



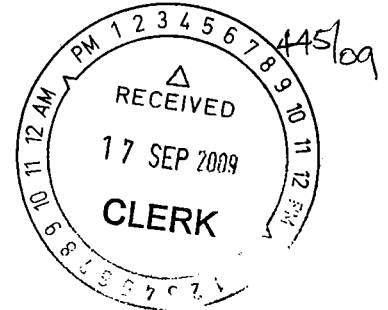
Brendan Smyth MLA

Australian Capital Territory

Deputy Leader of the Opposition

Member for Brindabella

Shadow Treasurer, Shadow Minister for Economic Development,
Business and Tourism, Emergency Services, Territory Owned
Corporations and Gaming & Racing



Mr T Duncan
Clerk
ACT Legislative Assembly
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr ~~Duncan~~ *Ta*

I write to seek approval for overseas travel utilising my study allowance. I will be accompanied by my wife, Robyn.

I would like to attend two conferences concerning areas of interest within my shadow portfolio responsibilities. These conferences are being held in Italy later this year.

The first conference is the Aerial Firefighting Conference & Exhibition which will be held in Rome, Italy, on 5 and 6 November 2009. The conference will look at the emerging field of fighting bushfires through aerial bombardment.

This Conference is being organised by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, with support from the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Response (UN-ISDR) and the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC). It will deal with such important issues as aerial suppression systems, aerial firefighting tactics, training and simulation as well as night time aerial firefighting operations.

The second conference relates to my tourism responsibilities and is the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) 48th Congress and Exhibition with associated post congress tours from 7 to 13 November 2009 in Florence, Italy.

This Congress will look at all aspects of the convention industry, including the application of modern technologies, the emerging shape of meetings, celebrating big anniversaries and different sectors in the conventions and meetings trade. I have been asked to make a presentation at this Congress and also be part of a panel discussion.

I will be absent from Australia from 17 October 2009 to 15 November 2009 or a total of 29 days. I would note that part of this trip will comprise a private holiday. The proportion of this trip that will comprise Assembly business includes four days for travel both to and from Italy, two days for the Aerial Fire Fighting Conference in Rome and seven days for travel from Rome to Florence and attendance at the ICCA Conference in Florence.

I understand that the Member's Guidelines allow for a certain amount of private time whilst on overseas travel on Assembly business. I look forward to your advice, therefore, as to the proportion of the airfares that would be considered to be private travel. I will, of course, pay for this proportion of the airfares.

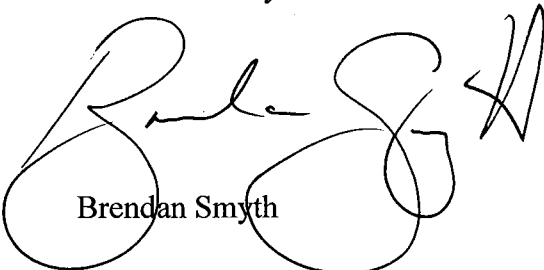
The approximate cost of the trip will be as follows:

Fares	\$4,900
Accommodation, expenses and internal travel	5,600
ICCA Conference	650
Aerial Fire Fighting Conference	720
Total estimated cost	<u>\$11,870</u>

I understand that the net cost for attending these two conferences can be accommodated within my study allowance.

If you have any questions about my proposal, please let me know.

Yours sincerely



Brendan Smyth

17/9/9

STUDY TRIP REPORT

Name: Brendan Smyth MLA

Purpose of visit: To travel to Italy to attend the Aerial Firefighting Conference & Exhibition held in Rome on 5 and 6 November 2009 and to attend the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) 48th Congress and Exhibition in Florence and Venice from 7 to 13 November 2009.

Places visited and date(s) of visit:

- Rome, 5 and 6 November 2009
- Florence, 7 to 11 November 2009
- Venice, 12 and 13 November 2009

Expenses incurred:

Air fares	2,502.54
Conference registration	1,540.30
Expenses and Incidentals	3,989.13
Total:	\$8,031.97

Organisation(s) and individuals visited:

Aerial Fire Fighting
Ergife Palace Hotel
Rome, Italy
5 – 6 November 2009

International Congress & Convention Association
48th ICCA Congress & Exhibition
Florence, Italy, 7 – 11 November 2009
Venice, Italy, 12 – 13 November 2009

Business undertaken:

I attended and presented at the Aerial Fire Fighting Conference 5th & 6th November 2009, Rome, Italy.

I attended and presented at the 48th International Congress and Convention Association Congress and Exhibition 7 -13 November Florence, Italy.



