

10 December 2006

Fourth Annual Conference – report on participant feedback

1 Introduction

This report, prepared by Mark Hennessy, sets out the results of a questionnaire survey handed out to participants in the Fourth Annual Victorian Conference on Community Safety, held at the Darebin Arts and Entertainment Complex on Wednesday 15 November 2006.

Twenty seven people returned completed questionnaires, out of approximately 60 people attending the conference, a return rate of approximately 45%. The number of people attending was only about 60% of the numbers in each of the previous years, when about 100 or more people attended. The reasons for the drop in attendance are not able to be determined from the data presented here, which is feedback only from those who did attend.

2 Participants' ratings

The ratings by participants of the conference are set out in Figure 1 below. The results are very positive.

Participant feedback, 4th VSCN conference, 15/11/2006

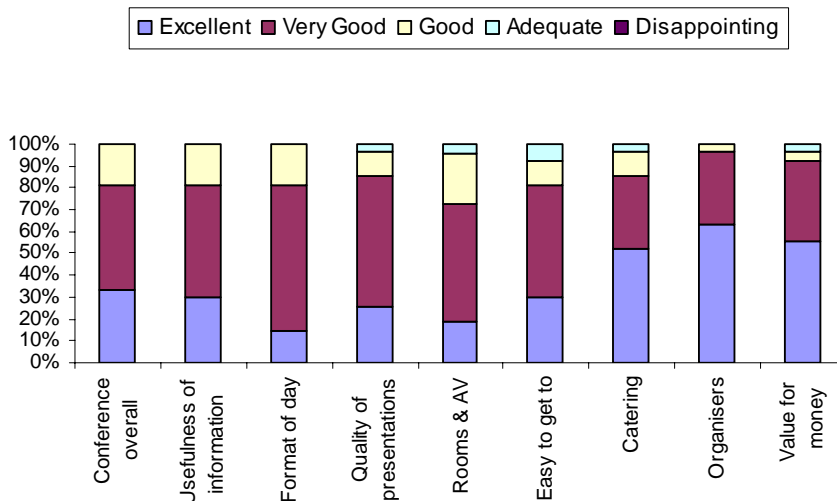


Figure 1 Participants' ratings of the 2006 VSCN Annual Conference

3 What did you like best about today?

Particular speakers and sessions

- David Chalke (7)
- Workshops (1)
- Choice of workshop topics
- “Working with men” presentation
- Dale Hanson (2)
- Keynote speakers (2)
- Passion of MFB presenter and depth of knowledge.
- Broad coverage of Casey man’s program.

Scope and diversity

- Range of presenters (1), different speakers/topics (1).
- The variation in topics and concurrent workshops
- Interstate participation
- Variety and quality

Networking

- Chance to catch up with others in injury prevention network members
- Opportunity for networking (2)
- The opportunity to network with experienced, informed and passionate practitioners.
- Presentations and networking.
- Amazing people I will stay in contact with.

New information

- Stimulates creative thinking and broader concepts when presenters share their work.
- Sharing ideas – I gained so much, thanks.
- New programs.
- Hearing about all the wonderful work done by passionate people in the community.

Format

- Liked having only two concurrent sessions – made it easier to choose.

4 What did you like least about today?

Topics and speakers

- Sponsor presentations (whilst I still recognise these are a likely necessity).
- 1.30 – 3.00 “Street legal” (2).
- The “Street Legal” title was not quite right for the information it contained.
- Very specialized – I know that people asked for workshops but response was disappointing.
- Dr Dale Hanson’s presentation – difficult for me to follow on occasions.
- I would like to see more emerging local programs presented.
- Same old challenges are disappointing, although make me realize our LGA is streets ahead.
- Lack of community participants to talk as program consumers.
- Poor attendance at afternoon workshop.
- Having to leave before afternoon sessions.

Venue, facilities

- Bit noisy – trolleys outside.
- Lighting in the venue – in and out of rooms.
- The cold weather (3) – can VSCN order better next year??

Other

- Would be better to finish at 4.30, given we have a 1.5 hour drive home.
- Nothing (2) – hope to see you next year
- The fact that many people who should have attended and would have benefited from attending were not present.

