new golden age . . . from early morning on 1 January 1901 trams, trains and ferry boats carried thousands of people into the city for the greatest day in their history: the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia. It was to be a people’s festival (Clark 1981, p. 177).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the new inhabitants had come to terms with the landscape of Australia, and the democratic ritual of the picnic had gained mass popularity. This extended to guilds, unions and company workers, as demonstrated by the following description of the annual picnic of the employees of Sydney boot and shoe manufacturers McMurtie and Company, at Clontarf in 1906:

The sweet strains of piano, violin and cornet . . . added zest and enjoyment to the festive occasion’, said the Advisor. ‘Laughter producers were also in evidence, several of the company wearing comical-looking hats and false noses so that even at the commencement of the day’s proceedings hilarity and enjoyment was assured.’ The enjoyment continued as the party disembarked to the strain of bagpipes, and the sporting programme began . . . The ‘little ones’ were provided with ‘toys, spades, balls and lollies’. The shooting gallery was well patronised, and when darkness fell dancing went on in the beautiful dancing hall. Baby Houston danced a Scotch reel to the music of bagpipes. Miss Robinson sang *Underneath the Watermelon Vine*, and little Ruth Bailey danced a jig.

At 8 pm, the whistle blew and the homeward journey commenced with ‘music up till the last’ and a final rendering of *Auld Lang Syne* as the *Erina* arrived at the Quay (Pearl 1974).

However, Australians had to wait until after World War II before a home-grown form of celebration took hold across the nation. In the 1940s and 1950s, city and town festivals were established, that created a common and enduring format. Even today, it is a safe assumption that any festival with an Aboriginal or floral name, and that includes a ‘Festival Queen’ competition, street parade, outdoor art exhibition and sporting event, dates to this period. Sydney’s Waratah Festival (which was later replaced by the

Sydney Festival), Melbourne’s Moomba, Ballarat’s Begonia Festival, Young’s Cherry Festival, Bowral’s Tulip Time, Newcastle’s Mattara Festival and Toowoomba’s Carnival of Flowers all date to the prolific era of local pride and involvement after World War II. Moomba and Mattara both adopted Aboriginal names, the latter word meaning ‘hand of friendship’.

Holding such a festival became a badge of civic pride, in the way that building a School of Arts hall had done in an earlier era, or constructing an Olympic swimming pool would do in the 1950s and 1960s. These festivals gave the cities and towns a sense of identity and distinction and became a focus for community groups and charity fundraising. It is a tribute to their importance to their communities that many of these festivals still continue after more than half a century.

Alongside this movement of community festivals was another very powerful model. In 1947 the Edinburgh Festival was founded as part of the post-war spirit of reconstruction and renewal. In Australia, the Festival of Perth (founded in 1953) and the Adelaide Festival of the Arts (founded in 1960) were based on this inspiring model. The influence of the Edinburgh Festival proved to be enduring, as shown by the resurgence of arts festivals in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane in the 1980s and 1990s. By the 1970s, however, with the coming to power of the Whitlam Government and then the formation of the Australia Council, new cultural directions were unleashed that were to change the face of festivals in Australia.

The Community Arts Board of the Australia Council, under the leadership of Ros Bower, developed a strategy aimed at giving a voice to the voiceless, and taking arts and festivals into the suburbs and towns of Australia. Often for the first time, migrants, workers and Aboriginal people were encouraged to participate in a new cultural pluralism that broke down the elitism that had governed the arts in much of rural and suburban Australia. Sensing the unique cultural challenge faced by Australia, Bower (1981) wrote:

In terms of our national cultural objectives, the re-integration of the artist into the community is of crucial importance. Australia lacks a coherent cultural background. The artist needs to become the spokesman, the interpreter, the image-maker and the prophet. He cannot do it in isolation or from an ivory tower. He must do it by working with the people. He must help them to piece together their local history, their local traditions, their folk-lore, the drama and the visual imagery of their lives. And in doing this he will enrich and give identity to his work as an artist. The arts will cease to be imitative, or preoccupied with making big splashes in little ‘cultured’ pools. They will be integrated more closely with our lives, our history, our unique environment. They will be experimental and exploring forces within the broader cultural framework.

The 1970s involved not only the emergence of multiculturalism and the ‘new age’ movement, but also the forging of the community arts movement and a new and diverse range of festivals across Australia. Examples of the rich diversity spawned by this period are the Aquarius Festival, which was staged by the Australian Union of Students at Nimbin in northern New South Wales; the Lygon Street Festa in Melbourne’s Carlton; the Come Out young people’s festival held in alternate years to the Adelaide Festival; the Carnivale celebration of multiculturalism across Sydney and New South Wales; and Sydney’s Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Festivals became part of the cultural landscape and connected again to people’s needs and lives. Every community, it seemed, had something to celebrate, and the tools with which to create its own festival.

1.3 The birth of an event industry

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1.3 Discuss the growth of state event corporations and the emergence of an event industry.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, certain seminal events set the pattern for the contemporary event industry as we know it today. The Commonwealth Games in Brisbane in 1982 ushered in a new era of maturity and prominence for that city and a new breed of sporting events. It also initiated a career in ceremonies and celebrations for former ABC rock show producer, Ric Birch, which led to his taking a key role in the opening and closing ceremonies at the Los Angeles, Barcelona and Sydney Summer Olympics and the Turin Winter Olympics.

The Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 1984 demonstrated that major events could be economically viable. The organisers managed to combine a Hollywood-style spectacle with a sporting event in a manner that had not been done before, and that would set a standard for all similar events in future. The production and marketing skills of the television industry brought the Olympics to an audience wider than ever before. Television also demonstrated the power of a major sporting event to bring increased profile and economic benefits to a city and to an entire country.

The entrepreneurs of the 1980s economic boom in Australia soon picked up on this potential, and America’s Cup defence in Perth and Fremantle in 1986–87 was treated as an opportunity to put Perth on the map and to attract major economic and tourism benefits to Western Australia. By 1988 there was a boom in special events, with Australia’s Bicentenary perceived by many as a major commemorative program and vehicle for tourism. This boom was matched by governments setting up state event corporations, thereby giving public sector support to special events as never before. In Brisbane the success of Expo 88 rivalled the Bicentennial activities in Sydney, and Adelaide managed a coup by staging the first Australian Formula One Grand Prix.

The Bicentenary caused Australians to pause and reflect on the Australian identity. It also changed forever the nature of our public celebrations:

I would argue that the remarkable legacy of 1988 is the public event. It is now a regular feature of Australian life. We gather for fireworks, for welcome-home marches for athletes and other Australians who have achieved success. We go to large urban spaces like the Domain for opera, rock and symphonic music in our hundreds of thousands. The Sydney Festival attracts record numbers. The Gay Mardi Gras is an international phenomenon . . . Whatever the nature of debate about values, identity and imagery, one certainty is that Australians are in love with high-quality public events that are fun and offer to extend the range and experience of being Australian (McCarthy 1998).

The Bicentenary also left a legacy of public spaces dedicated to celebrations and special events, and of governments supporting events for their perceived social and economic benefits. Sydney’s Darling Harbour opened to welcome the Tall Ships on 16 January 1988 and provided the city with a major leisure centre. Darling Harbour incorporates dedicated celebrations areas, tourist attractions, a festival marketplace and the International Convention Centre, all adjacent to the Powerhouse and National Maritime Museums. Likewise, Brisbane’s riverside Expo 88 site was converted into the South Bank Parklands, and Melbourne followed suit with the Southbank development on the Yarra River.

