

Final Report

Australian Banana Industry Congress 2021

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Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC)

Project code:

BA19003

Project:

Australian Banana Industry Congress 2021 (BA19003)

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Funding statement:

This project has been funded by Hort Innovation, using the banana levy research and development levy and contributions from the Australian Government. Hort Innovation is the grower-owned, not-for-profit research and development corporation for Australian horticulture.

Publishing details:

ISBN 978-0-7341-4843-8

Published and distributed by: Hort Innovation

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www.horticulture.com.au

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Summary

The Australian Banana Industry Congress (ABIC) 2021 was successfully held in Cairns, Far North Queensland, from May 12-14.

Held every two years, ABIC is the Australian banana industry's premiere national event, convened by the industry's peak industry body, the Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC).

Despite a raft of uncertainty over COVID during 20 months of planning the event, Congress 2021 was successfully held at the Cairns Convention Centre and the Pullman International Hotel.

The decision to host the event in the banana heartland of Far North Queensland, proved valuable both for assisting in mitigating the risks associated with hosting a large event during an evolving pandemic, and for attracting one of the biggest delegate attendances in the event's 26-year history.

Almost 470 delegates – including 140 growers – attended over the two-and-a-half days. This is considerably more than the 2019 Banana Congress held on the Gold Coast which attracted 370 delegates, including 103 growers.

Our 2021 registrations were particularly positive given the hardship suffered by many growers in the Far Northern Cassowary Coast region from Cyclone Niran in March, when some growers lost 100 per cent of their crops. On top of this, almost every grower nationally was suffering significantly (both financially and emotionally) from critical worker shortages due to COVID.

The aim of the ABIC Planning Committee was to build on the success of previous Congresses, by providing participants with a transformative and thought-provoking experience, as well as providing a platform to share new ideas and innovative insights.

With this in mind, the committee delivered a comprehensive grower-focused program, giving all those involved in the banana industry (including growers, supply chain, researchers and other industry partners) a chance to consider ways to improve farming practices, inject growth in their businesses through change and innovation, improve their resilience, value-add, and implement new concepts for a continued robust industry.

The event delivered significant outcomes to industry value chain, showcasing a variety of levy-funded research and marketing programs, as well as providing an opportunity for growers to gain a greater insight into latest updates on supply chain development and technology.

The event was driven by a dedicated Management Committee, along with the ABGC, and a voluntary Program Committee, while Brisbane-based event's planning company MCI Australia aided in logistics and operational matters.

Throughout the two-day plenary program, attendees gained insight into global banana trends, succession planning, export opportunities, disease threats, and current on-farm innovations making tangible differences on farms Australia-wide.

Leading motivational speaker Matt Church kicked off plenary proceedings and was followed by a stellar line-up of speakers including mental health advocate Mary O'Brien, leading creative consumer strategist Adam Ferrier and CEO of SwarmFarm Robotics Andrew Bate.

Research and Development aimed at taking the banana industry into the future was showcased throughout the plenary program and as part of the "Science Snapshots" (a series of posts and presentations designed to deliver latest R&D in easy-to-understand ways).

Continuing to successfully market Australian bananas also took a focus, while growers also shared tips on brand awareness, environmental achievements and GPS bunch tagging, as part of the popular Grower Innovation Panel.

Rugby league great and Australian Bananas Ambassador Billy Slater was a popular special guest at the Trade Show Evening, while Australia's Outback Croc Wrangler Matt Wright kept attendees entertained at the traditional Banana Ball and Awards Ceremony, which officially concluded the Congress 2021 program of events.

An off-site tour was again included in the Congress program in 2021, prior to the official opening of the event on May 12. This included a bus tour to Howe Farming and the Mt Uncle Distillery on the Atherton Tablelands, before winding up in Cairns at the FNQ Food Incubator. This tour was booked to capacity and received positive feedback from delegates who attended.

Overall, the feedback from the entire Congress 2021 program was overwhelmingly positive, with many delegates describing it as one of the best they have attended.

Keywords

Bananas, innovation, research, inspiration, innovation, education, resilience, sustainability, science, marketing.

