

IPPS

Sharing Plant Production Knowledge Globally

the Propagator



International Plant Propagators Society (IPPS) Australia

International Plant Propagators' Society www.ipps.org.au
Australian Region - Newsletter Autumn 2012 - No: 33

Sustainability for Food and Business

When I think of Toowoomba I imagine a picturesque medium sized country city located 90 minutes or so west of Brisbane, on the rich volcanic soils at the edge of the Great Dividing Range.

Toowoomba is 700 metres above sea level & has a more temperate climate than Brisbane. No doubt this helps plant growth and it's reputation as Queensland's Garden City.

The city dates back to the early 1840's so there is plenty of history for the visitor to see. There are numerous National Parks and smaller towns nearby to explore as well.

Over the last decade the horticultural industry has been undergoing rapid structural changes. The green-life industry is not what it used to be and we need to change.

Business texts have guru Michael Porter suggesting that there are three clear successful competitive positioning strategies that businesses can follow:

1. Low Cost Leaders - economies of scale.

2. Differentiation - industry class price leaders with premium products/services.

3. Focus - whose efforts are focussed on servicing a few niche markets.

The key is to follow a clear strategy. Historically middle roaders who try to mix strategies will fail.

That is why this conference that deals with the heart of things we can physically do is vital for sustainability of our businesses.

This conference covers many aspects of improving your sustainability through propagating and growing plants more efficiently. It will explore best practice and emerging technologies that give an edge, or even have you contemplating alternative opportunities.

More importantly members are there with the experience to assist you in solving problems. It really is worthwhile coming along to

network with others in the industry. Who knows it might lead you into something different entirely.

I really am looking forward to the conference tours, and know there are some especially interesting things to see and learn about as we experience others "managing sustainability".

Come along with an open mind and be prepared to be positively challenged by what you hear and see at this years conference.

Bruce Higgs



Photo courtesy of Toowoomba Motel Events Centre

THIS EDITION

Sustainability for Food & Business
International Scene - Japan
2012 Toowoomba Conference
Plant Breeding - Ozbreed

Reports

- President's Comment
- Executive Officer's Comment

Profile Brad Skinner

Challenge
News & Events
Newsletter Editors Comment

President's Comment

Here's hoping the New Year has revitalised members.

Behind the scenes,

the managing of the Society is a flurry of activity in the lead up to the Toowoomba Conference.



Brad & the team have put together a very balanced, informative program on many aspects of the current hot topic for business; 'Sustainability'. Much of this newsletter will be dedicated to "What's on in Toowoomba'. There has got to be something that tempts you, so come to Toowoomba & enjoy the hospitality & friendship of the IPPS family

My further congratulations go to Anne Willcock, our 2012 South African Exchangee. Anne has already completed her trip to South Africa & by all reports, had an experience of a lifetime. I look forward to meeting up with Anne & listening to her tales at the Conference.

We are now busy organising a tour schedule for Eugenie-Lien Bezuidenhout, the winner of exchange program from South Africa. Her specialty area is the production of Proteaceae. Would you like to host Eugenie for a short time during her trip? We are looking for volunteers particularly in Qld. so please contact me by mid- April.

Nominations are still open for the prestigious Rod Tallis Award & for our 'Six Pack' group. I have extended our closing date to Friday 20th April. Young people in horticulture are our future lifeblood & we need to recognise & encourage them. Updated nomination forms and further

information are available on the website.

Would you like to be part of a professional but friendly group dedicated to the management of our society? If you are a passionate member who cares about our industry, don't wait for the tap on the shoulder, please nominate to be an executive board member. Nomination forms will be forwarded to members with the AGM minutes very soon.

I look forward to catching up with members & visitors in Toowoomba but if you have questions about the Conference or any other matters, please contact me anytime.

Peter Lewis

Executive Officer's Report

WOW – Already we are a quarter of the way into Twenty Twelve.

IPPS Office

This time of year is always a busy time. I have been kept quite busy with 'day-to-day' running of the IPPS Office as well as membership subscription renewals and registrations for the Toowoomba Annual Conference from 17th to 20th May'12.

Membership

The Australian Region of IPPS has 234 compared to 237 members this time last year.

Membership Subscription Renewal

Yes, it is that time of the year again.

A big thank-you to those members who have forwarded payments.

