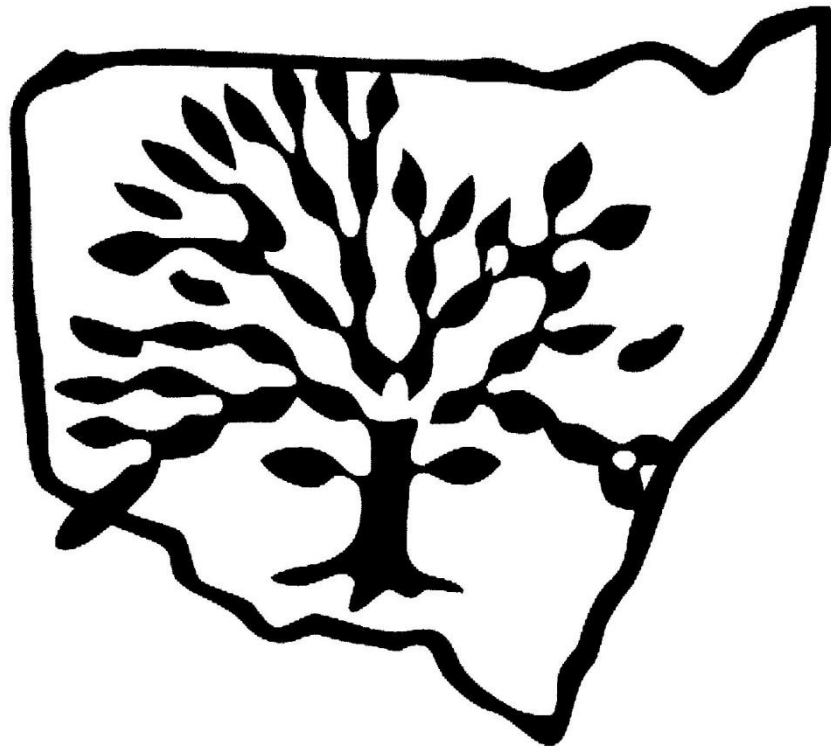


# **NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc**



## **Conference Requirements and Guidelines**

July 2015

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# Part 1 - Introduction: Planning for Success

## 1.1 Introduction

The annual Conference of the NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc is held in New South Wales or the Australian Capital Territory. The Conference is organised by a member society under the auspices of the Association. These requirements and guidelines should be used by societies organising the Conference.

Please note that the requirements must be met by the host society, whereas the guidelines are intended to assist the host society to understand the Association's policies. While each host society will place their own particular stamp on the proceedings, they are also obliged to meet certain standards.

All host societies are free to change the format of the conference within reason with the approval of the Association committee. This is how new facets of the annual conference come into being part of the regular format

## 1.2 Definitions

The following are definitions of certain names and abbreviations used:

<b>AGM</b>	Annual General Meeting
<b>Association:</b>	NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc.
<b>Conference Committee:</b>	A committee appointed by the Host Society to plan and manage the Conference.
<b>Conference Convenor:</b>	A member of the Host Society appointed to convene the Conference Committee.
<b>Host Society:</b>	Association member society who is hosting the annual Conference
<b>Association Committee:</b>	Committee of the NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc.
<b>Association President:</b>	President of the NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc.

## **1.3 Expectations**

The primary aim of the Conference is to further the study of family history and to bring together societies and individuals.

The Conference should provide a happy and friendly atmosphere where registrants feel comfortable and friendships may be made.

The Conference should provide value for money by having interesting and informative speakers as well as high quality meals and refreshments.

## **Part 2 - Requirements**

### **2.1. Submissions**

A written submission by an Association member society to host a Conference shall be presented to the Association Committee in accordance with the Association By-Laws.

Each submission shall be made at least two years before the anticipated Conference.

The host society will be responsible for determining the Conference dates, venue and theme.

The host society could submit a proposal on behalf of a number of smaller neighbouring Association member family history societies in the same Region.

Each submission should contain:

- proposed dates;
- a brief profile on the history of the town, or its historical significance;
- a suggested theme and topics to be explored;
- possible venues and conference facilities;
- information on the availability of accommodation; and
- information on transport options.

The host society must appoint a clearly defined Conference committee, headed by a Convenor, who shall be responsible for the planning of the host society's Conference.

The immediate past Convenor shall be available to advise the new Convenor and/or new Conference committee if and when required to do so.