Aerial Fire Fighting

The way in which bushfires (known as wildfires in many other countries) are fought varies greatly from the northern hemisphere to the southern hemisphere. Many northern hemisphere countries have a much greater reliance upon the use of aerial suppression than we do in Australia. They also use fixed wing as well as rotary aircraft, where as aerial suppression in Australia is predominately by helicopters.

The use of aircraft for the aerial suppression of bushfires first occurred around 1930 and usually involved small aircraft equipped with casks or kegs. It wasn't until after World War Two when a large number of surplus military aircraft became available, particularly bomber aircraft, that aerial suppression became a regular feature in bushfire suppression, particularly in North America.

Aerial suppression is now in its third phase, with specifically designed fixed wing aircraft as well as the conversion of even larger aircraft now allowing the delivery of very large volumes of water with foam, retardant or gel products added to improve the effectiveness of the drop.

The conference ran for two days and had over 200 delegates from 31 countries.

The conference looked at a number of different areas including:

- country updates
- application of new technologies and products
- suppression tactics
- inter-country cooperation
- standards
- research and development
- fuel reduction
- the effects of weather
- training
- international cooperation

A trade exhibition allowed many different firms to display their products. These ranged from various types of aircraft and firefighting chemicals to training simulators, tracking systems and other service providers.

Countries such as Italy, Croatia, Poland, Spain, Lebanon, Greece as well as the European Union gave presentations concerning their approach to aerial Firefighting. Aerial fire suppression activity consumes 50% of the Italian Civil Protection budget, spending 130

million euros in 2009 on firefighting and a further 60 million Euros on aircraft acquisition. The current fleet consists of 39 aircraft including 19 medium fixed wing, 8 small fixed wing with the rest being helicopters. It was noted that bushfires in Italy while declining in number are growing in size.

The Croatian Air Force operates an entire squadron of firefighting aircraft. Their policy is that no delays are permitted: as soon as a fire is reported, as many aircraft as possible are dispatched. They conduct four aerial reconnaissances a day during the fire season and operate a priority dispatch system. Given limited community based resources to fight fires their main suppression tools are medium and small fixed wing aircraft and helicopters.

Aerial fire suppression began in Poland in the 1960s. Poland relies on an integrated approach based on a series of fire towers and ground and air patrols with a view to the detection of all fires within 30 minutes of ignition. They operate a number of fixed wing and rotary aircraft from 17 Forest Air Bases and 50 operational landing grounds. The aircraft are mainly medium lift capacity aircraft, mostly manufactured in Poland.

Spain conducts fire suppression activity for a full twelve months a year. Winter fires occur in the uplands and along the northern coast with a summer fire season particularly on the Mediterranean coast. Private contractors operate 41 fixed wing and 31 rotary aircraft with the Royal Spanish Air Force operating 32 fixed and 31 rotary aircraft, with a combined load of 538,000 litres. The Spanish budget for aerial suppression was 67 million Euros in 2009. Despite having what was classified as a quiet season, unfortunately 9 firefighters and 2 pilots died as a result of bushfires in 2009 in Spain.

Lebanon put its first national Strategy for Forest Fire Management in place in 2009. Funds have been raised to purchase 3 firefighting helicopters for the Lebanese Air Force. The Government of the United Arab Emirates has agreed to donate additional helicopters for the firefighting effort. Lebanon is also currently building up its volunteer firefighting capacity as part of its national strategy.

An officer from the Greece Air Force gave a presentation concerning the tactics used in fighting bushfires in Greece

The conference was told of the initiatives of the European Union (EU) to assist member states in combating bushfires. The EU has established a Fire Fighting Technical Reserve (EUFFTR) stationed in Bastia, Corsica. The EUFFTR was established in response to the 2007 European fire season which was particularly bad. There were twelve major outbreaks in six countries, seven of which occurred simultaneously.

The EUFFTR consists of two Bombardier 415 aircraft which are used in three different scenarios. The first is the Short Intervention in which the aircraft are dispatched and return on the same day. They are dispatched within three hours of request and take no backup or support. They operate at a range of less than 500 kilometres.

Secondly the EUFFTR is Pre Positioned, with an expectation of the assistance being required for several days. Usually with a range of greater than 500 kilometres, the unit is onsite within 24 hours of the request and take additional flight crew and maintenance staff.

The third option is the Detachment which is usually for longer than several days and distances of greater than 500 kilometres. Where multiple conflicting requests for assistance are received the aircraft will remain in Bastia and are allocated on a priority basis.