A friendly reminder to everyone else, could you please tend to this matter at your earliest convenience. If you are having difficulty in paying your subscription (for whatever

reason), please feel free to contact me so that we can discuss alternative payment options.

BANK DETAILS:

**Bendigo Bank BSB: 633-000
Account No: 140185737**

If paying by EFT PLEASE PUT INVOICE NO. OR NAME IN THE PAYMENT BOX SO I CAN IDENTIFY WHO PAYMENT IS FROM. THANK YOU

Contact Detail Changes

To ensure Office records are kept 'up to date' I would appreciate it if Members could please notify me of any changed contact details. In particular, if you have changed telephone provider recently, please advise me of your new email address at pjberry@iprimus.com.au or pam@ipps.org.au

It is important that the Australian & International database records are kept 'up to date', otherwise you could be missing out on receiving information.

Toowoomba Annual Conference –'Sustainability for Food & Business' - 17th to 20th May 2012

Conference Registration Form can be accessed and downloaded from the website: www.ipps.org.au

DON'T DELAY..... BOOK TODAY....

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Email: pjberry@iprimus.com.au or pam@ipps.org.au

Phone (W): 07 3829 1444
Fax: 07 3829 9767).

I look forward to meeting up with Members who will be attending the conference in Toowoomba.

Pam Berryman



South African Exchange

Peter Lewis and the South African Exchangee Selection Panel chose Anne Willcock as this years South Africa Exchangee. Anne is from Westbourne Park in South Australia and is a student at TAFE Urrbrae. She is also a volunteer worker at 'Greening Australia' Nursery. So here is what she had to say about this:

So, when I found out I was going to South Africa, I could scarcely believe it. It had been some time since I had applied, but I had never thought my chances to be high. I hadn't told many people about my application, and so the news came as quite a surprise to them too.

My parents knew it was only a matter of time before they saw me off on my next adventure, and they knew I would make the most of it (remembering to keep safe of course!). My partner was the most upset, I guess because he'd have to cook his own dinner for three weeks!

Everyone at the nursery I work at part time was extremely jealous, and have been interested to hear about how different work would be for us if we were South African.

My TAFE nursery teacher Daniel had been to South Africa two years ago on the same exchange, so he was especially excited for me. The other teachers had seen how much Daniel had enjoyed the trip and the things

he had achieved since, so they were very supportive as well, especially when it came to catching up on all the work I had missed - but we all know this experience has been completely worthwhile!

South African workplaces are so different to those over here - the ladies prefer to fill pots on the ground, and the lack of technology makes for innovative thinking. But times are changing, and South African nurserymen are keen to bring their industry into the 21st century. They openly share their information whilst looking to overseas growers for new ideas and techniques.

The IPPS, nationally and internationally, has been a great resource and I hope we can continue to learn a lot from each other.

Advice from 2011 6 Pack

With the 2012 conference a little over a month away it is a good time to get some input from last year's 6 pack.

While saying she is just learning, Kiri Borgas enjoyed last years conference immensely. She encouraged this years 6 pack to take every opportunity and talk to everyone. Don't be afraid to ask and listen to what members have to say.

David Jenkinson said last years conference was very good, informative and enjoyable. The 6 pack spent a fair bit of time hanging around together It was a good opportunity to meet people in the industry. This year Luke Dent and Pam will be coordinating daily duties.

Heidi Dougherty thought it was a great experience for someone new to horticulture. As well as meeting

people and gaining knowledge the conference really helped with life skills especially in organising an event. The speakers were great and definitely helped her career path. Her advice was to go in with an open mind and take time to chat and learn regardless of age.

International Scene

Garden Centers in Japan

This time we move to Japan as Tadao Fujimori the newsletter editor for IPPS Japan explains some aspects of the horticultural market there, please admire the photos of plants.

The two busiest seasons for Japanese Garden Centers is from the end of April to Mother's day in May and also the month of December. In May, we Japanese have what is called "Golden Week". There are 4 national holidays concentrated in this period of May so that some people may take a vacation as long as 10 days. Many take family trips to go abroad or just around Japan.

In this season the cold weather has gone, so it's a very comfortable and warm spring season. People feel good and like to go out of doors and of course many people like to go to garden centers to buy the various ornamental plants to enjoy at home and in their own garden.