## **2.2 Liaison and Reporting to the Association Committee**

It is important for the host society to keep in touch with the Association Committee and to liaise with it if any unforeseen difficulties are encountered during the planning stage. This provides the Association Committee with the opportunity to give appropriate support where necessary.

The Conference Convenor will be invited to act in an ex-officio position on the Association Committee from the time their successful submission is accepted until the proposed conference. (or until the conclusion of all business associated with the Conference). The Conference Convenor may delegate this role to another member of the Conference Committee or to the Host Society's delegate on the Association Committee.

A formal progress report, given in person or in writing, shall be presented to each State Committee meeting prior to the proposed Conference.

Following the Conference, a final written report is to be presented to the next Association Committee meeting. The report will also be presented at the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association.

In accordance with Association By-Law 7.9, within nine months of the Conference, the host society shall present an audited income and expenditure statement relating to the Conference to the Association Committee

## **2.3 The AGM of the NSW & ACT Association of FHS Inc.**

The Conference must be held in the second half of the calendar year in order for the Association to convene an AGM of its Member Societies during the Conference, in accordance with Rule 22 of the Constitution of the NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc.

The AGM of the Association must be held during the conference and should be held at a time when it can be comfortably conducted without interrupting the Conference programme. A minimum of one and a half to two hours should be allowed for the meeting to allow business to be dealt with adequately.

The delegates must attend the AGM, which is usually held on Saturday afternoon. This is the day most registrants attend and is the best opportunity for the Association to encourage attendance by other groups.

## **2.4 Conference Dinner**

The cost of the Conference Dinner must not be included in the Conference registration fee and must be optional.

## **2.5 Closing Ceremony**

The Association President must be afforded the opportunity to formally thank the host society's Conference Convenor and members of their committee and introduce the new President if applicable who will then introduce the new Committee.

The Association President should make a presentation to the host society on behalf of the State Committee.

The Conference Convenor should be afforded the opportunity to make a short speech in reply.

The final item on the agenda should always be a call to the next host society.

The Association President should announce the Host Society for the next conference and introduce that Member Society's Conference Convenor.

At the time of the call to the next host society, the Association President should pass the Association's banner to the next host society, for safe keeping until the next Conference.

Such banner must be displayed in a prominent position throughout the next Conference.

## **2.6 Financial surplus**

When financial details of the Conference are finalised, if there is a surplus of income over expenditure, the host society must donate 10% of the surplus to the Association's Travel Fund.

## **2.7 Conference correspondence and finance**

A dedicated Conference Secretary and Conference Treasurer must be appointed by the host society. Conference correspondence and financial dealings must be kept separate to other host society business.

## **2.8 Catering costs**

Commercial stall holders, and any other organisations not members of the Association, must contribute to their individual catering costs.

Those stallholders not participating in the Conference should be charged for their meals and given a meal ticket to enable them to claim their meal.

## **2.9 First Aid**

The host society should check with their local council, their insurance provider and the Conference venue management to determine whether a First Aid officer is required for the Conference. A list of First Aid providers is in the Yellow Pages telephone directory.

# **Part 3 - Guidelines**

The Association strongly recommends that these guidelines be thoroughly examined and understood by the Conference Convenor and all host society committee members.

## **3.1 Conference Organising Committee**

- a. Appoint a Conference Convenor as soon as possible after their submission for hosting the Conference has been successful.
- b. Appoint a conference committee consisting of capable people willing to participate in, and lead, a team. It is advisable to involve members who have previously attended similar conferences. Each Conference Committee member to be allotted a clearly defined task to perform, for example, publicity, registration, seating, catering, exhibitions, bookstalls, and so on. As planning progresses, individual Conference Committee members might consider the need to recruit their own teams to assist them with their tasks.

Report regularly to its society's Management Committee and society members.

During the actual Conference many additional people may be needed to undertake specific tasks to lighten the load on those on the Conference Committee.

It is useful for the Conference Committee to establish contact with the Conference Committee of the immediately preceding Conference, in order to draw on their experience.

It may be helpful, if required, an outgoing Convenor making themselves available to the incoming Convenor for advice and guidance.

## **3.2 Theme**

It is usual for conferences to follow a theme, however consideration to the theme need not be too narrow. Suggest that proposed speakers be asked to consider planning their presentation with the theme in mind and incorporate this from their own area of expertise.