A number of technical papers were given across a variety of subjects including aircraft, firefighting products and reporting on and the effectiveness of fire suppression techniques. A presentation from the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) informed the conference of some of the lessons learnt in dealing with bushfires. The primary lesson was that more needed to be done to integrate the various activities around both the reduction of and the suppression of bushfires, particularly with additional emphasis on fuel reduction.

The FAO representative also spoke to the fire management working paper entitled *Fire Management: Voluntary Guidelines, Principles and Strategic Actions*. Of relevance to those at the conference was the applicability of the guidelines to aerial firefighting.

It is clear that the aerial firefighting capability has matured greatly in the last decade in the availability of larger and more accurate aircraft, in tactics, in the application of fire retarding products and in international co-operation. While the past few years have seen more international efforts, it is also clear that further opportunities exist to better coordinate the international effort making greater use of the costly equipment that is often underutilised in the off season in each hemisphere.

There is no international organisation covering or coordinating the aerial fire suppression industry.

The issue of fire weather prediction and its effect on bushfire fighting and aerial operations was also discussed.

A number of presentations looked at advances in technology, particularly in the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and their application to fire detection and suppression.

Legal issues were discussed concerning international activity, particularly liability issues. Communications are an international problem as are standards for equipment and products and training.

There is also the question of assistance to countries which do not have the resources to use aerial suppression techniques. One presenter made the statement that some of the largest fires and the most numbers of fire related deaths occur in Africa which receive little or no assistance and certainly little or no coverage in the world's media. In 2008, there were approximately 350 bushfire related fatalities worldwide.

As the only Australian delegate, I was asked to address the conference on aerial fire suppression in Australia, reflect on the Victorian fires of 2009 and comment on the outlook for the Australian fire season.

In both his opening and closing remarks, the chairman of the organising committee, Rear Admiral Terry Loughran (Rtd) CB FRAeS, stressed the importance of fuel reduction. As it is the only factor of the three components of a bushfire fuel, oxygen and temperature that

humans can manage or have any effect upon, it is the factor that all jurisdictions have to address.

Conclusions and/or recommendations for the Aerial Firefighting Conference:

It is clear that the use of aerial bushfire suppression is used in different ways in different jurisdictions. The industry is changing rapidly. The industry and its capability are expanding quite quickly.

Issues of cost, utilisation, application, international co-operation, communications, tactics, standardisation and legislation all need to be addressed.

The industry as a whole needs to better coordinate internationally.

The best way to reduce the impact of bushfires is to reduce fuel loads.

Aerial firefighting alone will not stop fires. The need for coordination with ground crews is essential.

The best application of aerial suppression is to respond with aerial suppression as quickly as possible to reduce the spread of the bushfire and to contain the fire until the arrival of ground crews. Ultimately the blacking out of a fire ground will be conducted by ground crews.

It is now acknowledged by NAFC that a role exists for medium and large fixed wing firefighting aircraft in Australia

The cost of maintaining a significant state or territory firefighting aircraft presence is beyond the resources of individual Australian jurisdictions and that a national approach is the appropriate path to follow

I recommend that:

1. The ACT Minister for Emergency Services, through the ACT's membership of National Aerial Firefighting Centre, calls for a trial of fixed wing aerial fire suppression aircraft to assess their effectiveness in the Australian bushfire context.
2. Given its central location in south eastern Australia, the ACT Minister for Emergency Services lobby in appropriate forums for Canberra to become the centre of aerial fire suppression activity in Australia.
3. The Chief Minister raise at COAG that Australia further investigates reciprocal arrangements with other jurisdictions to increase international co-operation to combat bushfires.
4. The Chief Minister raise at COAG that all states and territories in Australia put in place a national fuel reduction strategy.

International Congress & Convention Association 48th Congress & Exhibition

With almost a thousand delegates from 68 countries representing 450 organisations, the 48th ICCA Congress and Exhibition was the largest ICCA Congress to date.

At the ICCA Congress, I participated as a Speaker in a session that dealt with 'Big Anniversaries'. This provided me with the opportunity to present information on Canberra as Australia's capital city and to provide an insight into preparations for Canberra's centenary in 2013. I received a lot of positive feedback after our session.

The ICCA Conference also included the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

The conference was divided into a number of streams that looked at various sectors of the business travel and events market including Destination Marketing, Meetings Management, Meetings Support Venues and Transport. There were also regional updates by the various chapters of ICCA.

Of particular interest were developments in the Asian region. As the nearest market to Australia, it provided both opportunities as a potential source market as well as competition to the Australian market. Asia is very much a growth market; it is rapidly growing its capacity, improving the education of the workforce and working to leverage off major events.