Introduction

The Australian Banana Growers' Council (ABGC) is the banana industry's national industry development organisation. It was formed in 1961 to represent the interests of Australia's commercial banana growers. In more recent years, it also runs industry development projects, including a biennial Congress, the first of which was held in 1995.

Bananas are purchased by 92 per cent of Australian households with about 403,00 tonnes of fresh bananas sold last year, producing a farm gate value of approximately \$600 million. There are approximately 600 banana growers in Australia. The major banana production region is North Queensland, in and around the areas of Tully, Innisfail, the Atherton Tablelands and Lakeland Downs. About 94 per cent of national banana production comes from across these areas. Bananas are also grown on the mid-north to far-north coast of NSW, in Western Australia at Carnarvon and Kununurra in the Northern Territory.

Since the introduction of the national banana industry levy for marketing and research and development (R&D) in 2008, some of the ABGC's funding for the biennial Banana Congress has been matched by the Commonwealth Government, via Hort Innovation.

The 2021 Congress again attracted some matched funds from Hort Innovation, for which ABGC is extremely grateful, as it helped ensure another successful event. Again, the largest contributor to revenue for this Congress was sponsorship, with the second largest contributor being delegate registration fees. We are also very grateful for the continued generosity of sponsors, exhibitors and delegates – both new and existing.

The ABGC's Congress Management Committee was assisted in the organisation of the 2021 Congress by Nazli Barootian, Michelle Tan and Danny Perry from event managers, MCI Australia. The event also had a dedicated, voluntary Congress Program Committee, which was integral in developing a thought-provoking and innovative Congress Program.

Work started on the May 2021 Congress at the end of 2019 - soon after the completion of the preceding Congress, held on the Gold Coast in May of that year.

Congress 2021 was held in Cairns, building on the success of the 2019 Congress, by keeping to a shorter, grower-focussed program.

Methodology

Following the 2019 Congress, a delegate survey was conducted to help shape the 2021 Congress program.

The key central outcomes of the survey included effectively gauging;

- Perceived value for money of Congress 2019
- Highlights of the 2019 Congress
- Biggest motivation to attend Congress in 2021
- Topics or speakers that should be added to the 2021 program
- Which location is preferred for Congress 2021
- Any additional subject matter or activity the respondent would like added to the 2021 program.
- What could be improved to enhance the respondent's overall Congress experience.

The results of this survey assisted the 2021 Congress Program Committee to shape an informative and appealing program of events, tailored from this delegate feedback.

The main feedback from growers included;

- Queensland location, to ensure greater affordability.
- Continue a more grower-focused program, including presentations on farming in general and by banana growers themselves discussing innovation being trialled on farm.
- Presentations on succession planning, health, finance and motivation.
- Include off-site tours, as per 2019

Congress 2021 was successfully held in Cairns – building on the success of Congress 2019 – thanks in no small part to the post-2019 Congress survey feedback.

The event included a two-day plenary program and an optional day which included an off-site tour preceding the official opening of ABIC 2021 on May 12.

As with previous Congresses, the program maintained a strong scientific and marketing focus, while providing broad insights into innovation, export potential, latest research and development, self-care, value adding and general business growth.

The program kicked off at Pullman International Hotel on Wednesday morning with registrations and an optional off-site tour, followed by the official Congress Opening poolside at the Pullman that evening. The following morning saw the start of two days of plenary sessions, with a trade show held that evening and concluding with the Banana Ball and Awards ceremony the following night.

Sponsors

- Former MCI Sponsorship Development Manager Danny Perry brought in more than \$381,500 in sponsorship and exhibition revenue, which was \$37,100 higher than MCI has ever previously achieved for the event, in the two previous years it has assisted in managing the event.
- Danny reported that sponsors and exhibitors were excited about the Far North Queensland location. There was also growth of other initiatives in the sponsorship campaign, including;
 - Development of the Machinery Exhibition Component of the event from 2 spaces sold (in 2019), to sold out (ie 5 sold) in 2021.
 - The launch of an industry sponsored Innovation Zone which allowed three early-stage AgTech Start Ups to take small exhibition booths at the event
 - Incorporation of new sponsorship items, including a Nascar Racing Zone
 - The successful launch of the 'Back a Grower Program', where sponsors funded the full registration of a grower who had never been to a Congress in the past, or hadn't been for some years.