### **3.3 Forward Planning**

The host society is responsible for setting the Conference dates. Local and national activities, National Family History Month, as well as examination periods, festivals and school holidays will need to be taken into consideration when setting the Conference dates. This will ensure that adequate accommodation is available for Conference registrants.

Proposed dates, the venue and conference theme is a requirement under Part 2.1 of this document to be announced at the Conference that announces them as host society.

### **3.4 Selection of host society**

Following a successful submission to host the Association Conference, the host society will receive written confirmation from the Association detailing:

- the expected reporting procedure to the Association in the lead-up to the Conference;
- specific Association requirements relating to the time of its AGM or other aspects of the Conference;
- requirements for the keynote address;
- requirements that an independently verified financial statement be presented to the Association within nine months after the Conference;
- requirement that a written report be presented to the AGM following the Conference; and
- requirement that 10% of Conference profits will be donated to the Association's Travel Fund by the host society.

### **3.5 Conference budget**

Establish a Conference budget that ensures that the Conference can be run in such a way that all costs can be covered.

If required, the Host Society can be given a loan of up to \$1000.00 to help cover planning expenses. Any such loan must be repaid to the Association before the calculation of the Conference profits, and before the first Association Committee Meeting (usually in February) in the calendar year following the Conference.

A detailed Conference budget should be established to ensure that the Conference can be run in such a way that all costs can be covered. Ideally, a small surplus should be returned to the host society to compensate it for the work involved in staging the event. However, the Conference should not be regarded by the host society as a major fundraising event.



Base the costings on the minimum number of registrants expected to attend. Traditionally an average of 300 people attend each conference, so a notional 200 people would be reasonable on which to base a budget.

A budget needs to be finalised at least nine months in advance so that registration costs can be advertised and publicity printed and distributed. Written quotes with a time frame will help keep to a minimum any last minute fluctuations.

Major items of expenditure will be the venue and equipment hire, catering, and speakers' expenses such as fees, travelling, meals and accommodation.

**There will need to be a clear understanding of exactly what costs will be covered for each guest speaker at the time they are invited to participate.** It is reasonable for guest speakers to be offered a substantial contribution towards their reasonable travel and accommodation expenses, unless they are located locally.

Please note that the employers of some guest speakers will often meet full expenses. It is a legitimate business expense where attending conferences is part of the guest speaker's job description.

Insurance costs also need to be taken into account, as specific insurance may need to be taken out by the host society to cover the Conference. Organisers will need to check with the venue management to determine whether any additional insurance cover is required to cover the host society for public liability, damages, etc.

Printing and stationery costs will include preliminary publicity leaflets, registration forms, maps, the conference programme, name badges and advertising. Postage costs and conference bags will also be major expenses.

Total these expenses and divided by the minimum number of registrants decided upon. Catering costs per person for morning/afternoon teas and lunch/lunches during the Conference to be added to this amount to determine the cost of the registration fee. It is advisable to add a small 'buffer' to allow for unexpected cost increases and unforeseen expenses. This 'buffer' may also return a small surplus to the host society if other costs can be contained.

As not all registrants attend the Friday evening social get-together, this should be costed separately, and be a separate optional item on the registration form.

The cost of the Conference Dinner on Saturday night is an optional extra and not included in the registration fee.

A Conference raffle may be held by the host society to help defray costs. If prizes can be donated, then the profit margin on such a raffle would be increased. Sponsorship may be sought from local clubs and businesses and from among the membership of the host society.

It is suggested that the raffle is the decision of the host society to have or not to have and should be free of the 10% donation to the Association.

Paid advertisements in the Conference programme will help to pay for its printing. The previous Conference Convenor or committee could advise on this. As some local councils may print the programme freely for community organisations consideration of advertisements will be left to the host society.

The Conference Committee may wish to consider whether to offer an “early bird” discount for registrations received by a certain date, say two months before the closing of registrations. Such discount encourages early registration which greatly facilitates planning and ordering of supplies.

The Conference Committee might also wish to offer a discounted registration rate for members of our Member Societies. This may encourage people to become members of family history societies and also encourages societies or groups to become members of the Association. This discounted offer would be an optional offer of the host society.

When budgeting, base registration income on the most discounted registration fee; any higher registration fees then contribute to a surplus.

### **3.6 Venue**

Wherever possible, it is preferable for the Conference to be held at a venue that has facilities for lecture sessions, dinners and accommodation. This immediately limits the choice of venue to universities, colleges, clubs and large hotels.

