

Canberra 100 – Celebration of a Century

How to Celebrate Canberra's Centenary in 2013

The outcomes of a Tourism Think Tank, on November 21, 2005 from members of the Canberra tourism and business events industry.

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Introduction

The Canberra tourism and business events industry has a vested interest in ensuring Canberra is set apart from other cities and that as a destination, it grows stronger in its capacity to attract people, organisations and events. The Centenary of Canberra 2013 provides ample opportunities to achieve that goal nationally and internationally. This paper is a contribution towards the call for ideas for the celebrations of the city in 2013.

The transformation of a city due to a successful long running major event can be seen in other places. World Expo 88 forever changed Brisbane from a large country town to a vibrant world city, and provided the catalyst for Brisbane to grow and develop in the years that followed.

It is vital that Australians and international visitors are attracted to the story of Canberra in 2013 and that the events planned reach out to a wider audience. As the Chief Minister stated in *Canberra 100 Celebration of a Century – A Discussion Paper*, "it's a celebration we should invite all Australians to share with us."

The opportunities

Canberra already has a reputation for arts, culture, history, sports, meetings, education, and science. The opportunity is to build this reputation to a national and international level. The tourism and business events industry believe that we have the chance to capitalise on our strengths and build appeal for the destination and the celebration.

The participants in the Tourism Think Tank, which included representatives from both the accommodation and attractions sectors, generated the ideas below. We understand that many tourism organisations have also had the opportunity to submit in other forums, and the purpose of this paper is to add to the many other discussions being held in the business community of Canberra, rather than represent priorities or for that matter exclude other ideas in the future.

Festivals/Multi Disciplined events

- “Centenary Challenge” - using the land and water axis of Canberra, develop a world first multiple disciplined event, which includes water and land sporting activities with checkpoints at National cultural institutions. Similar to an AROC event, it would involve cultural challenges whilst using the lake and the parliamentary triangle.
- World Expo 2013 – 25 years since Brisbane. No destination decided for 2013. Las Vegas has indicated a potential bid, but New York is bidding for 2012, and San Francisco for 2015 (www.expomuseum.com)
- World Youth Festival with a cause (environment, drugs, world peace) including music/concerts, youth sports (skate board, bmx) fashion etc attracting Australian and international artists. Include live broadcasts from Triple J.
- Canberra’s International Year of Design (similar to 2003 the International Year of Design in Barcelona which was year long festival devoted to design in all its forms and expressions and included competitions, conferences, exhibitions). Include a design competition for an iconic structure (to be completed and opened in 2013) on City Hill aligned with Griffin’s original vision for Capitol Hill, which has synergy to the original design competition for Canberra.
- Tasting Australia – gift from South Australia/Adelaide for 2013 and include long lunches/dinners on the Bridge
- Back to Canberra Week – culminating in a Centenary Ball, including a Day in the life of Canberra Photographic Exhibition and develop a visual, written and oral history of Canberra’s evolution as told by original residents, past temporary residents, visitors and diplomats (past and present).

Arts/Culture/Heritage

- 3 day music festival using the lake, similar to opera event during bicentennial
- International short film competition – films about, set in Canberra culminating in a short film festival
- International/multicultural music events with international artists supported by embassies.
- Indigenous culture/art – yearlong festival inviting each embassy to facilitate their indigenous exhibition alongside the permanent Australian.

- Emulate Scandinavia's international gold panning competition to tell the story of the first Europeans in the region.
- Significant art events, for example;
 - Major public art installations and wrapped buildings (big public art)
 - Decorating public spaces in Civic with murals, mosaics similar to Old Quebec
 - National Sculpture Prize become International Sculpture Prize for 2013
 - Commission statutes of National significance
 - Visiting exhibition from the Smithsonian.
 - Australian Icon Competition, Australian designers and artists to produce depictions of Australian Icons.

Sport

- International Sevens Rugby Tournament
- Collaboration between Sports, Dance and Circus into major conference and festival
- Inaugural "Tour De Australia" which winds through the Southern Highlands and the Snowy Mountains and finishes in the Parliamentary triangle
- International cycling events in a purpose built Velodrome

Science

- Develop the Australian Science Festival into a World Science Festival
- Become the world's first self sustaining capital city and host an international renewable energy symposium
- Develop an International Solar Challenge event with ANU

Meetings/Education

- Youth Parliament – National election of under 18years and hold a youth parliament
- Global Symposium bringing religion, culture and environment together
- Develop celebration specific theming to encourage conferences to hold event in Canberra in 2013
- Every school in Australia to send one group to Canberra

Promotion

- Touring exhibition throughout Australia in 2012 promoting 2013
- Canberra Exhibition in other National Capitals to promote 2013

- Use interviews with children in current educational tours to voice impressions of Canberra
- Develop local ambassador program now to promote the Centenary

Conclusion

It is imperative that the ACT looks at the opportunities of 2013 to showcase Canberra to Australia and the world, to build a positive image, international profile and visitation.

Importantly, the opportunity between 2005 and 2013 is to lay the groundwork, and build the impetus, which is vital to the success of the Centenary celebrations. The tourism and business events industry believes that 2013 can be a year for the local community to celebrate as well as a catalyst for economic growth, employment and population growth.

As Sir Llew Edwards (Chairman & Chief Executive of World Expo 88) said when commenting in 2001 on the impact of the Commonwealth Games and World Expo on Brisbane, "We gave our city a spirit, a pride and an image of hope for a better future. Brisbane came of age."