Sponsor marketing

In order to ensure maximum exposure to the potential delegate base, sponsors/exhibitors were provided with a promotional media kit. This kit encouraged sponsors and exhibitors to promote their involvement in the congress. The kit included;

- Information on how to promote their involvement
- A personalised email signature with the sponsors logo and the Congress logo (available for high level sponsors only)
- Newsletter content
- Pre-made social media posts
- Website Banners

Exhibition

- A trade exhibition area featured 52 exhibition booths (10 more than the previous Congress in 2019), raising \$104,250 in exhibition funding. The wide expanse of the newly-refurbished Cairns Convention Centre meant exhibitors with heavy machinery could also be accommodated in the indoor exhibition area. These exhibitors were relegated to an outdoor area at Congress at Royal Pines in 2019.
- A 'Trade Show Evening' on the second night of Congress (May 13) again proved a big hit with both delegates and exhibition holders. The inclusion of special guest - NRL star and Banana Ambassador Billy Slater – was a huge drawcard, with delegates lining up for autographs and photos with the Rugby League great. The evening also allowed for extra opportunities for delegates to network with sponsors and exhibitors in the trade show area.
- Science researchers were able to exhibit posters with information on their latest research in this exhibition area known as the "Science Cafe". Here, delegates could meet with the scientist to learn more about their research and ask questions one-on-one. A range of topics was covered by 17 science 'snap shot' posters, including the latest in TR4 research, pre-commercialisation of TR4 resistant varieties, epidemiological research to better manage Banana Bunchy Top disease and resistant rotation crops to reduce plant-parasitic nematodes in banana.

Plenary

- Plenary sessions were held over two-days and included a high calibre of speakers on banana industry issues including global consumer trends, R&D, disease threats, marketing, robotics, future technologies, supply chain, retailing, as well as succession planning and mental health.
- The program included keynote speakers, presentations and panel discussions. Audience questions and interaction were encouraged and were assisted by a tailor-designed Congress App.

Research and Development Zone

- As discussed above, banana levy-funded R&D was showcased in a designated Science Cafe Zone in the exhibition area throughout the duration of Congress, with 17 posters and display materials from banana industry and other relevant horticultural sector scientists and researchers on display.
- Science Speed Talks were presented during the plenary program on Day 1 of the plenary program where seven speakers had three minutes to deliver a brief, yet informative insight into their current scientific research, followed by a 15 minute Q&A.
- Following the Science Speed Talks delegates could meet scientists in the exhibition area to learn more about their research activities.

Social (not funded by Hort Innovation)

- The social networking aspect of Congress is an integral drawcard for delegates. Social events were scheduled on three nights including a Welcome Reception, Trade Show Evening and Banana Ball. A dedicated 'Banana Bar' each evening at the Pullman Hotel provided opportunities for continued networking after each event had concluded.
- The Banana Ball also included the ABGC Awards of Honour presentation and – as always - was a major highlight of the 2021 event.

Incentives

- New incentives added to drive registrations in 2019 were again included in the 2021 Congress marketing campaign. These included the ‘Win your Way to Congress’ Early Bird incentive, where delegates who registered during the Early Bird period went into the draw to win back their registration costs, accommodation and travel. Growers who also registered before May 1 (National Banana Day) also went into the draw to win a \$250 bar tab, drawn at the Welcome Reception. Both of these incentives anecdotally proved extremely successful.

Outputs

Some 469 delegates attended the Banana Industry Congress 2021 in Cairns, including 140 growers - compared to 370 at the previous Congress, which included 103 growers.

Participants enjoyed presentations by 25 invited speakers, including Science Speed Talks and robust discussion panels, along with a capacity exhibition area and a program designed to educate, create discussion and inspire.

Prior to the event, extensive marketing of Congress was featured in the Australian Bananas Magazine, including August 2020, December 2020 and April 2021 editions. December 2020 and April 2021 editions included multiple page features, profiling keynote speakers and detailing the program of events and optional off-site tours.

The Australian Bananas Magazine has a national distribution of almost 1000 growers and industry stakeholders.