As soon as possible after being chosen as host, the host society needs to determine the actual Conference dates so that the venue can be booked. A suitable venue is mentioned in the previous paragraph. One of the many sporting or social clubs or larger hotels with appropriate accommodation within a reasonable distance are ideal venues.

The venue would ideally provide the following:

- a lecture room large enough to comfortably seat at least 300 people in either theatre style or at tables with sufficient space to easily move to and from chairs;
- space for bookstalls and commercial displays in close proximity to the lecture rooms;
- access for the disabled: there needs to be level access to the venue and it is preferable that all Conference facilities are on the one level and located together;
- access for delivery of bookstall stock and exhibition materials with ample parking for loading/unloading goods;

- full catering facilities capable of providing prompt service during the Conference breaks;
- catering for the Conference Dinner on the Saturday evening if it is to be held in the same location as the Conference;
- suitable lecturing facilities, including a stage or dais, lectern, good public address system, projection and recording facilities;
- adequate air conditioning, heating and toilets;
- sufficient facilities for exhibitors such as tables, chairs and power outlets;
- sufficient lighting for exhibitors, sponsors and speakers; and
- facilities for PowerPoint presentations: screen and data projector
- Provide a suitable room for the Association Committee meeting and Forum historically held on the Friday of the Conference. Also provide a suitable room for the holding of the AGM if the conference area is required to be transformed for the Conference dinner.

### **3.7 Programme**

The format of the Conference is a matter for the host society, historically taking into account the traditional Conference elements such as opening addresses, the keynote address and the Association's AGM.

Ample time for a midday break needs to be provided to allow registrants sufficient time to browse the stalls as well as to have lunch.

Ideally, sessions need be no more than one hour in duration including question time.

A discussion forum or panel session in the time slot immediately following lunch is preferable to a formal lecture. Energy levels often drop after lunch and this will energise registrants.

The programming of concurrent sessions needs to be planned very carefully to avoid disappointment for attendees who may want to attend both concurrent sessions. Programming concurrent sessions provides for more sessions and a variety to allow choice according to interest. Suggest handouts be considered for distribution to those attending other sessions.

### **3.8 Publicity**

An advantage would be if all Association Member Societies were notified eight to ten months in advance of the Conference dates and asked to publicise the forthcoming Conference in their journal or newsletter.

The initial mailing to be followed up with a mail-out of registration forms to Member Societies in ample time for these to be distributed to those interested in attending the Conference.

Where available, the host society will utilise their website to promote their forthcoming Conference with the Conference news being continually updated.

Consider articles in local newspapers, radio, community TV noticeboards etc to generate local interest. The more a community talks about coming events, the more likely sponsors will recognise opportunities. If possible have speakers talk at meetings of other community groups and distribute flyers or advertising material to doctors and dentist surgeries, hairdressers, local libraries, local cafes and restaurants, retirement villages and any other places where people gather to either wait or socialise. **Always obtain permission before leaving advertising material.**

Host Societies might consider attending Fairs and other community events for the purpose of creating interest in the coming annual Conference.

### **3.9 Registration Form**

Consider keeping all forms and advertising flyers simple. If items can be produced on a photocopier this will reduce printing costs.

Include information on the Conference theme, although is it not necessary to outline the entire conference programme.

Provide clear information on Conference dates, Conference fees, day registration costs, catering arrangements, special dietary needs and disabled access to the venue.

Include the availability of accommodation on the registration form: on your Website (if applicable) or contact details for several nearby motels. An indication of the expected price range of the alternatives is useful to registrants.

Clearly indicate if an 'early bird' registration cut-off date for registration is applicable.

If available, provide credit card facilities, and direct debit for payment of registration fees and meal costs. The registration form will provide information on what methods of payments is available including which credit cards are accepted. The trend to using commercial booking agents might be worth investigating. Also consultation with previous host will be beneficial in this regards.

Deal with requests for refunds in a sensitive manner, giving due consideration to traumatic situations which may cause prospective registrants to cancel their registration at the last minute. If no refund is to be given then clearly indicate this on the registration form.

The registration return slip needs to provide space for the inclusion of name, address, preferred name for name tag, society, if any, a space for any special dietary needs and payment details.