The other busy season is December. Japanese people also have a tradition of sending presents this time of year: It is called "Oseibo" in Japanese. The gifts go to friends, acquaintances, teachers, business customers and so on who the person





good feelings to the people there, this gives a special feeling of luxury to the room. That's why these plants are the perfect gift that will keep thankful thoughts of the giver in their hearts.

Toowoomba Annual Conference

–‘Sustainability for Food & Business’ - 17th to 20th May 2012

This year we will be meeting at the Toowoomba Motel Events Centre.

On the afternoon of Thursday 17th May, there will be another IPPS Golf Classic. If you can not make this event then just relax and enjoy Toowoomba, or come along to registration at the motel for the chance to catch up with old fiends and unwind at the welcome function.

On Friday we start the day with the Fellows Breakfast for past presidents and the Young Propagators Breakfast.

Then the conference will start with our official opening and welcomes by Peter Lewis and Brad Skinner (our conference convenor).

Then there is a really special treat with our key note speaker and well known horticulturist – **James McGeoch** of *Birkdale International*. James (an IPPS veteran) will talk about his experiences in the Asian Nursery Industry with particular emphasis on China.

James is a Director of Birkdale International (Hong Kong), Zhuhai Birkdale Nursery (China), Nakheel Birkdale International (United Arab

Emirates) and McGeoch’s Birkdale Nursery which operates Emaho Trees in Australia.

He has 42 years horticultural and 22 years exporting experience. Over the last 15 years, he has spent most of his time in Asia. Major projects include Disneyland in Hong Kong and James Packer’s City of Dreams in Macau.

Just recently, he has signed a collaborative agreement with the Shanghai Government to undertake their landscaping requirements in conjunction with Disney US for the new Disneyland Shanghai which is about to commence.

NURSERY VISITS

Following morning tea we will set out on our Nursery Visits. Barbara McGeogh will welcome us to Emaho Trees at Ravensbourne where we will have lunch. As well as a boutique tree farm specializing in a range of advanced, premium quality, Australian native trees, the 40 acre property boasts a garden that is part of the Open Garden Scheme.

Then on to Ausplant Nursery at Dalby. Ausplant Nursery (started in 1983 on 10 acres) is now owned and operated by Brady and Rachele Cumming who continue the family tradition of growing quality plants for the Nursery and Landscape Industries.

EVENING FUNCTION - Queensland Country hospitality at the Jondaryn Woolshed - looking forward to it.

Saturday sessions start with **Anita Milroty** from the *Outback Gondwana Foundation*. She will take us through a botanical discussion on the evolution of plants from prehistoric to modern time with emphasis on their adaptation strategies to climate change.

David Hancock – *Natural Area Holdings* – will take us through a case study for developing a business around propagation for

felt obliged to in that year. It is a token of heartfelt appreciation.

Generally, traditionally people would give various foods, however recently more and more people would like to present the ornamental plants as their Oseibo gift. We can proudly say that this is the result of the promotion efforts of the nursery industry.

This is the reason why we at the garden centers are awfully busy and benefit greatly from this season.

The 6 most popular potted plants in this season are:

- ◆Cyclamen
- ◆Cymbidium
- ◆Begonia
- ◆Azalea
- ◆Poinsettia
- ◆Phalaenopsis.

These plants are all of a high grade and we can enjoy them over two months at home. They bloom throughout the important New Year’s holidays providing a feeling of happiness, hope and joy while brightening the indoor environment through the winter. We promote the fact that since these ornamental plants will be placed in the most visible location of the house bringing



environmental & commercial sustainability.

Peter Rowe – *PolyGenomX* – this company is responsible for the commercialization of unique technologies for rapidly propagating large quantities of fast-growing, climate-tough, special purpose trees (and other plants) that can double the profits of any plant-based enterprise. Sounds just about right now.

YOUTH AWARD WINNERS

The session kicks off with a presentation by our Rod Tallis Award Winner.

Robert Percy – *Aspley Nursery* – “Fog or Mist, when and where to use “ should be an interesting talk that may have some of us reassessing what we are doing.

Anne Willcock – ‘*My South African Experience*’ will talk about her experience in March in South Africa culminating in attending that regions conference.