Singapore for instance receives 40% of its tourism receipts from business travel and events and continues to look to expand into new markets. They work to ensure appropriate representation on their various boards to ensure co-operation between sectors and indeed industries. For instance, Singapore has appointed a medical doctor to a tourism board to capitalise on a growing medical tourism market world wide.

The conference was told that within Asia, Korea is the fastest growing region. The city of Seoul through its Seoul Tourism Organisation has invested in infrastructure and increased its marketing budget to increase its share of the Asian market. In 1979 the COEX was built and is the 10th largest facility in the world, in 2001 the Incheon International Airport was built and in 2008 the Seoul Tourism Organisation was established. The government then doubled the Seoul Convention Bureau each year for two years.

A strong emphasis of the conference was to educate members on improving their organisations. One such session was devoted to *Bidding for International Association Congresses*, taking delegates through the process of developing their bids, concentrating on the latest developments and techniques but emphasising the need to deliver what it is the client actually required.

Another session was devoted to the *Use of Social Networking Tools for Business*. The presentation discussed the need to keep up with the changing media available as well as emerging applications. In the events market a recent survey revealed that 95% use email, 74% websites, 69% online advertising and 62% use social media. It was reported that

website use was static and that email was reducing in importance; 67% of internet access was now through mobile media.

The use of blogs, video, wikis and social networks were seen to be of vital importance to the future of organisations. Indeed the prediction was made that organisations wishing to remain competitive would soon be appointing a Chief Lishing Officer (CLO) to monitor such communication tools.

A great deal of work is being done on a concept called Convention 2020. The project is being conducted by an organisation called Fast Future who have been tasked with consulting with the industry to determine what the conference centre of the future will look like. The initial results of the survey will be released this month.

The natures of meetings themselves are also changing. Three major areas of change were discussed. Firstly the audience will change. By 2020 it is predicted that 56% of the world's population will live in Asia. This will require an appreciation of the various cultures and how they do business. As already mentioned more conferences will be in Asia and more conference work will come out of Asia looking for international venues. There will be more older people. The needs of older delegates and greater numbers of them will have to be addressed, as well as a greater mixing of age groups. Also more women will be active participants.

Then we have the continuing evolution of technology and accessibility. Currently we are at Web 2.0, but will soon move to Web 3.0 as well as the continuing move to social media. At the end of the day surveys still show that 68% of people still prefer to meet face to face.

Finally, the industry is very sensitive to external factors. Rising cost, the global financial crisis, terrorism and environmental concerns all have impacted on the industry in recent years and will continue to do so into the future.

Some useful suggestions to counter the way in which the industry is changing revolved mainly around greater creativity in using new technologies, developing new forms of meetings and through the creation of focused organisations to cater to specific industries to promote their organisational aims.

Some of the biggest events worldwide are major sporting events. A session was devoted to the decision making process on how the world's major sporting bodies decide where to hold their events. Representatives of the Association of Summer Olympics International Federation and SportAccord informed delegates of the processes followed by many of the world's largest sporting bodies and how to address them. These two organisations represent approximately 100 international sporting federations which conduct almost 1000 international events. SportAccord organises an annual conference that brings together these organisations to plan the sporting event calendar of the future.

One of the major concerns discussed at the ICCA Conference was the perception that the meetings industry was "Extravagant, Wasteful, Frivolous, Unnecessary – Why we have to Fight Back to Create a Positive Image for our Industry". Recent surveys have shown that 70% of meeting planners are concerned about the current image of the meetings industry. Also of

concern is that 50% of US corporations saw "significant non-financial risks" in holding meetings and events.

Factors such as the slowness of the economic recovery in Europe and the United States, comments by influential persons such as the President of the United States critical of what appeared to be inappropriate travel and meetings, corporate cutbacks and inappropriate messaging by the industry itself has led to a public perception of leisure rather than business, and the unorganised nature of the industry coupled with the fact that the industry didn't have an immediate counter argument nor the data to highlight the importance of the industry.

At the same time, there was an irony in that many of the world leaders and their senior advisors and bureaucrats attended numerous meetings in the wake of the global financial crisis to determine solutions and the way forward.

Governments are a unique factor in the equation. It was stated that 75% of convention centres worldwide are owned in some way by governments, but that governments don't understand the industry. With many governments having a short term view, largely governed by the electoral cycle, the turnover of governments (both of ministers and the government itself), the public versus private argument and that often governments usually follow public opinion not lead it has led to that lack of understanding.