If registrants “family history research interests” are sought for printing, clearly indicate to the registrants the number of entries that they are permitted and of the required format. Clearly indicate a cut-off date, after which entries will not be accepted. This will ensure adequate time for the preparation of the registrants’ interests for publication.

Asking for a stamped self-addressed envelope to accompany completed registration forms will reduce postage costs for the host society in providing receipts.

In order to meet privacy requirements, encourage and make provision for registrants to sign a statement on the registration form if they agree to their name and contact details being printed in the Conference programme or in the registrants’ interests, or if they do not wish their details to be included.

### **3.10 Speakers**

Select with care your Speakers as they are an essential element of any Conference. While it is good to showcase local talent, the Conference will often attract a greater number of registrants if the programme includes several well-known speakers.

Avoid inviting speakers who have presented papers at recent conferences. Clearly offer Speakers a specific package when they are invited to speak, making them aware from the beginning what costs the host society is willing to meet.

The host society should also make it clear to speakers whether they are expected to produce a written paper in addition to their presentation and whether they will be taped. If they are to be taped, then a **Clearance Form must be signed by the speaker**, allowing the tapes to be circulated, transcribed or published.

Biographical notes on each speaker and an abstract or outline of their presentation should be printed in the Conference programme for the information of registrants.

The host society should obtain biographical notes and abstracts from speakers within sufficient time to meet printing deadlines for the Conference programme.

### **3.11 Publication of papers**

It is not mandatory to publish the papers given at a Conference. However, some Member Societies have chosen to do so, either by transcribing a tape recording of the presentation by the speaker, or by inviting the speaker to provide a written paper. Either way, there is considerable work involved in editing or preparing the papers for publication and the market for the published papers may be quite small. Such papers do, however, provide an excellent record of a Conference.

It is important that speakers are made aware, at the time of the invitation being extended to them to participate in the Conference, whether they will be expected to provide a written paper or if their session will be taped, transcribed and published.

Where papers are to be reproduced, it is recommended that speakers be requested to provide their notes electronically. This will minimise the time required to reproduce papers and will also ensure that the speakers' notes are correct.

### **3.12 Audio Visual and other Equipment**

Microphone: if speakers intend using slide projectors, or a computer presentation, they should be equipped with a lapel microphone to enable them to move about.

The lectern should be adjustable. If it is not, a solid stool or small step should be provided for smaller speakers.

Provision for PowerPoint presentations is now mandatory at the majority of conferences.

Discuss with Speakers in advance of the amount of time allocated to them and advise them of the mechanism by which they will be warned when their session time is about to end. Timing lights or a small bell is needed to ensure the programme runs to schedule.

### **3.13 Family History Fair**

It has become customary to hold a Family History Fair on the Friday prior to the Conference. Such a Fair is a good way of attracting local publicity and recruiting new members for the Host Society (it might even be possible to accept late registrations for the Conference from new recruits, if catering and other arrangements can be adjusted at this late stage.

Friday Fairs are free to the public in order to maximise publicity.

Offer Member Societies who wish to participate one free trading table, they would be expected to pay for any additional tables they require.

An appropriate fee would be incurred by non-member and commercial organisations for their tables, unless their tables are included in a sponsorship package.

During the Fair, presentations and workshops on specific topics can be offered. Some of these might be free, while participation in workshops might require the payment of a registration fee. The number of people participating in a workshop might be limited to ensure that participants get proper instruction.

It is a good idea to invite all your local history related groups to this fair as they often have items that are not available anywhere else. Do not restrict it to Family History; craft groups such as scrapbooking, spinners and weavers, tapestry and embroidery groups should be invited.

### **3.14 Association Forum**

The Association is responsible for the Forum and will work together with the Host Society to determine the room facilities and time.

It has become customary for the Association to hold a Forum on the Friday prior to the Conference. The Forum is an opportunity for Member Societies to exchange information in an informal setting, rather than taking up time at the AGM. Past Forums have included discussions on electronic journals, systems for sharing electronic documents, attracting new members and presentations on the latest in microfilm digital scanners.

Subjects under consideration need to be relevant to the challenges of running a family history society.

A room capable of holding one or two representatives from each Member Society is required, and the Forum should be allotted at least an hour and a half.

The Forum is not limited to the delegates of Member Societies; any member of a Member Society attending the Conference is welcome and are encouraged to share their experiences involved in organising a family history society.

