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Press Release – For Immediate Release

Subject **XXII International Congress of The Transplantation Society**

The gathering in Sydney of the world's leaders in transplant medicine, was not only the largest medical meeting in Australia this year, but groundbreaking in terms of the opportunities for learning on the part of its near 4,500 participants. Over the life of the five day XXII International Congress of The Transplantation Society, the creative use of communications technology ensured that the presentations of the 1,400 speakers had life long beyond their delivery. This was a return visit of the congress to Sydney, with more than double the number of delegates who registered in 1988.

Technology was a focus for The Meeting Planners with every session available to medical scientists and researchers unable to attend. This was achieved by way of webcasts of plenary sessions and the ability to download audio podcasts complete with Powerpoint displays of nearly 1,600 sessions. The downloads were password protected and made available to members of the Transplant Society and members of the Australia/New Zealand society.

“We were determined at the outset that we would be raising the bar for the organisation and management of this meeting,” says Karine Bulger, Chief Executive Officer of The Meeting Planners, the Professional Conference Organiser (PCO) whom were appointed to manage the event on behalf of The Transplant Society of Australia and New Zealand.

“The Transplant Society's members are involved in the broadest spectrum of activity around the science and management of organ and tissue transplantation. It's a complex and sometimes controversial topic and we had an Abstract Review Committee of 500 members worldwide in 49 Abstract Panels around the world to select our large panel of speakers. This was achieved through a specially designed secure internet-based program to ensure the decision-making process could meet our deadlines for the development of the scientific program.”

The Meeting Planners worked with their conference committee, led by Dr Jeremy Chapman, for over five years. Alongside the Conference Management Team, an additional separate Program Team was established who worked full-time for over a year on the management of the program. 2,500 abstract submissions were received via the online abstract system, of which 1,500 were received within the final 48 hours.

The big hit of the meeting was the use of the ePresenter system, which was managed by Event Infotech. More than 700 authors took up the opportunity to have their work displayed on the ePresenter system, whereby their traditional poster presentations were displayed on a bank of 20 computer terminals. Delegates and reviewers were able to view all the poster presentations and communicate with authors through the interactive database. The authors were allowed a maximum of 10 slides and could edit them to within hours of their being presented.

“This is the largest use of the ePresenter system yet undertaken in Australia and we’ve had excellent feedback from authors and delegates alike,” says Karine Bulger. “If the author gives permission, the delegate is able to download the information for reference up to 12 months after the conference and we are also able to provide authors with information with regard to the frequency that their material is accessed. A customised search facility makes it very easy and time-efficient for delegates who no longer have to wander past scores of posters to find what they’re looking for.”

In addition to the ePresenter terminals, the posters were available for delegates to download wirelessly on their personal computer notebooks from anywhere within convention centre.

A series of eight booths for mini-oral presentations were established in the poster display area. Uniquely, the booths gave 318 authors who had not been selected for a dedicated session on the program, a chance to make a brief, oral presentation with a maximum of three slides. Such was the interest in these lunchtime presentations that the capacity of the booths had to be extended overnight to accommodate the delegates.

For Dr Jeremy Chapman, the Congress Chair, The XXII Transplant Society meeting was the culmination of an effort to bring the event back to Sydney which started on the closure of the Sydney congress back in 1988.

“There was some scepticism from the pharmaceutical industry that distance would impact on our numbers and we might not attract all the right people. Through the strong scientific program we developed, we’ve had outstanding attendance and the exhibitors are delighted with the quality and number of delegates.”

He said the requirements of the American Medical Association with regards to the conflict of interest issue had been burdensome, with rigorous checking of some 2,500 submissions.

“This congress accounts for more than a third of CME points a doctor will require over a two year period, so it was essential that the scientific program fully met their criteria. The Meeting Planners team and our reviewers did an outstanding job to achieve this.

Dr Chapman, who is the incoming president of The Transplant Society, said The Meeting Planners had done an outstanding job in the organisation and management of the congress.

“They did an outstanding job and I’ve had nothing but positive feedback from delegates and speakers. The convention centre in Sydney is immaculate and has run like clockwork.”



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