- August 2020 edition – Australian Bananas Magazine

<https://abgc.org.au/wp-content/themes/abgc/assets/lib/magazine/magazine.html?file=https://abgc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Issue-59-AUGUST-2020.pdf#magazineMode=true>

- December 2020 edition – Australian Bananas Magazine

<https://abgc.org.au/wp-content/themes/abgc/assets/lib/magazine/magazine.html?file=https://abgc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ABGA-Issue-60-DECEMBER-2020-WEB-1.pdf#magazineMode=true>

- April 2021 edition – Australian Bananas Magazine

<https://abgc.org.au/wp-content/themes/abgc/assets/lib/magazine/magazine.html?file=https://abgc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Issue-61-APRIL-2021.pdf#magazineMode=true>

Following Congress, a 7-page feature was published in the August 2021 edition of the Australian Bananas Magazine. This included a comprehensive wrap of the event, a re-cap of keynote presentations, acknowledgement of all major sponsors, acknowledgement of 2021 Award of Honour recipients and galleries of photos from social events, including the Banana Ball and Welcome Drinks.

- August 2021 edition – Australian Bananas Magazine

<https://abgc.org.au/wp-content/themes/abgc/assets/lib/magazine/magazine.html?file=https://abgc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Issue-62-AUGUST-2021-WEB-1.pdf#magazineMode=true>

Marketing

- Again in 2021, the Management Committee liaised with the graphic design team at MCI to develop modern, crisp branding for the Congress, which was used for all media promotion, marketing and promotional material.

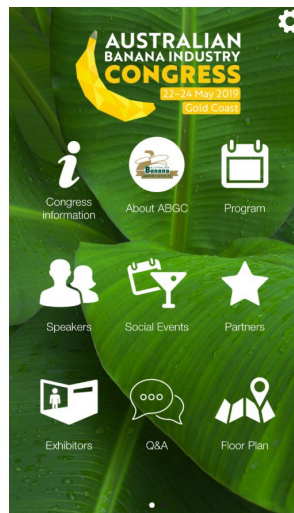


Website

All information on the Banana Industry Congress 2019 was hosted on the designated website www.bananacongress.org.au. This website served as the key communication tool for all details relating to Congress including the program, speaker profiles, registration, accommodation, venue information and sponsorship and exhibition details.

This website provided delegates with all the information they needed to attend Congress, including downloading the Congress App, which was also developed so delegates could access all event information on their electronic devices.

Congress App



The website and App included;

- Detailed information about ABGC and its objectives
- Detailed information about the Cairns Convention Centre and Pullman International Hotel.
- Program information and updates
- Profiles of all speakers
- Social function details
- Contact information
- Sponsors and exhibitor information
- Exhibitor floorplan

Delegate Collateral

Custom-made satchel bags were given to all Congress delegates along with other sponsored items such as lanyards, diary and other sponsors' inserts.

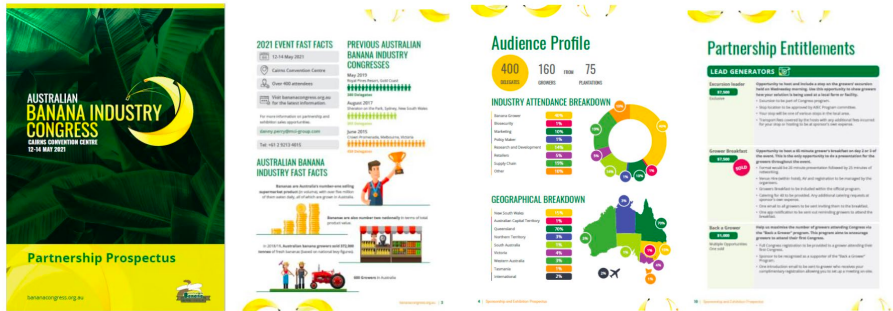
Other material produced as part of the conference were:

- Printed program booklet
- Sponsorship and Exhibition prospectus
- Registration brochure

Handbook



Sponsorship Prospectus



Delegate satchel



Hort Innovation branding

Hort Innovation was branded as a partner for all events were applicable, with Hort Innovation branding maintained (as per guidelines) on all event outputs, including the R&D Science Cafe in the exhibition area.