### **3.15 Friday night function**

It is traditional for a casual get together to be held on the Friday evening prior to the Conference to allow registrants to renew friendships and to meet new people. No formal speeches need be incorporated into this function, although there may be a brief welcome by the President of the host society.

Clearly indicate on your registration form the type of gathering you propose holding, whether a light snack or full meal will be provided and whether there will be additional costs for this event.

This is particularly important if the function is being held at a venue where there is little or no alternative choice of food available, as many registrants will have travelled long distances and need to know whether to eat an evening meal before they arrive at the function.

The Friday night function began as a cheese and wine night in Newcastle many years ago and has grown from that idea to anything from a sausage sizzle, finger foods or a full meal. The choice is up to the host society but necessary that conference registrants know what is to be offered.

### **3.16 The Official Opening Ceremony**

The Official Opening Ceremony is usually held on the Saturday morning when the greatest number of registrants will be present. It is customary for the Association President to present a welcoming address on behalf of the Association Committee. They may, if desired, be invited to be Master of Ceremonies for this session.

The welcoming address on behalf of the host society will be given by the Conference Convenor who will then invite an official dignitary or suitable official to open the conference. Suggestion: A suitable official could be the Local State or Federal Member or the Mayor of the Local Council.

Consideration should also be given to commencing the ceremony with a Welcome to Country from a local indigenous elder.

### **3.17 Keynote address**

The keynote speaker presents the John Crowe Memorial Address immediately following the Opening Ceremony.

Historically *The John Crowe Memorial Address* relates to the theme of the Conference. This will usually be the highest-profiled speaker and will set the tone of the whole Conference.

### **3.18 Official Dinner**

The Dinner is an optional extra as some registrants may choose not to attend. The Dinner time should not commence too early. The time between the end of the Saturday Conference proceedings, and the AGM may be the registrants' only opportunity to explore the local area.

Clearly indicate in the registration information whether wine is included in the cost of the Dinner and, if not, whether corkage will be charged on wine purchased elsewhere. Be sure to provide non-alcoholic drinks.

Dinner Entertainment is optional and at the discretion of the host society.

There could be one principal after-dinner speaker, or some form of entertainment (often musical). This could be humorous or light, where possible, as registrants have usually spent the day sitting in a lecture environment.

Where the host society prefers not to offer entertainment, the President of the host society should formally welcome those attending the Dinner.

Toasts are optional and suggest they be brief.



The Dorothy Fellowes Website Award and the Cynthia Foley Encouragement Awards are presented during the Dinner.

Speeches and entertainment should not be disturbed by noise from the clearing of tables and washing up.

Menu cards add to the cost of the dinner but are popular as souvenirs.

Seating at round tables is preferable as this encourages conversation amongst guests. The Dinner is one of the best opportunities for social interaction among registrants. To promote this interchange, where possible, groups of registrants from a society should be discouraged from sitting together. If possible, a member of the Conference Committee or host society should be seated at each table to facilitate registrants in getting to know one another.

During the dinner the Association President may announce the conference host for the next conference as voted on at the AGM during the afternoon and thank the outgoing Committee and announce the new Committee and introduce the new/old President. This can also be done at the closing of the Conference.

### **3.19 Accommodation**

The Conference Committee may need to include an accommodation organiser to arrange accommodation.

Local information centres and the local council may provide invaluable assistance.

If the Conference is to be held at a university or similar venue, accommodation on campus is generally acceptable for registrants.

If rooms are to be shared, this should be made clear on the registration form. However, it is better to provide single rooms at extra cost, as many registrants may not like to share.

Check on arrangements for locking up at night and keys for 'stop-outs'.

Advise registrants in advance if the venue does not provide towels, soap, drinking glass and coat hangers.

Tea and coffee-making facilities should be provided where feasible.

Determine whether the accommodation is available on the days before and after the Conference for those who may wish to have an extended stay.

A list detailing nearby motels/hotels, B & B's and other accommodation, with the range of prices, could be provided to registrants well in advance of the Conference. There could also be information on the distance between the accommodation and the Conference and the accessibility between the two. Accommodation and transport options for the disabled and those with impaired mobility to be included.

### **3.20 Transport**

The Conference Committee may wish to include a transport organiser to co-ordinate buses/taxis/trains/planes where required.

If the Conference is to be held in an area lacking public transport, arrangements may have to be made to convey registrants to and from their accommodation to the venue. Local registrants may be able to assist those without transport. If registrants are arriving by plane, it provides them with a warm welcome if they are met on arrival and transported from the airport to their accommodation.