**Eugenie-LienBezu
idenhout** –
*Arnelia Farms,
Hopefield, South
Africa - South
African Exchangee
Presentation.*



GROWING MEDIA

Sandeepta Gamalath – *Jiffy* – a paper on current trends in the development of sustainable Potting Media ingredients for Plant Propagation to the End User.

Barbara Mann – *Barbara Mann Propagation* - Using Peat based Pots for Propagation

Peter Eichmann – *Oxford Park Nursery* – Using Coir Peat as a base for a Potting Media Outdoors

Brad Skinner – *Highsun Express Plugs* – Biodegradable Pots – The latest from the US Pack Trials.

Marshall McKay – *Phytofuels* – Biofuels - more opportunities.

CONFERENCE AWARDS & CELEBRATION DINNER – Saturday night at Toowoomba Motel & Events Centre. WATER

Sundays sessions start with **John McDonald** – *NGIQ* – Latest technology in Irrigation & Water Management for Horticultural Enterprises. We then should anticipate a talk on “Dam water harvesting, wetland management”.

GROWERS EXPERIENCES – A small panel will provide information on ‘*What They Did*’

PESTS & DISEASES

Then **John McDonald** – *NGIQ* – will discuss the “Disease test kits and their application in Nurseries” . This will be followed by “Taking the ‘Soft Approach’ to Pest & Disease Management, Does it Work? “

Todd Layt – *Ozbreed Pty Ltd* – will wind up the session with “Current research on weed control in Potted Plant Production”.

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Sustainability for Business – Heating & Cooling – Energy Storage – The latest developments in ‘efficient’ use & management of energy for production in the Nursery Industry

QUESTION TIME

Questions rising out of conference proceedings will be taken in writing over the days. This will give potential respondents time to consider a more concise answer to your question. You can also send them in ahead, so to kick things off you are invited to begin sending your questions to Pam’s email at pam@ipps.org.au

POST CONFERENCE TOUR

MONDAY 21st MAY 2012

A leisurely day visiting Production Nurseries in the Lockyer Valley & Redlands City Regions finishing at the Brisbane Airport at 4.00pm

IPPS on LinkedIn



The IPPS International Board has announced the introduction of The International Plant Propagators Society’s own LinkedIn group. For those not familiar with LinkedIn, it is a business-related social networking site used mainly for professional networking. The site allows you to post messages and read replies by members – and non-members – all around the world.

Here’s how to get started ...

- Already a LinkedIn member - search for the International Plant Propagators Society group.
- Not a member of LinkedIn - Go to www.linkedin.com and join the LinkedIn network. You will need to register with the site before you can gain access to the IPPS group.

Once you have applied to join the IPPS group the moderator will approve your application.

As a LinkedIn member you will be able to participate in any IPPS group discussion as well as join other industry related groups.

The IPPS group will be an open group which means any LinkedIn member from around the world can apply to join. Part of the job of the moderator will be to police any discussion postings to ensure the standards and ethics of IPPS are upheld.

This site will help improve international communications within IPPS as well as provide a forum to ask production questions, discuss propagation issues, and post news and announcements, photographs, etc.

If you have any questions about this group, email the moderator: IPPSmoderator@ipps.org

Alan M. Jones Eastern Region International Director Manor View Farm Monkton, Maryland, USA



Todd Layt with very popular *Westringia*, Ozbreed Aussie Box®

Plant Breeding - Ozbreed

After hearing about plant breeding successes from many people over the years I thought it was about time that we heard the Ozbreed story. So I contacted Todd Layt to get his story. Linda Roberts provided this, and I hope it inspires some members similarly to try to breed some plants.

Ozbreed is an environmental plant and turf breeding company, established in 2002 and managed by Todd Layt. Ozbreed focuses on research & development of improved plant and turf species and marketing these products to consumer & commercial markets.

Background

Todd grew up on a turf farm in the early to late 1970's and was running the farm by the 1980s where he gained his initial firsthand experience with turf varieties. The farm was sold in 1986 and Todd spent a few years working for larger corporate companies.

With limited resources he started Abulk in 1990, primarily a turf company, which laid the foundations for Ozbreed. After some years many of his customers kept asking for an improved native grass so with this in mind Todd developed Australia's first improved native grass, **Eskdale**

Poa, and the key to successful business growth was soon realised.