Whatever its economic causes, the recession of the late 1980s and early 1990s put a dampener on the party mood and the seemingly endless growth of events — that is, until 4.27 am on 24 September 1993 when International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch spoke those memorable words: ‘And the winner is . . . Sydney!’

Many said that the late 1980s recession ended the day Sydney was awarded the Olympic Games of the new millennium. Certainly, it meant the event industry could once more look forward with optimism, as though the recession had been a mere pause for breath. Event corporations formed in the late 1980s and early 1990s started to demonstrate that special events could generate economic benefits. This led to competition between the states for major events, which became weapons in an event war fuelled by the media. Australia approached the end of the century with a competitive events climate dominated by the Sydney Olympics, the new millennium and the Centenary of Federation celebrations in 2001.

This enthusiasm for events has continued well into the first decades of the new century, with the staging of the Goodwill Games in Brisbane in 2001; the World Masters Games in Melbourne and the International Gay Games in Sydney in 2002; the World Rugby Cup in venues around Australia in 2003; the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006; the World Swimming Championships in Melbourne and the World Police and Fire Games in Adelaide in 2007; World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008; the World Masters Games in Sydney in 2009; the World Cricket Cup in Australia and New Zealand in 2015; the Rugby League World Cup in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea in 2017; and the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast and the Invictus Games in Sydney in 2018.

The corporate world was quick to discover the marketing and image-making power of events, and events became established through the 1990s and the early 2000s as an important element of the corporate marketing mix. By the early 2000s, corporate involvement in events had become the norm, so that sponsorship was perceived as an integral part of staging major events. Companies became increasingly aware of the role that events could play in promoting their image and increasing their market share, but they also became more focused on event outcomes and return on investment. It became common for large companies to have an in-house event team, focused not only on the company’s involvement in public events, but also on the internal role of events in company and product promotions, staff training and morale building. Events became not only a significant part of the corporate vocabulary, but also a viable career option with employment opportunities and career paths.

Challenges face the new industry

However, the path of the modern event industry has not always been smooth, and it has faced many challenges in its short history. These include the September 11 terrorist attack on New York; the SARS crisis; the GFC; a major upheaval in the global insurance industry, resulting in escalating insurance costs and in the need for the industry to adopt strategies for managing the risks to events; and the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in 2020.

As we entered the middle of the first decade of the 2000s, the spectre of climate change began to affect the industry as the world became increasingly aware of the threat of global warming. Environmental sustainability became a key event management concept, with green initiatives adopted to reduce the environmental impact and the carbon footprint of events. Many events were created as models to impart awareness of climate change, and to encourage participants to change their habits and lifestyle. Indicating the development of public awareness of the issue is the remarkable growth of Earth Hour, an initiative of the World Wildlife Fund to switch off the lights in major cities to encourage awareness of climate change, starting in Sydney in 2007 with 2.2 million participants. In 2008, 50 million people participated across 35 countries. By 2018 hundreds of millions of people around the world in more than 7000 cities in over 180 countries were participating in the event (Earth Hour 2018). In 2019 the School Strike for Climate mobilised school children around the world in a massive action that reverberated in the global consciousness and media (Shine 2019).

Much of the rapid expansion of events was fuelled by the longest economic boom in living memory, and, by the end of the first decade of the 2000s, a reality check was long overdue. This came with the global financial crisis sparked by the USA sub-prime mortgage affair in 2008, continuing worldwide into 2009. As the economy worsened, many corporate clients cancelled events, and those that continued them tightened their budgets. The mood switched swiftly to one of austerity, and the events that continued were required to exhibit modesty and thrift — virtues that the event industry now had to practise in order to survive.

Although the GFC had a considerable impact on the event industry, events, now established as an integral part of modern business practice, managed to survive the economic downturn, as they have survived other challenges in the past. A lasting legacy is that event managers have been called upon to deliver more with less, and to tread a thin and careful line between the twin challenges of economic and environmental sustainability.

In the decade since the GFC, events have continued to grow apace and to further entrench their position as a key part of our cultural life. Event managers and producers have sought to produce ever more innovative and attractive events in order to win our hearts and minds, and open our pockets. In 2009 Vivid Sydney was born as a smart light festival headlined by Brian Eno and using the Sydney Opera House as a giant screen for lighting projections. Over the following decade, it has morphed into a giant festival of light, music and ideas, attracting massive local and international visitation and bringing Sydney alive in winter. In the same year Federation Square in Melbourne initiated The Light in Winter project, and other lighting festivals have followed with the White Light Festival in Melbourne, Enlighten in Canberra, the Swan Festival of Lights in Perth and Field of Light at Uluru in the Northern Territory. Food and wine, film and music festivals have also continued to proliferate in cities and towns around Australia.

This veritable explosion of festivals caused Munro (2016) writing in *The Sydney Morning Herald* to ask, ‘Have we reached ‘peak festival’?’

... between the Sydney Festival, the Festival of Dangerous Ideas, Vivid Sydney, Sydney Writers’ Festival, ... Sydney Design Festival, Laneway Festival, Vibes on a Summer’s Day, Sydney Comedy Festival. ... you might start feeling festival fatigue.

There’s a festival for every occasion, season and sensation in this city. Could Sydney finally have hit ‘peak festival’?

However, Westwood (2017) writing in *The Australian* challenges this assumption:

Ticket data collated by Live Performance Australia shows that 2.5 million people collectively spent almost \$170 million on festivals in 2015, a figure that does not include film and writers’ festivals, or the huge attendance at the free outdoor attractions of Vivid Sydney. And there’s no sign of enthusiasm waning ...

In early 2020, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic exploded worldwide, fracturing many of the norms and structures of society. With the ban on mass gatherings, countless events were shut down almost overnight in Australia and globally. Despite innovations such as video conferencing and internet

delivery of events, the virus had a devastating impact on the event industry, as it did on the whole of society and the economy. At the time of writing, it is impossible to predict how long the crisis will last, or what the event industry will look like on the other side of the shutdown. However, given the importance of events and the crucial role that they play in society, it is likely that the industry will rebound and that events will continue, albeit modified to suit changed circumstances and the new norm.

EVENT PROFILE

Vivid Sydney: light, music, ideas

Vivid Sydney started in 2009 as a smart light festival at Sydney Cove. As the festival developed, projections on the sails of the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Museum of Contemporary Art and Customs House at Circular Quay helped to define a unique festival precinct. The use of computer mapping technology and high-quality projections brought the iconic precinct to life, supported by a series of innovative and often immersive installations by Australian and international lighting artists and companies to become the Light Walk. Crowds flocked to the festival, which quickly became a signature event for Sydney and a tourism drawcard,



attracting interstate and overseas visitors during the normally quiet winter season. Venues were expanded, including by 2018 the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, the Rocks, Barangaroo, Luna Park and Darling Harbour, along with the city’s Kings Cross, Chatswood and Taronga Zoo precincts.

Vivid had a strong music component from the beginning, attracting legendary performers including over the first decade Brian Eno, Lou Reed, Laurie Anderson, The Cure, Kraftwerk and Pixies to a program of concerts focused initially on the Sydney Opera House. By 2018 this had expanded to include Carriageworks, the City Recital Hall and a host of music venues across the city, with a wide range of local and visiting performers.