### **3.21 Catering**

The Conference Committee will need to include a catering organiser to oversee all catering arrangements.

The Conference organiser may choose to employ contract caterers, use the on-site facilities available at the Conference venue, or ‘do-it-yourself’. The decision on which alternative is best will depend on the facilities and experience available.

Items to be considered include:

- special menus for those who require them;
- checking whether the dining room is to be shared with other groups;
- ensuring that “workers” and stall holders are given priority at break times or arrangements made to provide refreshments where they are;
- making arrangements for late arrivals on the Friday night if a meal is to be provided; and
- providing estimates of the numbers to be catered for at each meal break.

The provision of fruit juice, tea or coffee to registrants on arrival is useful as many registrants travel long distances to reach the Conference venue.

### **Coffee/Tea Breaks**

Avoid having coffee and tea breaks served in the same hall as the lectures as it can disrupt proceedings. It has been suggested that morning and afternoon tea breaks be not less than 45 minutes.

To improve crowd flow, have at least four serving points during the morning and afternoon breaks. These should be laid out in such a manner that registrants flow easily past the tables.

Provide a cool drink alternative for those who prefer them.

While morning and afternoon teas should be served in a place convenient to the bookstalls, registrants need to be discouraged from carrying food and drink into these areas if at all possible.

## **Friday night function**

To improve crowd flow, have at least two serving points.

## **Saturday lunch**

The lunch area should be located close to the lecture hall and in good proximity to the bookstalls. Serving arrangements should be planned to allow everyone to be served and seated as quickly as possible. A choice of dishes is always preferable and arrangements should be made to cater for those with special dietary requirements.

To improve crowd flow, have at least two serving points. It is suggested that the Lunch break be for one and half hours.

## **Sunday lunch**

Sunday lunch arrangements; take into consideration the distance registrants will have to travel home. Some Conferences choose to close before lunch, some provide a packed brown bag and others provide lunch in their final proceedings.

Make sure Registrants are aware in advance whether lunch will be provided on the Sunday and whether this is inclusive of their registration fee.

## **Bar facilities**

Bar facilities should be made available to registrants if feasible. If the venue does not have its own bar, ascertain whether the Conference organisers can run one. This can be a useful source of profit but needs to be properly run. A liquor licence may be required.

Once opportunities to serve alcohol are known, the catering organiser should find out what laws are applicable. If a liquor licence is required, it is important to know well in advance who is required to make the application for a liquor licence. It is an expensive exercise and is probably best avoided if possible.

### 3.22 Registration kit

A registration kit is historically issued to all registrants, speakers and stall holders so that they know the full programme for the weekend. There are usually two registration sessions: an early registration prior to the Friday night function and one at the beginning of the Conference on Saturday morning.

The registration kit could include:

- Conference programme;
- registrants' family history research interests booklet, if applicable;
- name tag: essential for both organisers and registrants, **printed on both sides of the tag**. The name should be in print large enough to be read from a distance and those of the Conference Committee members should be different in some way to allow easy identification of those who can provide assistance. The name tag should have an attached spring clip that will not damage clothing.
- list of stall holders and their location;
- Conference evaluation form: these should not require the respondents to identify themselves in any way;
- pamphlets from government departments such as State Records, Land & Property Information Services etc;
- information on local church and religious services, including times and locations and a local map;
- advertising brochures: should be kept to a minimum;
- paper for lecture notes;
- biro or sharpened pencil; and
- small packet of mint lollies.

The Conference programme to include:

- welcome from the President of the host society and welcome from the Association;
- host society details;

- details of each speaker, including their biography and an abstract or outline of their presentations.
- information on areas of local interest and a brief history of the area where the Conference is being held; and
- family history research interests of registrants.

Please note that registrants “family history research interests” do not necessarily have to be included in the programme. A separate booklet may be produced or not as decided by the host society.

### **3.23 Bookstalls and information stalls**

This is basically an extension of the Fair, providing trading opportunities during the Conference. It is up to the Conference Committee whether to offer Member Societies a free table on the Saturday and Sunday. If a Fair is not held on the Friday, then Member Societies should be offered at least one free trading table on at least one day of the Conference.