5 How did you find out about the conference?

| | | | |
|------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| Email | 8 | Invited to present | 1 |
| List serve | 2 | Website | 2 |
| Member VSCN | 7 | Word of mouth | 2 |
| Via my workplace | 1 | | |

6 Suggestions for next year

- More dynamic sponsor presentations, if required.
- All speakers/presenters are to have the passion, knowledge and ability to effectively communicate to a group, as David Chalke did.
- Demographics presentation.
- Ask for presentations earlier than on the day – plenty of time to prepare the audio visual.
- Greater links with ASCF. Promotion/awareness of IF Day – great opportunity for VSCN to create further links.
- The conference program/flyer did not reflect what a good conference it might be! Thanks and congratulations.
- More presentations about emerging local programs.
- I thought it was wonderful.
- Representations of various community groups, ie indigenous, multicultural.
- A number of key supporters of VSCN should take responsibility to be a link/organiser to get more people to attend.
- Ensure streams on community connections remain separate from physical safety.
- Continue inviting excellent speakers.
- It was truly excellent. Well done.

7 When to hold next year's conference

Figure 2 shows the participants' preferences for which month to schedule the VSCN annual conference in 2007.

There is a strong preference for holding the conference in November.

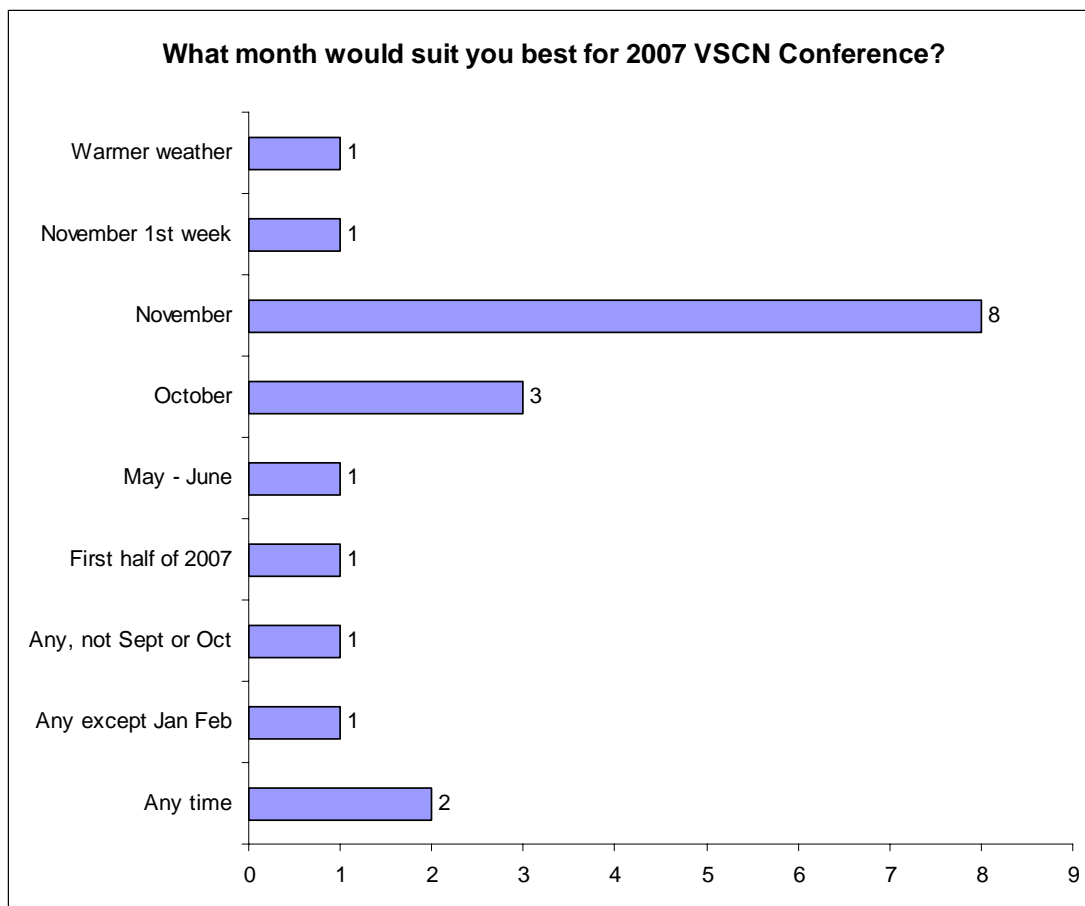


Figure 2 Preferences about when to hold the conference

8 Conclusions

The conference was again very well received by participants, with 100% rating it as good (or better), including 81% who rated it very good or excellent. The organisers were praised, with 93% rating the job they did as very good or excellent.