ABGC Facebook page

Videos

The ABGC produced a number of videos for Congress which were uploaded to its Facebook page and website.

A video produced to officially 'Open' Congress featured banana growers (and acknowledged Hort as a major sponsor of Congress) reached more than 8000 users on Facebook, received 119 'likes' and was 'shared' 46 times

<https://www.facebook.com/AustBananaGrowers/videos/1100802427106612>

A video to 'Open' Day 2 of Congress, also featured growers. This video reached more than 4000 users, attracted 65 'likes' and 16 shares.

<https://www.facebook.com/AustBananaGrowers/videos/1432103657170018>

The ABGC also uploaded daily highlights packages from Congress. These received thousands of views.

First Day Highlights Package (4869 organic reach)

<https://www.facebook.com/AustBananaGrowers/videos/745793196093981>

Second Day Highlights Package (1920 organic reach)

<https://www.facebook.com/AustBananaGrowers/videos/3084916718410301>

Third and Final Day Highlights Package (2379 organic reach)

<https://www.facebook.com/AustBananaGrowers/videos/288416429607007>

Promotion of Congress began well before the event kicked off, with 38 posts on Facebook between June 29, 2020 and June 1, 2021. These posts included acknowledgement of major sponsors, callout for scientific abstract submissions, Promotion of the Early Bird 'Win your way to Congress' Competition and post-Congress social pictures. Collectively these posts garnered thousands of organic views and engagements and assisted greatly in the success of Congress.

Acknowledging Sponsors

In the lead up to Congress 2021, eight posts were shared to acknowledge major sponsors and supporters of the event. These posts were an added incentive for partners to come on board and were clearly distinguished from regular ABGC content.

Scientific and General Media Coverage

Media coverage was extensive and included the following outlets:

- Good Fruit and Vegetables (including a 17-page Congress preview feature)
- FreshPlaza
- ABC QLD Country Hour; ABC Rural WA; ABC FNQ; ABC NT; ABC Country Hour Tasmania
- ABC online
- WIN News Cairns
- Queensland Country Life
- North Queensland Register
- Eativity online

Dedicated e-bulletins

In addition to featuring Congress content in regular e-bulletins (as appropriate), the ABGC produced a number of dedicated e-bulletins in the lead up to the event.

Both regular and dedicated e-bulletins featured clearly marked sponsor content on some occasions, where the Congress Management committee had approved it. Event management company MCI also sent direct emails to registered delegates, exhibitors and sponsors as appropriate.

These included specific Site Tour information, a link to the post-event survey and important details for exhibitors and sponsors (including thank you letters after Congress was completed).

Stakeholder Engagement

- A Stakeholder Engagement Strategy was developed to ensure effective communication with all Congress stakeholders.
- **See BA19003 - Appendix 1 – Stakeholder Engagement Strategy**

Project Risk

- A project Risk Management Register was established to mitigate against potential risks associated with the event.
- This was particularly prudent given the new risks associated with the global COVID pandemic and how it might potentially affect the running of an event the size of Congress.
- ABGC Communications Manager Sonia Campbell, in co-ordination with MCI developed a comprehensive Risk Management Strategy and Contingency plan to address COVID threats.
- This Strategy can be found in **BA19003 - Appendix 2 - Risk Management Strategy and COVID Contingency plan**
- Event managers MCI Australia also ran an Event Safety and Sustainability Tool (ESST) to determine any risk, warning features, sustainability levels etc for the event.
- Some of the items covered within the tool were;
 - Country of the event and its general safety rating based on items such as terrorism, political risk, infrastructure, environment and health, business risk, crime etc.
 - Environmental impacts the event may have i.e. efficient use of resources; energy, water, recycling etc.
 - Key suppliers of event have signed a code of conduct i.e. ethical practices.
 - Venue of event has adequate health and safety procedures, standardised exits and emergency materials and first aid capabilities for delegates.
 - All necessary care has been taken to ensure attendees information is protected under the new GDPR privacy laws.
- As a result of MCI's internal ESST tool, Congress 2021 did not return any high-risk results, which meant that no important anomalies were detected and the event was considered safe at the time it proceeded.