Parallel to this, a festival of ideas was developed which by 2018 had grown to over one hundred workshops, forums and creative events at venues including the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the City Recital Hall, and the Powerhouse and Australian Museums. Headliners in 2018 included James Cameron, filmmaker of *Avatar* and *Titanic*; Dare Jennings, founder of Mambo, Phantom Records and *Deus Ex Machina*; and Dan Goods, strategist at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory and co-founder of the Museum of Awe.

Ever-increasing crowds led to challenges of congestion and transport for the festival. Organisers responded by extending the duration of the festival to 23 days, encouraging visitors to explore the newer venues and to visit on the less crowded early weeknights, with the Light Walk becoming one-way at peak times.

In 2019 Vivid Sydney set a new record with 2.4 million people attending the festival and contributing over \$172 million to the NSW economy (Destination NSW 2020).

However, Vivid Sydney at the end of its first decade was not without its critics, one of whom complained that it is too crowded, too repetitive and has lost its creative mojo (Farrelly 2018):

Vivid at 10 has proved you can be loud without actually being vivid . . . So, question: has Vivid become the victim of its own success? Has it fallen into that old Sydney trap of substituting quantity for quality? . . . Do we really care about biggest? Whatever happened to best?

Events on the world stage

This brief outline of the history of modern events relates primarily to the Australian situation, but a similar story has been replicated in most post-industrial societies. The balance between more traditional festivals and contemporary corporate events changes according to the nature of the society in a given geographic area.

Nevertheless, there is ample anecdotal evidence to suggest that both the growth of events and the twin challenges of economic and environmental sustainability are worldwide phenomena. In 2017 the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) reported a record number of 12 558 international association meetings taking place globally, the highest annual figure ever recorded in its yearly analysis of the immediate past year’s meetings data. It had previously identified a 50-year trend

of exponential growth in the number of international association meetings, with numbers doubling every 10 years. Although this exponential growth had slowed in recent years, it was still described as a more mature, but still solid growth pattern (International Congress and Convention Association 2018).

Meanwhile in Asia, the staging of the Summer Olympics in Beijing in 2008, World Expo in Shanghai and the Asian Games in Guangzhou in 2010 and the Commonwealth Games in Delhi in 2010 saw these cities use major events to showcase their emerging prominence to the world. This increasing interest in events in Asia is reflected in the establishment of International Festivals and Events Association affiliates in China and South Korea (International Festivals and Events Association 2018).

Australia still retains a degree of prominence in the international events field, with state governments’ event corporations and the staging of the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000 being regarded as international benchmarks for best practice in the field.

1.4 Special events

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1.4 Distinguish between different types of special events.

The term ‘special events’ has been coined to describe specific rituals, presentations, performances or celebrations that are consciously planned and created to mark special occasions or achieve particular social, cultural or corporate goals and objectives. Special events can include national days and celebrations, important civic occasions, unique cultural performances, major sporting fixtures, corporate functions, trade promotions and product launches. It seems at times that special events are everywhere; they have become a growth industry. The field of special events is now so vast that it is impossible to provide a definition that includes all varieties and shades of events. In his ground-breaking work on the typology of events, Getz (2005, p. 16) suggests special events are best defined by their context. He offers two definitions, one from the point of view of the event organiser and the other from that of the customer or guest:

1. A special event is a one-time, or infrequently occurring event outside the normal program or activities of the sponsoring or organizing body.
2. To the customer or guest, a special event is an opportunity for an experience outside the normal range of choices or beyond everyday experience.

Among the attributes that he believes create the special atmosphere are festive spirit, uniqueness, quality, authenticity, tradition, hospitality, theme and symbolism.

Types of events

There are many different ways of categorising or grouping events, including by size, form and content, as discussed in the following sections. This text examines the full range of events that the event industry produces, using the term ‘event’ to cover all of the following categories.

Size

Special events are often characterised according to their size or scale (figure 1.2). Common categories are mega-events, hallmark events, major events and local/community events, although definitions are not exact and distinctions can be blurred.

Mega-events

Mega-events are those events that are of such scale and significance that they affect whole economies and reverberate in the global media. They include Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup and World Fairs, but it is difficult for many other events to lay claim to this category.

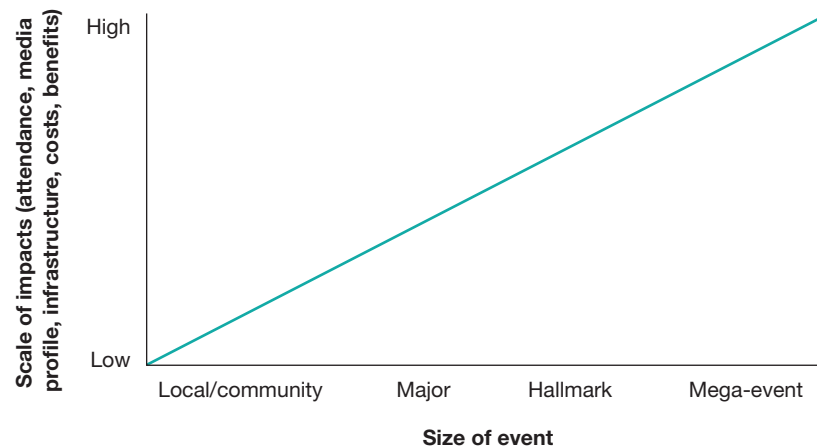
Hall (1992, p. 5), defines them as:

Mega-events such as World Fairs and Expositions, the World Soccer Cup final, or the Olympic Games, are events which are expressly targeted at the international tourism market and may be suitably described as ‘mega’ by virtue of their size in terms of attendance, target market, level of public financial involvement, political effects, extent of television coverage, construction of facilities, and impact on economic and social fabric of the host community.

Müller (2015) examined the definitions of several researchers in the field and concluded that:

[m]ega-events are ambulatory occasions of a fixed duration that (a) attract a large number of visitors, (b) have large mediated reach, (c) come with large costs and (d) have large impacts on the built environment and the population.

FIGURE 1.2 Categorisation of events



By these definitions, the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000 was perhaps Australia’s first true mega-event. The Melbourne Olympics in 1956 belonged to an earlier era of far less extensive media coverage and smaller television audiences, although in relative terms it may qualify as a mega-event of its era. Even Brisbane’s Expo 88 was officially a ‘B’ class World Expo, and events such as the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane in 1982 and the America’s Cup defence in Perth and Fremantle in 1986–87 would struggle to meet some of the criteria. More recently, the Rugby World Cup in 2003, the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006 and the Gold Coast in 2018 may be seen as contenders.

Hallmark events

Hallmark events, sometimes also known as flagship or signature events, are events that become so identified with the spirit or ethos of a town, city or region that they become synonymous with the name of the place, and gain widespread recognition and awareness. The term is often used in relation to tourism, where hallmark events not only serve to attract visitors, but also help to create and support the image and brand of the destination. Tourism researcher Ritchie (1984, p. 2) defines them as:

Major one-time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination in the short term and/or long term. Such events rely for their success on uniqueness, status, or timely significance to create interest and attract attention.