The usefulness of the information presented was rated as good, very good or excellent by 100% of respondents. The wide range of topics and people was valued, as were the opportunities for networking.

There were a number of comments around the topics and content of some of the sessions. In particular, the lack of match between one session title and its actual content, and the session on community connection having physical safety content. This seems to suggest that attention should be given to improving the match between session titles, objectives and content.

Some participants commented on presentations which were not dynamic, or lacked passion. With regard to format, there was one suggestion to finish at 4.30 pm to accommodate travel home. There were a few comments suggesting improvements in lighting and noise/sound.

Some participants expressed concern about poor attendance generally, and at particular workshops. This suggests that there is a need to develop a more formal communication plan to promote the conference.

9 Comparison with last year

The participants' ratings for all of the conferences are shown in Figure 3. The scale of the graph is: 1 = Disappointing, 2 = Adequate, 3 = Good, 4 = Very good, 5 = Excellent.

The ratings were better than for all the previous conferences in most areas. In the three areas where the conference was not rated better than all previous conferences, it was rated second best of all the conferences. It was our best result so far.

The biggest improvement was in the usefulness of the information.

It may be that the smaller numbers attending this year's conference comprise a self-selecting group who value the conference highly, which may introduce a bias towards higher ratings.

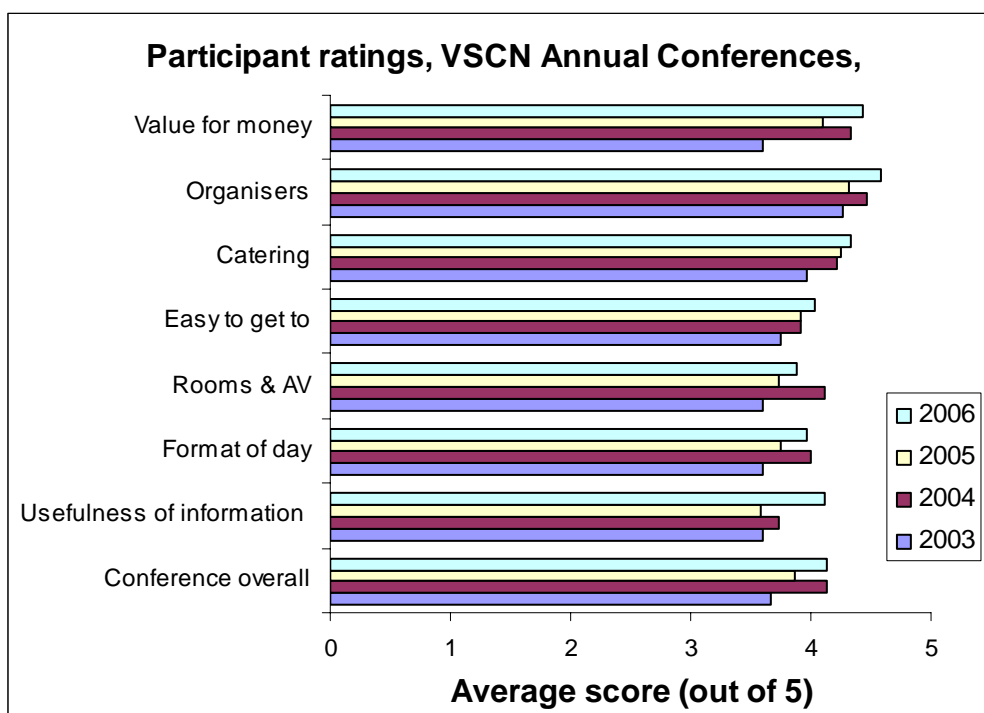


Figure 3 Comparison with previous conferences

The feedback from the 2005 conference included a number of practical suggestions for improvement, including the following:

- Consider a 2 day conference (2 participants suggested this).
- More grass roots / practitioner presentations.
- Need more interactivity between presenters and audience.
- Hold it in the South East.

None of these was implemented in 2006. It is not clear if they were ever formally considered in the planning for the 2006 conference, nor whether any of the feedback from 2005 was considered in this year's planning.

This year there was no call by the conference organisers for submitted papers, which in previous years may have generated an opportunity for some earlier publicity and a greater sense of ownership of the conference among our network members.