If tables and stalls are provided within the actual Conference venue, stallholders may need to be instructed to cease all trading and discussions during presentation. Ideally if at all possible, the tables and stall could be located in or adjacent to the area where the catering is provided.

In addition to its social and educational benefits, the annual Conference is an ideal opportunity for Member Societies and individuals to stock up on research resources for their libraries, save on postage and promote their societies and publications.

Commercial booksellers and trade exhibitors look forward to the opportunity to present their products face to face.

A comprehensive range of genealogical booksellers and providers of services relevant to family history societies should be invited by the Conference Committee to participate in the Conference. From the outset they need to receive details of sale times, costs for stalls and the space available. The booking form to include the number of tables and chairs required and whether power is necessary.

When specifying table sizes for stall holders, the actual table sizes must be available at the Conference. Stall holders have paid for that space and also bring products to fit that pre-paid space.

Societies which publish resource materials may wish to have a stall to sell their publications.

Societies may wish to share a table. If a society is unrepresented at the Conference, their brochures may be displayed on a table set aside for the Association.

The display area would need to be indoors and within reasonable walking distance of the main Conference venue, so that it is easily accessible during lunch and tea breaks. However, it is preferable that it is away from the lecture room so that noise does not carry from the stalls during sessions. It is preferable that the display area is closed at these times.

If it is not possible to close the area, stall holders may place a cover over their stall: for example, a sheet or table cloth.

If the venue is available, some stall holders may be interested in setting up and making sales on Friday evening.

Security is very important and the host society needs to ensure that some means of protection for stall holders is provided during the Conference sessions and overnight.

Adequate space needs to be left between tables and displays to enable movement between them. The number of stalls which can be accommodated may have to be limited if space is restricted.

The stall charge made to Member Societies to be kept to a minimum to cover any costs incurred by the Conference Committee, such as hiring fees for tables. Otherwise it is desirable that the facility be made available free of charge to such Member Societies **only**.

Non-Member Societies and commercial vendor fees need to include recouping the costs of the sales area and cover the hire of equipment such as tables and display boards if required. The fee may be levied according to the space allocated, or exhibitors may be asked to donate a percentage of sales.

Morning and afternoon tea and meal costs should be included in the cost for commercial vendors and for stall holders not participating in the Conference. These stall holders to indicate when booking and paying for their space if they want meals so that they can be charged accordingly and included in the catering numbers.

The Association strongly recommends the issuing of an invitation to the following:

- FamilySearch (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)
- State Record Office of New South Wales
- NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- National Library
- National Archives of Australia

The Host Society might consider a welcome team to assist stallholders to unload and transport their goods to the area and also assist with packing up at the end of the Conference. When communicating to stallholders suggest they provide their own trolleys, backing and display board. Information concerning *specials* they are offering during the conference should be provided to the Conference Committee in advance so these can be included in the registration kit.

### **3.24 Sponsorship**

It is strongly recommended that the Conference Committee actively seek sponsorship from a variety of sources, including both government and commercial organisations. Sponsorship can be sought generally or for specific activities or purposes (such as individual speakers, morning/afternoon tea, lunch, conference satchel, program, etc.). Sponsorship packages may include a free trade table, the sponsor's banner on the podium, and their logo on the program. Etc.

Some sponsors might simply provide giveaways for Conference registrants, such as pads, pens, possibly even satchels.

*Some sponsors might simply pay to have their leaflets in the conference satchel.*

### **3.25 Committee Conference kit**

It is recommended that the Conference Committee maintain a supply of items which may be required during the Conference, such as band aids, drawing pins, paper clips, sticky tape, blue-tac, masking tape, spare pens/pencils, marking pens, rubber bands, scissors, paper, a spare power cord and power board, globes for equipment and anything else deemed useful.

Make sure that all members of the Conference Committee know where to find this supply during the conference.

### **3.26 Outings**

Outings have become a feature of some Conferences. Sometimes an activity is arranged as an alternative for registrants who are not required at the AGM.

If considering outings the Conference Committee would then need to include an outing organiser on the Committee. The outing organiser is responsible for all aspects of the outing: obtaining quotations from coach companies, corresponding with the various authorities involved and the timetable.

One popular outing is to some type of research facility: local studies collection and/or family history section of local library or research facility of host history society.

### **Our Appreciation**

Thank you for hosting our annual conference  
We are most grateful for your support and effort in  
maintaining, and continuing, the high standard  
set at previous events.

Association President and Committee  
NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc.