

Society of Paediatric Anaesthesia in New Zealand and Australia (SPANZA) Conference 2008

Dates: 6 – 9 November 2008

Venue: Grand Mecure, Hunter Valley Gardens

City: Hunter Valley, NSW

Delegates: 239



Will Organise began working with the SPANZA Committee in February 2007. The 2007 Conference, held in Fremantle was a great success, with attendance having to be cut off at 200 delegates.

After many months of hard work putting together the program and social activities, the results of the Hunter Valley conference exceeded expectations with record attendance in both industry participation and delegate numbers.

A highlight of the week was the Simulation Course run on site, by the John Hunter Simulation Team who transported truck loads of equipment to the Hunter Valley to create 2 simulation rooms. This course had been booked out well in advance, and was a wonderful opportunity for the delegates to gain further skills and knowledge. The set up involved over 50 metres of paneling in a room to create various workspaces, dozens of computers and monitors, and 100's of metres of cabling, to allow for the room to be viewed in another conference room adjacent to the simulator set up.

The conference involved a large number of optional, afternoon workshops, including a humour and magic workshop one day, and a juggling workshop another! Hands on workshops were also included such as 2 different ultrasound techniques and Fibreoptic Intubation – many which were booked out well in advance.

The conference program featured a web link with the Canadian Paediatric Anaesthesia Society (CPAS) who were having their conference at the same time (in Canada). We connected via webcam after our morning tea, as they were finishing up for the day, and the session gave a wonderful opportunity to share ideas, techniques and theories from opposite sides of the globe. The audio visual support worked without a hitch through this session.

Social activities are an important component of the conference, with a casual welcome reception being held the first evening, in the gardens at the Grand Mecure. On Friday afternoon, for those not involved in workshops, a shuttle bus was offered to all delegates to allow them to access a number of wineries, without the concern of driving. A cooking school and winery tour was offered to partners, plus for the early risers, a chance to go ballooning was an option.

Saturday night was the optional dinner, which was a stunning night at the Hope Estate winery, located less than 5 min drive from the accommodation venues. The dinner provided a relaxed, elegant atmosphere amongst the great casks of the hall. Delegates danced the night away, being entertained by a live band and performers.