Classic examples of hallmark events are the Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, known throughout the world as an expression of the vitality and exuberance of that city; the Kentucky Derby in the United States; the Chelsea Flower Show in Britain; the Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany; and the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland. Hallmark events may even relate to whole countries rather than just cities or regions, with some examples being the Tour de France and Mexico’s Day of the Dead celebrations. Such events, which are identified with the very character of these places and their citizens, bring huge tourist dollars, a strong sense of local pride and international recognition. Getz (2005, pp. 16–17) describes them in terms of their ability to provide a competitive advantage for their host communities:

In other words, ‘hallmark’ describes an event that possesses such significance, in terms of tradition, attractiveness, quality, or publicity, that the event provides the host venue, community, or destination with a competitive advantage. Over time, the event and destination can become inextricably linked, such as Mardi Gras and New Orleans.

Examples in Australia might include the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, Vivid Sydney, the Australasian Country Music Festival at Tamworth, the Melbourne Cup and the Adelaide Festival, all of which have a degree of international recognition and help to identify the ethos of their host cities. Hallmark events are an important component of destination marketing, which will be discussed further in the chapter on event tourism planning.

Major events

Major events are events that are capable, by their scale and media interest, of attracting significant visitor numbers, media coverage and economic benefits. Melbourne has developed the Australian Open tennis

tournament, the Australian Formula One Grand Prix and the White Night Festival into significant annual major events. Perth has staged the Mastercard Hopman Cup in tennis, the Johnnie Walker Classic golf tournament and the Bledisloe Cup in 2019. South Australia has developed the Santos Tour Down Under into the prime cycling event in the southern hemisphere. Cultural events can also be contenders, such as the Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne arts festivals; the MOFO and Dark MOFO festivals in Hobart; and regional festivals such as Ten Days on the Island in Tasmania and the state-wide Queensland Music Festival.

Local or community events

Most communities produce a host of festivals and events that are targeted mainly at local audiences and staged primarily for their social, fun and entertainment value. Such events can be found in almost every city and town in Australia. Some examples deserving of attention because of their unusual nature or unique setting include the Birdsville Races in outback Queensland, the Henley-On-Todd Dry River Boat Regatta in Alice Springs, and the Deni Ute Muster in Deniliquin, New South Wales. These events often produce a range of benefits, including engendering pride in the community, strengthening a feeling of belonging and creating a sense of place. They can also help to expose people to new ideas and experiences, encourage participation in sports and arts activities, and encourage tolerance and diversity. For these reasons, local governments often support such events as part of their community and cultural development strategies.

Janiskee (1996, p. 404) defines them as:

. . . family-fun events that are considered ‘owned’ by a community because they use volunteer services from the host community, employ public venues such as streets, parks and schools and are produced at the direction of local government agencies or non-government organizations (NGOs) such as service clubs, public safety organisations or business associations.

Janiskee also comments that community festivals can become hallmark events and attract a large number of visitors to a community. Janiskee estimates that community celebrations in the United States have been increasing at an annual rate of 5 per cent since the 1930s, and it is reasonable to assume that they have increased at a similar rate in Australia.

Another growing subsection of community events is charity fundraising events, which seek to increase the profile and raise funds for their respective charities. Well-known examples include Community Aid Abroad’s Walk Against Want, SIDS’ Red Nose Day and Movember, a moustache-growing charity event held during November each year that raises funds and awareness for men’s health. Although these events often have key financial objectives, they are generally seen as part of the not-for-profit community sector.

Form or content

Another common means of classifying events is by their form or content. Festivals are a universal form of event that pre-date the contemporary event industry and exist in most times and most societies. Sports events have grown out of similar roots to become a sizable and growing sector of the event industry. Business events, sometimes called MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) events, are an established arm of the event industry, and generate considerable income for their host cities and, increasingly, for regional centres.

Festivals

Festivals are an important expression of human activity that contributes much to our social and cultural life. They are also increasingly linked with tourism to generate business activity and income for their host communities.

The most common type of festival is the arts festival, which can encompass mixed art forms and multiple venues — such as the capital city arts festivals — or single art forms such as the Queensland Music Festival, the Sydney Biennale or the Melbourne Writers Festival. The most popular form of arts festival is the music festival. Music festivals can range from classical music festivals such as the International Music Festival in Canberra, to jazz festivals such as the Melbourne International Jazz Festival, to folk and blues festivals such as the Byron Bay Bluesfest and the Woodford Folk Festival in Queensland, to rock festivals such as the Falls Festival and Splendour in the Grass.

Another type of festival that has become universally popular is the food and wine festival. These range from large festivals in the capital cities to local festivals showcasing regional cuisine. Other festivals such as the Tropfest short film festival and Groovin the Moo have become multi-state festivals, while festivals such as Floriade in Canberra and the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras approach hallmark status in their respective cities. Regional festivals, too, are a growing phenomenon, with towns both large and

small expressing their unique character and distinctiveness through well-honed festivals and community celebrations. Some examples of the tremendous variety and array of regional festivals include the Mount Isa Rodeo in Queensland, the Wangaratta Jazz Festival in Victoria and the Parkes Elvis Festival in New South Wales. Festivals have become a pervasive feature of our cultural landscape and constitute a vital and growing component of the event industry.

Sports events

The testing of sporting prowess through competition is one of the oldest and most enduring of human activities, with a rich tradition going back to the ancient Greek Olympics and beyond. Sports events are an important and growing part of the event industry, encompassing the full spectrum of individual sports and multi-sport events such as the Olympic, Commonwealth and Masters Games. Their ability to attract tourist visitors and to generate media coverage and economic impacts has placed them at the fore of most government event strategies and destination marketing programs. Sports events not only bring benefits to their host governments and sports organisations, but also benefit participants such as players, coaches and officials, and bring entertainment and enjoyment to spectators. Examples of sports events can be readily identified in each of the size categories listed earlier.

Business events

Another long-established component of the event industry is business events, also known as the meetings industry or the MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) industry. This sector is largely characterised by its business and trade focus, although there is a strong public and tourism aspect to many of its activities. Meetings can be very diverse, as revealed by the definition of the Commonwealth Department of Tourism (1995, p. 3):

. . . all off-site gatherings, including conventions, congresses, conferences, seminars, workshops and symposiums, which bring together people for a common purpose — the sharing of information.

A study conducted in 2015, ‘The Value of Business Events to Australia’, found that in the 2013–14 financial year, over 37 million people attended more than 412 000 business events in Australia. These events generated \$28 billion in direct expenditure, \$13.5 billion in value-added expenditure and generated 179 357 direct jobs (Business Events Council of Australia 2015).

The following examples illustrate the exposure, visitors and economic benefits that major business events bring to their host cities.

- SIBOS, the world’s biggest financial services event, was expected to attract 6000 delegates to the International Convention Centre in Sydney in October 2018, delivering up to \$37 million in visitor expenditure (Business Events Sydney 2017).
- The world’s largest public transport event, The Union International des Transports Publics (UITP) Global Public Transport Summit, was expected to attract 2000 delegates to Melbourne in 2021 and to deliver \$9.4 million in economic contribution for Victoria (Melbourne Convention Bureau 2018).

Another lucrative aspect of the business event industry is incentive travel, defined by the Society of Incentive Travel Executives (cited in Rogers 1998, p. 47) as ‘a global management tool that uses an exceptional travel experience to motivate and/or recognise participants for increased levels of performance in support of organisational goals’. Australia’s colourful and unique locations and international popularity as a tourism destination make it a leading player in the incentive travel market.