The business quickly grew with improved varieties of ornamental grasses, strappy leaves, native shrubs & ground covers, and environmental hardy exotics. These products either have a low fertility rate and/or fit into our native product range.

What is the approach to R&D?

In the early days research was a result of spotting mutations that would occur naturally in mass production of plants. Purpose breeding was later employed as a trial and error process. Once a better variety is realised, rigorous testing is then completed to determine suitability and performance in a wide range of different environments and varied conditions.

The testing phase is an integral element and takes approx. 5 years to complete, then another 5 years to reach the marketplace, therefore return on R&D is not realised until some 10 years later. Ozbreed will then determine a suitable market, and utilise marketing tools available to market products.

What is the key to success?

The key to success is to be a leader, not a follower. Listen to your industry feedback and deliver unique solutions. If you chose to market a similar product to what is on trend, then you will find the marketplace saturated, interest will wain and buyers will revert to a more established brand. The most important philosophy is to be the first with a better, unique product, then back it up with effort and long term commitment.

'If you are the 3rd or 4th to jump on the bandwagon, then you will falter.

You need to create the bandwagon...' -Todd Layt

Summary

Yes this model of business is different to the traditional type, and not



Tanika®, a very popular *Lomandra longifolia*, commonly used in roadside planting and landscapes.



Nara Native Turf™, Australia's first and only all purpose native turf.



Landscape image with various Ozbreed plants and turf.

commonly seen in the plant propagation industry. But it is not new, it has been tried and tested in many markets around the world over the past 15-20 years.

It is unconventional in that Ozbreed does not sell plants, there is no traditional turnaround of goods for payment. However this does not mean that we are a virtual company, there are tangible products that are being grown and sold around the world. It is just a different focus, which allows for a greater percentage of time and effort devoted to what we do best.

Linda Roberts Ozbreed pty ltd

PROFILE

Brad Skinner

What are the things that you feel have created your standing in the industry?



When I first started growing plugs

it was relatively new in Australia. In fact we were the first nursery to base our business plan around selling seed raised plugs in 512's and 288 plug trays for bedding plant growers to transplant and finish in punnets and pots. This soon expanded into the cut flower market where the growers appreciated some of the disciplines introduced to ensure that orders were on time and well communicated if there were any hiccups. Due to the pioneering nature of the venture many of my customers were quite interested in how we were going and supportive of us.

Wherever I can, I have tried to embrace technology to improve our level of service. From plug tray gapping machines where the missing cells are replaced by good plants robotically, to using barcode scanners from the outset some 15 years ago.

I have always been open to visitations to our nursery for customers and competitors alike and that was one of the reasons I joined IPPS. The motto fits comfortably with me.

What do I have to share with others (particularly new members) of the IPPS regarding the world of propagation.

As Highsun is a specialist seed propagation nursery we have built up quite a number of blueprints for germination of annual and some perennial germination methods from stage 0 media and seeding techniques through to stage 4 sun toning. In between stages 1,2 and 3

deal primarily with germination and growing on moisture levels and applications of plant growth regulators.

We also maintain and propagate from mainly annuals and some perennial mother plants. This is a new science for us and can only now say we have a handle on this side of the Industry. Framing mother plants to give the best cutting yield is an important factor in the success of vegetative young plants.

Another area we have some experience in is the use of alternative propagation medias such as paper pots, as this has been our media of choice from the outset. We also have experience in coir medias and recently began trials using Oasis foam.

What are the significant things you have personally gained through IPPS membership.

IPPS has opened my eyes to the traditional side of the industry for want of a better phrase. Initially I was totally focused on the bedding industry and seed raising, but due to the move into the distribution of propagation materials such as coir, Oasis foam and paper plugs I had to become more familiar with the "other" sides such as cutting propagation and grafting particularly as Highsun was dabbling in those areas. The conferences attended have been insightful if not always directly relevant to my endeavours and that is one of my aims for the upcoming Toowoomba conference. The conference committee has assembled speakers to stimulate thought, hopefully teach you something and entertain.

IPPS Proceedings on PubHort Website

All IPPS members can now view abstracts from past combined proceedings on the PubHort website, operated by the International Society for Horticultural

Science (ISHS). All the abstracts through to Volume 56 are now online with Volumes 57, 58 text. and 59 to be added next year. A search box will help you find papers by a particular author or on a certain subject or plant.