Outcomes

Congress delivered a number of key outcomes to the banana industry value chain on the Banana Research Program as well as showcasing other levy-funded research activities.

It provided a forum for knowledge sharing and debate so that industry participants and other stakeholders could consider ways of sharing, planning and implementing new concepts for a strong, sustainable and resilient banana industry.

Congress deliverables:

- Capacity building exercise as the pre-eminent gathering of the banana industry in Australia, as such drew media attention to the issues facing the industry, as well as assisted in growing the knowledge of individuals who attended.
- Greater awareness of levy investments, including the increased adoption of levy outcomes to build a stronger, more robust Australian banana industry.
- Increased grower and other delegate awareness of the latest Hort funded banana R&D and marketing information.
- Greater insight into current international and domestic Panama TR4 science and research.
- Keynote speakers broadened the knowledge of attendees, including to the banana industry value chain on research findings, value adding, best practice, emerging risks and opportunities.
- Exposure to broader opportunities in trade, R&D, innovative on-farm technologies, networking and more through plenary sessions, exhibition stalls and social networking.
- Consistently proven as a valuable tool for growers to socialize, particularly since increased on-farm biosecurity changes have changed the way growers previously interacted freely between farms.
- A more cohesive industry in terms of the ability of growers to network with scientists, researchers and marketing specialists who support them.

Monitoring and evaluation

Attendance

- Some 469 delegates attended Congress, which included social functions, plenary sessions, Optional Off-Site Tour, Trade Show Evening, Banana Ball and Awards of Honour Ceremony.
- The break-down of attendees included 140 growers. Other attendees included supply chain, science and research, marketing, retail sector, biosecurity and Government policy.
- The grower attendance figure is quite significant as it represents a significant increase in grower attendance compared to the previous Congress in 2019.
- Of added significance is, of the 123 ABGC grower members who attended, 87 indicated they had attended Congress previously, while 55 had never attended a Congress before.

Delegate comparison:

Year	2013	2015	2017	2019	2021
Total delegates	392	458	353	381	469
Growers (including registered accompany persons)	83	165	80	103	140

Program

The Congress Program Committee carefully devised an outstanding speaker line-up for the 2021 event.

The Plenary Program built on the strengths of the previous Congress, including grower feedback sought via a survey of delegates following the 2019 event. The results of this survey assisted the 2021 Program Committee to shape an exciting and informative program of events, with a focus on showcasing R&D, marketing and emerging industry issues.

The program gave growers the opportunity to receive latest updates on supply chain development and technology, gain an increased knowledge of Hort Innovation funded R&D and marketing programs for the banana industry and provide participants with a thought providing experience, generating new ideas and innovative insights.

Among the diverse and notable guests were: dynamic motivational speaker Matt Church; brand strategist and consumer psychologist Adam Ferrier; highly praised rural mental health campaigner Mary O'Brien; marketing expert Tate Connolly (Hort Innovation); and Australia's much-loved Outback Wrangler Matt Wright. The full program can be found in **BA19003 – Appendix 3 – Congress Handbook**.

Listening to feedback from Congress 2019, the Program Committee ensured that grower innovation was put front and centre, including a dedicated grower panel where delegates heard from banana growers who have developed, researched or were using innovative farming practices.

Other topics covered in the program included domestic and global marketing, growing your business, succession planning, robotics and improving efficiencies on farm.

On top of this, the social program again featured the ‘Banana Bar’, Welcome Reception and the much-loved Banana Ball – a chance to celebrate industry and honour some of the banana business’ best.

A tailor-made Congress App - which was first introduced to Congress in 2017 – again proved popular as more people were used to the new technology and were more attuned to how it worked.

Other key outcomes of Congress included;

- Positive outcomes for all levy payers, through access to R&D outputs and marketing information
- Strong media coverage of issues affecting industry
- Development of new ideas and business modules brought about by exposure to cutting edge speakers.
- Greater update of industry best practice following robust panel discussions on on-farm innovation and biosecurity protocols to continue to fight serious disease risks such as Panama TR4.
- Exposure to cross-industry speakers, promoting the strength, diversity and a positive outlook for Australian banana growers.

Delegate feedback

The Congress Management Committee and ABGC senior staff went to great lengths to gauge grower feedback on Congress, both during the event and after. A survey of delegates was also conducted post-Congress via SurveyMonkey.