Last, but not least, exhibitions are a considerable and growing part of the business event industry. Exhibitions bring suppliers of goods and services together with buyers, usually in a particular industry sector. They can be restricted to industry members, in which case they are referred to as trade shows, or open to the general public. The International Motor Show, the Home Show and the Boat Show are three of the largest exhibitions in Sydney, each generating tens of thousands of visitors. Major convention centres in most Australian cities and many regional centres now vie for their share of the thriving business event industry market.

1.5 The structure of the event industry

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1.5 List and describe the components of the event industry.

The rapid growth of events in the past decade led to the formation of an identifiable event industry, with its own practitioners, suppliers and professional associations. The emergence of the industry has involved the identification and refinement of a discrete body of knowledge of industry best practice, accompanied by the

development of training programs and career paths. The industry’s formation has also been accompanied by a period of rapid globalisation of markets and communication, which has affected the nature of, and trends within, the industry. Further, it has been accompanied by an era of increasing government regulation, which has resulted in a complex and demanding operational environment. The following sections describe the key components of the event industry.

Event organisations

Events are often staged or hosted by event organisations, which may be event-specific bodies such as the Sydney Festival, the Adelaide Festival, or the Australian Open tennis tournament organisers in Melbourne. Other events are run by special teams within larger organisations, such as the City to Surf fun run organised by *The Sun-Herald* newspaper in Sydney, the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race organised by the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, or the Taste of Tasmania organised as part of the Hobart Summer Festival by the City of Hobart Council. Corporate events are often organised by in-house event teams or by project teams within the companies that are putting on the event.

Event management companies

Event management companies are professional groups or individuals that organise events on a contract basis on behalf of their clients. The Australia Day Council, for example, may contract an event management company to stage an Australia Day ceremony, or Mercedes Benz may contract an event manager to stage the launch of a new Mercedes car model. The specialist companies often organise a number of events concurrently, and develop long-term relationships with their clients and suppliers.

Event industry suppliers

The growth of a large and complex industry has led to the formation of a wide range of specialist suppliers. These suppliers may work in direct event-related areas, such as staging, sound production, lighting, audiovisual production, entertainment and catering, or they may work in associated areas, such as transport, communications, security, legal services and accounting services. This network of suppliers is an integral part of the industry, and their increasing specialisation and expertise assist the production of professional and high-calibre events.

Venues

Venue management often includes an event management component, whether as part of the marketing of the venue or as part of the servicing of event clients. Many venues, such as historical houses, galleries, museums, theatres, universities and libraries, create additional revenue by hiring their facilities for functions and corporate events. Sydney’s Unique Venues Association (2018) encompasses a wide range of venues including Taronga Park Zoo, Luna Park, Sydney Town Hall, the State Theatre and Sydney Harbour Islands. Types of venues that commonly include an event management in-house team include hotels, resorts, convention and exhibition centres, sports and fitness centres, sports stadiums, performing arts centres, heritage sites, theme parks and shopping centres.

Industry associations

The emergence of the industry has also led to the formation of professional associations providing networking, communications and liaison within the industry, training and accreditation programs, codes of ethical practice, and lobbying on behalf of their members. Because the industry is so diverse, multiple associations have arisen to cater for specific sectors of the industry. Some are international associations with affiliated groups in countries such as Australia; others are specific to their region or country. Some key industry associations relevant to the interests of event managers include the following.

- Meetings & Events Australia (MEA). MEA is the peak body representing the event industry in Australia. It is dedicated to fostering professionalism and excellence in all aspects of the industry. MEA’s mission is to:
 - promote the growth and excellence in the meetings and events sector
 - create business opportunities and facilitate business-to-business relationships
 - encourage better business practices
 - offer professional development and education to build a skilled and informed industry workforce

- develop and manage an accreditation program to enhance the reputation of the industry and increase consumer confidence when dealing with industry professionals
- expand the meetings and events market by promoting its value
- advocate on behalf of the industry to raise its profile with government.
- MEA runs an extensive education and accreditation program. It also conducts an annual conference and a national awards program recognising excellence in a range of events and services to the industry (Meetings and Events Australia 2018).
- Exhibition & Event Association of Australasia (EEAA). EEAA is the peak industry association for those in the business of trade and consumer expos and events. It works to ensure industry growth by encouraging high industry standards, promoting the professionalism of members and highlighting the unique business opportunities that exist through exhibitions and their associated events. EEAA’s role is to:
 - strengthen the voice of the exhibition and event sector through effective advocacy and research
 - promote exhibitions and events as the most powerful face-to-face marketing channel
 - drive education, training and best practice in the industry
 - nurture young talent and promote careers in the sector
 - recognise achievement and excellence
 - promote sound WHS and ethical practice
 - help members grow their businesses
 - deliver events and networking channels that allow members to build peer-to-peer contacts.
- EEAA conducts an annual conference and awards program and provides significant industry networking opportunities through the annual EEAA Leaders Forum and the Young Stars and Leaders Table. It provides an ongoing program of professional development for members, a jobs board, an Excelling in Exhibitions Program in association with Sydney TAFE and an industry traineeships program in association with TAFE NSW. It also maintains an annual calendar of events run by its members and conducts an extensive research and advocacy program (Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia 2018). The EEAA code of ethics is reproduced in figure 1.3.
- Professional Conference Organisers Association (PCO). The PCO Association represents the interests of Professional Conference Organisers and Event Managers in Australia and New Zealand. It aims to increase the standard of professionalism of its members and promote a better understanding of the roles, functions and contributions of Professional Conference Organisers and Event Managers in the conference and event sector. It runs an annual conference, and a Certified Event Manager (CEM) accreditation program (Professional Conference Organisers Association 2018).

International event associations the International Festivals and Events Association (IFEA) and the International Live Events Association (ILEA), formerly known as the International Special Events Society (ISES), have both had Australian chapters in the past, but are largely inactive there at this time. A useful list of international event associations can be found at the Bizzabo blog (Bizzabo Blog 2018).

FIGURE 1.3 EEAA code of ethics

All members of the Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA) have agreed to abide by a code of ethics.

1. Members of EEAA shall abide by all relevant state and federal laws.
2. No member shall offer or promote any exhibition or service by means of explicit or implicit representation which is likely to have a tendency to deceive or mislead prospective clients.
3. No member shall use an exhibition title which is so similar to the title of another event that it is likely to deceive or mislead.
4. No claims, statistical or otherwise which cannot be substantiated, shall be made in relation to any exhibition.
5. Areas of major expenditure over and above those not included in exhibition space/stand costs shall be clearly indicated to exhibitors.
6. Members shall not accept contracts from companies whose legal or ethical status is known to be in doubt.
7. Fairness shall characterise dealings between members, their clients and visitors.

8. Members will not by innuendo or rumour damage the reputation of another member or disadvantage other members by unfair trading practices.
9. Members shall, at all times, be accessible to their clients and visitors.
10. Members shall make every effort to resolve complaints and grievances in good faith through reasonable direct communication and negotiation.
11. Undertakings or promises made by members in all literature shall be adhered to. In the event of necessary changes, notification will where possible be given to actual or potential clients.
12. Adequate insurance in respect to public liability shall be carried.
13. Wherever possible members shall use the services provided by other Association members.
14. In the event of any member's non-compliance with EEAA Code of Ethics, Clause 7 of the Constitution will apply.

Source: Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia 2018.

External regulatory bodies

As noted, contemporary events take place in an increasingly regulated and complex environment. A series of government and statutory bodies are responsible for overseeing the conduct and safe staging of events, and these bodies have an integral relationship with the industry. For example, many local councils now require a development application for the staging of outdoor events. This application may cover regulations governing the erection of temporary structures, traffic plans, noise restrictions and so on. Councils also often oversee the application of state laws governing the preparation and sale of food, and by-laws regarding street closures, waste management and removal. In addition, event organisers have a legal responsibility to provide a safe workplace and to obey all laws and statutes relating to employment, contracts, taxation and so on. The professional event manager needs to be familiar with the regulations governing events and to maintain contact with the public authorities that have a vested interest in the industry.

1.6 Event management, education and training

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1.6 List and describe the main professional associations in the event industry, discuss the attributes and knowledge requirements of a special event manager and list the types of organisation involved in the delivery of event management training.

As the size and needs of the event industry have grown, event management training has started to emerge as a discrete discipline. In the early years of the industry, leading up to the mid 1990s, the field was characterised by a large number of volunteers. Those few event managers who obtained paid positions came from a variety of related disciplines, drawing on their knowledge gained from that discipline and skills learnt on the job. Many came from allied areas such as theatre and entertainment, audiovisual production and film, and adapted their skills to events. Others came from a background of working for event suppliers such as staging, lighting and sound production companies, having discovered that they could expand and build on their existing skills to undertake the overall management of events. However, as the use of events by government and industry has grown, event budgets have increased, and the logistics of events have become more complex, the need has emerged for skilled event professionals who can meet the industry's specific requirements. Education and training at both vocational and tertiary levels have arisen to meet this need.

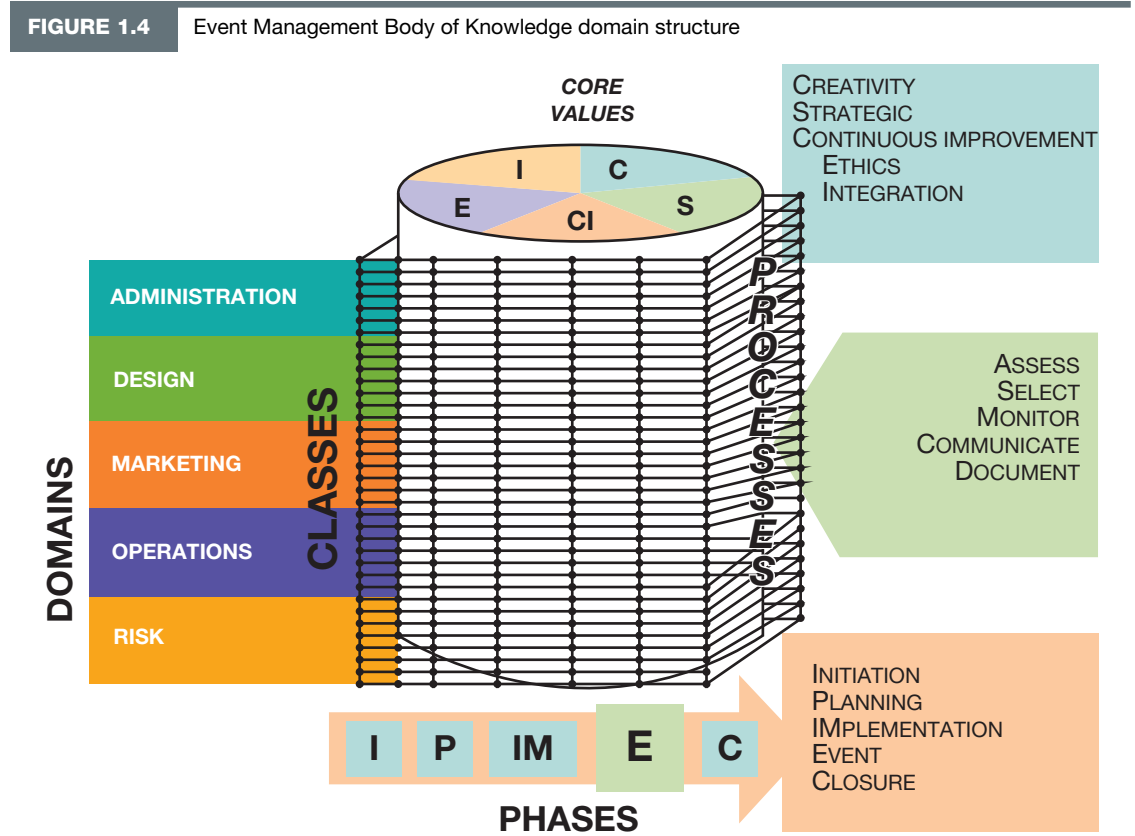
Identifying the knowledge and skills required by event managers

In addition to generic management skills, Getz and Wicks (1994, pp. 108–9) specify the following event-specific areas of knowledge as appropriate for inclusion in event management training:

- history and meanings of festivals, celebrations, rituals and other events
- historical evolution; types of events
- trends in demand and supply
- motivations and benefits sought from events
- roles and impacts of events in society, the economy, environment and culture
- who is producing events, and why?
- program concepts and styles

- event settings
- operations unique to events
- management unique to events
- marketing unique to events.

Studies by Perry, Foley and Rumpf (1996), Harris and Griffin (1997), Royal and Jago (1998), Harris and Jago (1999) and Arcodia and Barker (2002) largely confirm the importance of these knowledge/skill areas. The Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) program identifies five knowledge domains — administration, design, marketing, operations and risk — each with its classes and processes (see figure 1.4). Thus despite occasional differing emphases and nuances, the field generally agrees on the specific body of knowledge of best practice appropriate to the training of professional event managers.



Source: EMBOK 2005.

The content and organisation of this book parallels closely the knowledge domains identified by EMBOK and other researchers in the field. Part 1, the event context and concept development, provides a general background to the event industry, the range of perspectives on events and event impacts. Part 2, planning, deals with the knowledge areas of administration and marketing, while part 3, event operations and evaluation, deals with the knowledge area of operations.

Training delivery

As the industry has grown and the regulatory environment has become more complex, the skills needed for successful event management have also grown exponentially. This has resulted in the availability of a plethora of event management training options, ranging from entry courses to ongoing professional development and advanced event management education. The range of training and education providers includes the following.

- Most event associations provide some form of training, ranging from professional development through seminars, workshops and forums to certificate and accreditation programs (see figure 1.5), sometimes in conjunction with external organisations.
- TAFE and private colleges provide training at certificate, diploma and bachelor levels in a range of event management-related fields.

- Universities provide event management education at both undergraduate and post graduate levels. This may be in dedicated event programs, or as subject components in wider course areas such as tourism, hospitality, leisure, recreation, sports and arts management programs.

In all of the above cases, training may be offered face to face, online or by a mixture of these modes. Many courses also offer an industry internship component, where students are able to gain industry experience under supervision. Intending students are advised to study prospective courses closely, in order to ensure that the course content, mode of delivery, timeframe and cost match their needs.

FIGURE 1.5 The Asia Pacific Institute for Events Management (APIEM)

The Asia Pacific Institute for Events Management (APIEM) is a membership, non-commercial organisation established to contribute to the professionalisation of the events and MICE industry in the Asia-Pacific region. APIEM does this by:

- accrediting as APIEM Centres of Excellence those universities, polytechnics, colleges and training providers that have been audited to demonstrate that they provide an events and MICE curriculum of an international standard
- providing the APIEM Certified Event Manager, Organiser and Planner qualifications that are benchmarked to the United Kingdom National Occupation Standards for the Events Industry
- contributing to the events and MICE academic body of knowledge by publishing the *Asia Pacific International Events Management Journal*, a scientific, international journal
- bringing together events and MICE academics and practitioners at international conferences, meetings and symposiums 29organised by APIEM Events Management Services
- supporting the development of an international standard curriculum in event industry and MICE education through consultancy services to universities, polytechnics and colleges
- 30 organising continuing professional development programs in the Philippines, Taiwan and the United Kingdom for faculty lecturers who teach event industry and MICE subjects.

APIEM offers two main types of membership. Firstly, APIEM individual membership for events and MICE practitioners, faculty and students who wish to be recognised by an international professional organisation for their expertise in events and MICE management. APIEM has individual members in Australia, Polynesia, South-East Asia, Central Asia, Europe, India, Sri Lanka, the Middle East and the United States.

The second type of membership is for education and training organisations that wish to be recognised for providing an events and MICE curriculum that is of an international standard. The APIEM accreditation process to become an APIEM institutional member is based on four criteria: the management and content of the curriculum; teaching and learning standards; resources and learning environment; and welfare and student services.

APIEM has accredited universities, polytechnics, colleges and training organisations as Centres of Excellence in Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Taiwan.

Source: Hind 2020.

Career opportunities in events

As demonstrated, events are an expanding industry, providing new and challenging job opportunities for people entering the field. Titles and roles in the industry are not yet standardised, and may vary in different sectors of the industry and in different locations. However, the roles outlined in table 1.1 are generally accepted.

TABLE 1.1 Roles in the event industry

Title	Role
Event Director	Senior role in charge of a program of events
Event Manager	Person with overall responsibility for the planning and execution of an event
Event Coordinator	Person responsible for a given aspect of an event
Event Assistant	Entry-level position in the industry working under supervision

However, a career in the event industry is not limited to just these roles or to event management companies. There is a vast array of event positions available in different sectors of the industry, including in corporate and government institutions, public relations companies, the media, arts and sports organisations, not-for-profit groups and charities, non-government and community organisations, to name just a few. Inside these and the companies that supply them there is a variety of roles to suit all interests and backgrounds, including project managers, stage managers, technicians, graphic artists, set designers, costume makers, makeup artists, marketers, publicists, photographers, entertainers, comperes, caterers, pyrotechnicians — again, the list is seemingly endless. It is in the nature of the industry that much of this work is freelance and spasmodic, with many event staff working on a short-term contract basis for a series of employers and events.

A successful career in events depends on applicants identifying their own skills and interests, and then matching these carefully with the needs of prospective employers. Areas of expanding activity — such as corporate events, conferences, local government and tourism — may be fruitful areas to examine. Employers often look for a mix of qualifications and experience, so intending job seekers may be advised to consider volunteering and/or taking entry-level positions in order to build their resumes and to gain a foothold in the industry. A satisfying and rewarding career awaits those who apply themselves with vision, passion and perseverance.

SUMMARY

Special events perform a powerful role in society, and they have existed throughout human history in all times and all cultures. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, the Australian Aboriginal culture had a rich tradition of rituals and ceremonies. The event tradition in modern Australia began in a primitive way with the arrival of the First Fleet, and developed through the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the colony prospered and the new inhabitants came to terms with their environment. The ruling elite often decided the form and content of public celebrations, but an alternative tradition of popular celebrations arose from the interests and pursuits of ordinary people. During the twentieth century, changes in society were mirrored by changes in the style of public events. The post-war wave of civic festivals and arts festivals was strongly influenced by the community arts movement in the 1970s, along with multiculturalism and the ‘new age’ movement. Notions of high culture were challenged by a more pluralistic popular culture, which reinvigorated festivals and community events.

With the coming of the 1980s, governments and the corporate sector began to recognise the economic and promotional value of special events, and state events corporations spearheaded a new level of funding, profile and professionalism. With the advent of the global financial crisis in 2008, event managers faced a new challenge in balancing the economic and environmental sustainability of events. Events have continued to grow in numbers and complexity in the first decades of the new century.

Events can be classified by size — including mega-events, hallmark events, major events and local or community events — and by form or content — including festivals, sporting events and business events. With increasing expansion and corporate involvement, events have emerged as a new growth industry, capable of generating economic benefits and employment.

Significant components of this industry include event organisations, event management companies, event industry suppliers, venues, industry associations and external regulatory bodies. In response to the requirement for professional event management training, industry associations, universities and other tertiary institutions have developed programs. Intending entrants to the industry are advised to study the industry carefully to match their own interests and skills with those required by prospective employers.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why are special events created? What purpose do they serve in society?
- 2 Why have special events emerged so strongly in recent years in Australia?
- 3 What are the key political, cultural and social trends that determine the current climate of events in Australia?
- 4 What do you perceive as the major challenges currently facing event managers in Australia?
- 5 Identify an event in your city or region that has the capacity to be a hallmark event. Give your reasons for placing it in this category.
- 6 Examine the structure of the event industry in your area and identify local examples of the components outlined in this chapter.
- 7 Do you agree with the attributes and knowledge areas required by event managers identified by the studies in this chapter? Create a list of your own attributes and skills based on these listings.

CASE STUDY

THE AUSTRALIAN EVENT AWARDS

The Australian Event Awards is the national awards program for the Australian event industry. It was conceived and first conducted in 1999 with the first awards ceremony being held at the Westin Hotel in Sydney.

The program was developed at a time of significant expansion in many facets of the industry and, at the same time, an increasing fragmentation on the bases of both event type and geography. For example, sporting events were (and to an extent still are) seen as different from business events which were seen as different again from community events. Similarly, the events scene in one city or town was seen as quite separate from that located in another.

The reality for those working in the sector is of course quite different. The same skills of analysing and meeting complex stakeholder needs; developing creative solutions; and balancing the competing

challenges of creativity, logistical delivery, limited resources and, recently, security are universal to all event types and they are the core skills of event managers all over Australia (and indeed internationally).

In addition, there remains a real need for Australian event practitioners to come together; great benefit and sometimes commercial opportunity comes from the capacity of like-minded people to share ideas, challenges and solutions and to celebrate those who demonstrate excellence and take events to the next level. It is also true that in any industry there is benefit in ‘hunting as a pack’, in using the core interests of a significant group to influence public policy, internal organisation and the identification of new opportunities.

Thus, the Australian Event Awards was born with three core aims:

1. to reward the performance of those people, organisations and events that are doing the best work in Australia
2. to encourage ongoing excellence and the further development of a thriving event industry in Australia
3. to unite the Australian event industry.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

The Australian Event Awards is not the only awards program available to the event industry in Australia. Others include the following.

- The International Live Events Association (formerly The International Special Event Society) Esprit Awards
- The International Festival and Events Association Awards
- The Meeting and Events Australia (MEA) Awards
- The Exhibition and Event Association Awards
- The Australian Tourism Awards (which has some event-related categories).