Sustainability issues affecting the meetings industry were also seen as significant. While many hotels, meeting venues and planners have adopted green policies, it is considered that there is still a significant way to go. The push for a more environmentally friendly meetings industry, with enormous ramifications for Australia, is that it is impossible to avoid the carbon impact particularly of international travel. The European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) have initiatives to reduce meeting related travel. Indeed the EU may even legislate a 25% reduction in meeting related travel.

These factors all combine to create what the presenter called "a perfect storm of issues" for the meetings and convention industry. Governments want to demonstrate restraint. Corporations want to reduce spending, green concerns aid the decision not to attend and new technologies which are increasingly affordable and telecom and internet providers who see an opportunity have all combined to present considerable challenges to the industry.

The challenges to overcome were seen as complacency within the industry and the poor promotion of the impact on the meetings industry both in economic and policy terms. There are no universally accepted measurements of the impact of the industry compounded by the current use of inconclusive or inappropriate measures. It was put that the meetings industry is incorrectly associated with leisure. It should be better identified with business and economic development, professional development as well as its contribution to the development of solutions and their implementation to any problem.

ICCA's annual conference has a tradition of having a session involving a political panel. This years subject was "Big Anniversaries – Perfect Opportunity for Politicians and the Meetings Industry to Work Together". I was offered the opportunity to speak about Canberra's Centenary in 2013. The two other panel members were representative of the city of Gothenburg which will celebrate its 400th anniversary and the Edinburgh College of Surgeons

which recently celebrated its 500th anniversary. Each of the panellists gave a presentation followed by a question and answer session.

Many suggestions were put forward including

- researching other cities with impending events and find a common interest;
- create a "roadshow" and use the opportunity to take the celebration outside of the city;
- celebrate the birthdays of local citizens who turn 21, 50, or 100 to personalise the occasion;
- find companies who are also celebrating their centenary and seek opportunity for mutual benefit;
- create a sense of nightlife by ensuring attractions and venues extend opening hours;
- involve the school community with a view to creating community involvement;
- find ambassadors from different parts of the city and use them to create local awareness;
- find ambassadors from different community sectors and use them to create local awareness.

Some of the suggestions include what not to do including not having a "party" as it is a waste of money but instead putting the funds into something sustainable for the long term use and benefit of the community.

Much of the discussion concerned establishing a lasting legacy from the centenary celebrations. Some saw it as an opportunity to construct a significant public building or venue or as an opportunity to either reboot the city brand or create the brand.

I would like to thank the Chief Minister, his staff and officers from his Department for their assistance in providing material that I used to make a power point presentation at the ICCA Conference. I also would like to thank the staff from the Canberra Convention Bureau for their assistance both in preparing for this Conference and at the Conference.

Following the conference, there were a number of workshops conducted in conjunction with various Italian tourism authorities. I attended the workshop sponsored by Venice Convention Centre which coincided with the Venice Arts Biennale. Discussions included coordination of meetings within Italy and in Venice, impending changes to the delivery of tourism support in Italy, the impact and importance of the meetings industry to Venice, coordination between tourism, the arts and the meetings industry in Venice, as well as site visits and attending the Venice Arts Biennale.

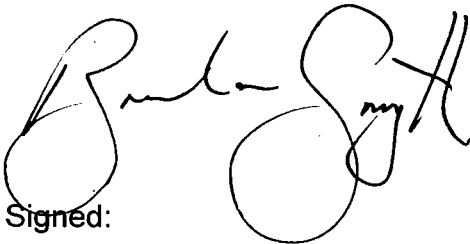
Conclusions and/or recommendations:

It is clear that the meetings industry is in a state of change mainly brought on through the world's economic situation, changing technology and environmental concerns.

The world wide convention centre infrastructure continues to expand, particularly in the Asian region.

I recommend that:

1. The ACT Government progress as quickly as practicable the construction of a new convention centre in Canberra.
2. The ACT Government review its promotion strategy with respect to Asia, to identify emerging opportunities for convention and related business.
3. The ACT Government collaborate with the tourism industry in the ACT to develop a strategy that incorporates new approaches and new technologies to promoting Canberra as a location for conventions.



Signed:

Date: 5 March 2000

Note: One or more attachments have been removed from this internet published version of the travel report. It is Secretariat policy not to scan images of certain documents that are incidental to the travel and the travel report (e.g. conference programs, promotional brochures) that Members attached to their study travel reports. Individuals wanting copies of these papers should contact the Assembly Secretariat via e-mail at secretariat@parliament.act.gov.au