Overall, the majority of feedback was extremely positive, with most growers pleased the event was held in Cairns. Many growers indicated that they had gained valuable knowledge throughout the event, particularly in the innovation and R&D space.

There was overwhelming feedback that the next Congress (2023) should again be held in Cairns, or another location in Far North Queensland.

The Post-Congress Survey-Monkey Survey was filled out by 44 delegates, including growers (11), R&D (11), marketing (5), supply chain (9), biosecurity (1), Government Policy (2), retail (1) and other (9).

Key outcomes of the Survey included;

- Thirty-two respondents rated their Overall Congress Experience as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Highly Satisfactory’.
- Almost 80 per cent rated the Congress Topics and Presentations as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Highly Satisfactory’.
- Almost 80 per cent rated the Exhibition area as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Highly Satisfactory’.
- More than 90 per cent indicated they would attend the next Congress (2023) if it was held in Cairns.
- The majority supported the existing two-day format.

Additional analysis

- A total of 52 exhibitors were represented at Congress (a sell-out), contributing \$104,000 to the event budget. This figure was up considerably on the previous Congress (\$65,000), almost certainly due to the Far North Queensland location.
- A total of \$376,575 (inc GST) was raised in sponsorship funds, including an amount of \$80,000 from Hort Innovation provided directly to the ABGC for Congress 2021 and \$16,500 provided by Tourism Australia.

Recommendations

1. The next Banana Industry Congress should be held at a Far North Queensland location, either Cairns or Port Douglas, as this was the overwhelming consensus from the majority of grower attendees.
2. The plenary program should be kept at two-days and Congress should culminate with the Banana Ball on the Friday night.
3. The program committee should review all feedback from the post-Congress survey in formulating the 2023 program, which should continue to be grower-focused, with a strong delivery of R&D, marketing and innovation.
4. Optional off-site tours should be considered again as they were again extremely popular in 2021
5. If the next Congress is again spilt between a Convention Centre and headquarter hotel, there should be a ‘banana hub’ information desk set up during peak times in the headquarter hotel to assist with delegate movement and queries.
6. The Management Committee (of ABGC directors and senior staff) should attend or read about other horticultural conferences in 2021/2022 to take ideas from them and implement improvements to the Banana Congress in 2023.

Refereed scientific publications

N/A

Intellectual property, commercialisation and confidentiality

No project IP, project outputs, commercialisation or confidentiality issues to report

Acknowledgements

Overall co-ordination of the Australian Banana Industry Congress 2021 was undertaken by ABGC Communications Manager Sonia Campbell.

Congress was managed externally by conference organisers MCI Australia: www.mci-group.com/australia The MCI team was Nazli Barootian, Michelle Tan and Danny Perry.

The Congress Management Committee consisted of: Paul Inderbitzin (Chair and ABGC Director), Sonia Campbell (Congress Co-ordinator) and Leanne Erakovic (ABGC Executive Officer).

The Congress Program Committee included: Paul Inderbitzin (Chair and ABGC Director), Sonia Campbell (Congress co-ordinator), Tate Connolly (Hort Innovation), Jade Buchanan (former ABGC Director), Doriana Mangilli (ABGC director), Josephine Borsato (Innisfail grower), Jenny Crema (Tully grower), Leanne Erakovic (ABGC Executive Officer), Amy Spear (ABGC Senior Communications Officer), Dr Rosie Godwin (ABGC), Shanara Veivers (QLD DAF).

All communications for the Congress including media engagement was managed by ABGC Senior Communications Officer Amy Spear, with assistance from Sonia Campbell.

All sponsors and exhibitors who supported the Congress – including Hort Innovation - are acknowledged for their valued contribution which again assisted in ensuring the event's success.

All participants are acknowledged for attending and contributing to the atmosphere and the exciting discussions both in sessions and at the social events.

Appendices

BA19003 – Appendix 1 – Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

BA19003 - Appendix 2 - Risk Management Strategy and COVID Contingency plan

BA19003 – Appendix 3 – Congress Handbook

BA19003 – Appendix 4 – Statement of Receipts and Expenditures Final Report