The Australian Event Awards differentiates itself from all of these programs by remaining relevant to all Australian events, event managers and support service providers regardless of event:

- type or audience
- size or attendance
- location or association membership.

The awards openly encourage all entrants to enter multiple programs and see significant value in excellence being celebrated at all levels of the industry, culminating in the broad, industry-wide Australian Event Awards.

Another strategic consideration is the significant resources required for entrants to participate in awards programs. In addition to entry fees, there is an amount of staff time and expertise required to enter awards programs and often, for those who do not win, there is the feeling that these resources have been wasted. The Australian Event Awards addresses these issues by:

1. minimising the challenge presented by the entry process — the process is entirely online and limited in the total word count. It aims to be fairly easy to complete while also balancing the need to let entrants show the judges their best performance. The mantra ‘easy to enter, hard to win’ is synonymous with the Australian Event Awards.
2. ensuring that every entry has access to feedback from the judging panel. This approach means that regardless of how an entry fares, every entrant receives expert feedback — effectively a peer review of their work — as part of the entry process. Often entrants take this feedback away and improve their work which then improves events and the whole industry.

Finally, in the age of the internet, award entrants (and indeed judges and other stakeholders) have a right to expect openness and transparency from those evaluating the work of others. From inception in 1999, the Australian Event Awards has embraced this as a key component of the program. By publishing the awards rules and the detailed judging process on the awards website, and of course by following these documents to the letter, the Australian Event Awards simultaneously enhances its reputation for fairness and heightens the prestige associated with winning.

INDUSTRY INVOLVEMENT

From the beginning, the Australian Event Awards took the view that it has to be interest from the event industry itself that keeps the project alive. Indeed, without the support of the industry, the awards themselves would simply not be possible. Generally, the industry supports the awards by:

1. sponsoring categories. In exchange for cash support, prominent industry companies are permitted to ‘own’ an Australian Event Awards category. By so doing they guarantee themselves exposure as part of the marketing campaign, and an opportunity to present the awards and say a few words at the ceremony about their support of the industry.

2. providing goods and services in-kind. The Australian Event Awards’ ‘project delivery partners’, of which there are about 20, are able to showcase their products and services to the industry and to show their support in the most practical way. From lighting to sound to fireworks, entertainment, AV and effects, the project delivery partners treat the industry to a spectacular ceremony to highlight the achievements of the industry over a year.
3. judging the awards. There are over 40 industry experts involved in the judging of the Australian Event Awards. These judges give their time on a voluntary basis to sift through hundreds of awards entries each year and evaluate them according to the published judging process.
4. entering. Of course, no awards program can exist without entrants and it is in this area that the vast majority of participants get involved.
5. attending. There are also industry players that simply attend the awards to meet and network with their fellow events players and to show support for those who are doing outstanding work and demonstrating excellence.

The awards program itself is regularly reviewed by a small advisory panel of partners, judges, entrants, finalists and winners to ensure that the program meets the needs and expectations of the industry and remains relevant.

CHOOSING A HOST DESTINATION

One of the bigger challenges facing any national event in Australia is the process by which a destination (state, city, venue) is chosen. With significant competition between destinations at all levels to host the Australian Event Awards and showcase regions to the event industry, the Awards has adopted a triennial bid process which it calls its ‘Search for a Home’. Every third year starting in 2010, the Awards invites proposals from any state, city, venue or joint venture thereof to host the awards ceremony for the following three years. This has yielded the following host destinations:

- 2009: The Westin Sydney, NSW
- 2010: Sydney International Aquatic Centre, NSW
- 2011: Allphones Arena, Sydney, NSW
- 2012: ANZ Stadium, Sydney, NSW
- 2013: Doltone House Hyde Park, Sydney, NSW
- 2014: Doltone House Darling Island Wharf, Sydney, NSW
- 2015: Doltone House Jones Bay Wharf, Sydney, NSW
- 2016: Novotel Twin Waters, QLD
- 2017: The Event Centre, Caloundra, QLD
- 2018: Novotel Twin Waters, QLD
- 2019: Perth Optus Stadium, WA
- 2020: Adelaide Entertainment Centre, SA.

CATEGORIES, CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The Australian Event Awards consists of 23 categories; these are divided into 11 ‘best event’ categories, eight ‘achievement’ categories and four ‘headline’ categories. Each category has its own distinct weighted judging criteria and questions designed to lead the entrants to address the criteria and provide as much information to the judges as they can within the word limits.

Broadly, the criteria address the following areas:

- overall quality
- the use of ‘best practice’ techniques
- identification of stakeholders and meeting of their needs
- degree of difficulty with regard to scale, challenges and complexity
- sustainability
- the backing of claims in the entry with evidence.

Entrants are encouraged to provide photos and video to communicate their achievements to the judges.

JUDGING – CONFERRING THE AWARDS

The judging process for the Australian Event Awards is in three parts. The ‘first round’ is performed ‘blind’ by judges who score each entry against each criterion without reference to each other or to other entries. That is, each entry is scored against the criteria and entirely on its own merits. The scores are compiled, moderated for bias and the top four entries in each category become finalists.

The judges are then informed of the finalists and a ‘finalist review’ process is undertaken whereby any judge that believes that an outstanding entry that they judged has been overlooked can nominate that entry

for a review by the co-chairs of the judging panel. If approved, an entry nominated in this way can become a fifth finalist in its category.

At this point all non-finalist entries receive their judges’ feedback and often a certificate of commendation. All finalists are provided with a logo kit and public relations kit to assist in celebrating their achievements.

Following the public release of the finalist list, the second round of judging takes place. In this round an entirely new group of 10–12 judges, led by the co-chairs of the judging panel, examines all the finalist entries and votes anonymously for the winner of their choice. The entry with the most votes becomes the winner.

THE AWARDS NIGHT

The Australian Event Awards ceremony is held each year between September and November and celebrates finalist events and achievements that occurred between July 1 the previous year and June 30 in the year of the awards. The ceremony includes a three-course meal and showcase performances from industry entertainers. The awards category partners present the category that bears their name and each winner is permitted a few words of thanks. Typically, the ceremony is live streamed on the Australian Event Awards website, disseminated through social media and reaches an audience of well over 1000 people.

EXPANSION – THE AUSTRALIAN EVENT SYMPOSIUM

In recent years, the Australian Event Awards Ceremony has been held in conjunction with the Australian Events Symposium, a two-day conference and exhibition for event industry professionals staged by the awards team on the days surrounding the awards ceremony. Each symposium has theme and topics that reflect that theme.

The aims of the symposium are aligned with those of the awards, and are to:

- drive industry growth and development
- ensure Australia remains on the leading edge of the event industry worldwide
- foster unity and advancement within the event industry
- create networking and collaborative opportunities across all sectors of the industry.

The content of the symposium is focussed on professional development for industry representatives and on delivering strong take-away value for delegates.

The addition of the Australian Event Symposium has allowed the Australian Event Awards to grow into the industry’s annual key gathering point drawing hundreds of professionals for three days of festivities, education and celebration of the national event industry.

Prepared by Ian Steigrad, Director, Australian Event Awards

QUESTIONS

- 1 What benefits and/or value does the Australian Event Awards provide to entrants and to the event industry?
- 2 What are the benefits to the Australian Event Awards of changing the host destination every three years?
- 3 What does the Australian Event Awards do to try to remain relevant to all events regardless of size, location or type of event?

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