To access the abstracts, go to www.ipps.org and go to the menu bar at the top of the page. Go to "Proceedings" and then click on "Proceedings on PubHort website", or simply

<http://www.pubhort.org/ipps/allvolumes.htm>

In addition, all Option 1 members (those who get the Proceedings in book or CD form) are able to download 10 full papers free each year they maintain their Option 1 membership of IPPS. A total of over 32,000 pages have been included and each volume published in the future will be included as well, making this a great resource for IPPS members and another benefit of joining as an Option 1 member.

Option 2 members can download papers for the fees charged by the ISHS, currently EUR 12 or USD 18 per paper so it pays to be an Option 1 member.

All Option 1 members would have received an email from the International Office with further details on how to access the full paper.

News

IPPS launched "Gator" in December 2011, this is a newsletter of the society edited by Greg McPhee that can be found on the international website: www.ipps.org.au

So what are you waiting for? Go online and have a browse.

Hydroponic Farmers Federation Conference 18 - 20 July, 2012

The Hydroponic Farmers Federation Inc. is holding its biennial conference in Ballarat, Victoria.

To register for the conference and show your support for the HFF, visit <http://www.hffconference2012.org>

Vale - Peter Kemp (1929 -2012)

It is with sadness that we mark the passing of a past member of IPPS and well known South Australian horticulturist earlier this year.

Challenge

A challenge with a difference this time!!! The challenge at this time seems to be staying in business; the market for ornamental plants is drying up.

I was chatting with a well-known production nursery at the recent market Day in Sydney who reported her Christmas sales were only 30% of last year's turnover.

I was also surprised when speaking with one of our Western Region delegates at last year's Conference in Sydney who told me of the number of production nurseries that had closed up shop in California, the

acreage's quoted ran into the thousands.

IPPS members I met in Ireland in 2009 report that retail sales in that country are at rock bottom and the only production nurseries making any money are those with an established market in Europe.

Another challenge the industry may face in the future is finding qualified staff, while speaking with some TAFE teachers here in NSW they reported that Certificates in Horticulture aren't being taught as the student numbers are too low.

Add to this the effect the "Big Box" stores are having on retail sales and we find lots of independent retail outlets closing up shop. Have a bit of a browse on the internet and you will find all sorts of traders practically giving stock away. Editor Bruce tells me he found someone selling tubestock at 15c each, that's the sort of price growers were paying way back in the 1960's.

So where have the customers gone? Why has gardening become so

unpopular? How do we address these issues into the future??

That's the Challenge we may all need to face.

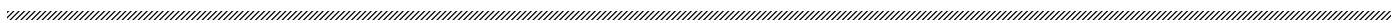
Michael Gleeson

Newsletter Editors Comment

Excitement is building for the Toowoomba conference, and there are plenty of things to see and hear judging by the program. As always it is a good time to meet old friends or make new ones, and everyone I am sure comes away with something worthwhile.

Please look up the facebook site and start contributing, it is for everyone. Don't forget that this newsletter and some past copies are also available on the IPPS website at www.ipps.org.au, and pass your extra copy of the newsletter around at work.

Bruce Higgs - editor
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ACCOMMODATION

Please arrange your accommodation directly with the Toowoomba Motel & Events Centre: **Address:** 2 Burnage Street, East Toowoomba QLD **Ph:** 07 4631 8600
 Email: events@toowoombamotel.com.au
Web: www.toowoombamotel.com.au. IPPS room rate is from \$120 AUD. When booking indicate you are attending the IPPS Conference.

Bus transfers by The Airport Flyer from Brisbane to Toowoomba – One Way - \$72 - Return - \$128

In keeping with the theme of **"Sustainability – For Food and For Business"** the organisers have aimed to attract trade sponsors and displays, as well as speakers who particularly relate to the theme so as to expose delegates to the many ideas and latest thinking out there.

For registration forms go to: www.ipps.org.au

Option	Full Registration		Single day (No night activities)	
	Early	Standard after 15 April	Friday – incl. event	Sat / Sun
IPPS Member	\$475	\$550	\$140	\$90
Non Member	\$575	\$650	\$160	\$110
Accompanying Person	\$375	\$450		
Student / Youth		\$375		
POST CONFERENCE TOUR \$95.00			All costs in \$AUD inclusive of GST	