



# ASTEN

## AUSTRALASIAN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY EXHIBITORS NETWORK

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### NEWS UPDATE

**April 2002**

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#### WELCOME TO THIS EDITION

This April 2002 ASTEN News Update contains information on:

- ? [ASTEN Website Update](#)
- ? [Next ASTEN Conference hosted by Scienceworks](#)
- ? [2002 ASTEN Fellowship Winners](#)
- ? [ASTEN Fellowship Report by Vicki Shegog](#)
- ? [2003 ASTEN Fellowship Application Process](#)
- ? [ASTEN at 3SCWC](#)
- ? [ASTEN Breakfast Meeting at 3SCWC](#)
- ? [Key Areas Identified for Science Centres and Museums at 3SCWC](#)

Further, check out the Exhibition Database on this website if you tour or receive exhibitions. It is important that you regularly up-date your information on this database. If you have forgotten your log-in details so that you can directly update this database, please contact Steve Winter, the ASTEN webmaster:

[steve@roadshow.org](mailto:steve@roadshow.org)

Steve would welcome your suggestions for improving this database. He is interested in knowing if there is currently enough 'depth' of information about the exhibitions, or if more fields should be added and what these fields might be.

Thank you to Steve Winter for his continuing work in developing the ASTEN web site.

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#### ASTEN WEBSITE UPDATE

There have been a number of recent updates to ASTEN's website. Please check out the site at:

<http://www.astenetwork.net>

In particular, check the contact details that are listed for your institution (in the Australian or the New Zealand Directory). Please let Brenton Honeyman, ASTEN Executive Officer, [bhoneyman@questacon.edu.au](mailto:bhoneyman@questacon.edu.au) know of any information which needs to be changed.

**ASTEN 2002 Conference**  
**28-29 OCTOBER 2002**

hosted by

**SCIENCEWORKS**  
Melbourne, Australia

**Mark these dates  
in your diary now**

**Special Workshop Program**

led by Stephen Brand, USA  
for directors and staff associated with  
business development

## CONGRATULATIONS TO ASTEN FELLOWSHIP WINNERS FOR 2002

From an excellent field of applicants from across Australia and New Zealand, three people were selected as recipients of this year's ASTEN Fellowship Awards.

This year, Questacon contributed a third fellowship, specifically provided to enable a recipient to travel to Canberra to participate in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Science Centre World Congress which was held in February 2002. The winner of this fellowship was Vicki Shegog, Manager of the Imaginarium Science Centre in Devonport, Tasmania. Vicki's report is included in this ASTEN News and is already available on the ASTEN website.

Paul Wilcox, Exscite Centre in Hamilton, New Zealand has been awarded his fellowship to enable him to visit Scitech Discovery Centre in Perth. While at Scitech, he will investigate design and crating techniques for interactive exhibits.

Amos Mann, Discovery World, Otago Museum, Dunedin, New Zealand will utilize his fellowship to visit the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney to investigate their technology-based programs, and then to visit Questacon in Canberra to investigate show performances and outreach programs.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Science Centre World Congress

#### Website Proceedings

[www.questacon.edu.au/iiscwc.html](http://www.questacon.edu.au/iiscwc.html)

Webcasts of Plenary Sessions 1 to 4 can be viewed online now.

Other session presentations are being added to the Congress web site.

## ASTEN FELLOWSHIPS IN 2003

During 2003, ASTEN is offering up to two fellowships for staff of ASTEN member institutions. The application form for these ASTEN Fellowships will be available on the ASTEN Website, and must be received by the ASTEN Executive Officer **no later than 30 October 2002.**

Each fellowship provides up to A\$1000 towards a project which involves travel to another ASTEN Member Institution and a minimum stay of five days. Preference is given to applicants who have limited opportunities to meet professionally with other science centre staff.

Project proposals must have a clear focus and demonstrate how it will benefit not only the recipient, but also ASTEN and its member organisations. Possible projects might involve learning about marketing strategies at another centre, working with a staff member at another centre to co-develop a new public program, or sharing exhibit ideas with designers and workshop staff. Check out the reports of past winners on the ASTEN website ([www.astenetwork.net](http://www.astenetwork.net)) this will provide examples of past successful projects.

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## ASTEN BREAKFAST MEETING AT WORLD CONGRESS

One of the special events at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Science Centre World Congress was the ASTEN Valentine's Day Breakfast on the morning of 14<sup>th</sup> February. Many ASTEN member institutions were represented at this enjoyable and informative occasion.

Annie Ghisalberti welcomed those attending, including several overseas delegates who attended in order to learn more about

ASTEN. Brenton Honeyman provided a brief report on ASTEN activities. This was followed by a brief report by representatives of ASTEN member institutions, highlighting challenges ahead for their institutions in 2002, and providing an interesting update on the range of initiatives being taken by science centres and museums across Australia and New Zealand.

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## **A**STEN MEMBERS WELL REPRESENTED AT 3SCWC

It was great that many delegates from ASTEN member institutions were able to be part of the 440 delegates attending the Congress. In all, 39 countries were represented. The program featured 5 plenary sessions, 1 major session, 31 panel discussions, 7 roundtable discussions, 10 workshops, 13 speakers corner presentations, 9 show performances, 1 exhibition roundtable, 6 special interest group meetings, 10 behind-the-scenes tours, 10 exhibitor displays, 8 social events and 4 lunchtime cultural performances! The Congress evaluation indicates that this worldwide gathering was highly successful in many ways.

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## **K**EY AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR SCIENCE CENTRES AND MUSEUMS

Following the Tuesday morning plenary session at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Science Centre World congress, delegates attended a roundtable discussion session to consider the questions “What are the major trends that are impacting on science centres and museums? What can science centres and networks do to address them?” These were the main issues identified and solutions proposed.

1. **Science centres need to position themselves in their communities** so that they are seen as having a legitimate, valuable function in that community. They should take a leadership role in promoting the understanding of science. They should also form strong links with their communities and look for opportunities to form productive partnerships.
2. **Science centres need to secure their funding** so that they can maintain their viability into the future. They can do this by building new partnerships that attract sponsorship, by positioning themselves to meet identified community needs and by selling their knowledge and expertise.
3. **Science centres need to maintain their scientific integrity** and stay current and relevant in their exhibitions and programs. They need to maintain their connections with practicing scientists and encourage citizens to engage in science-related debates. They should make use of new technology to improve communication with their colleagues and visitors.
4. **Science centres need to provide good customer service** and make themselves attractive and accessible to a wide, diverse audience.
5. **Science centre networks should support all science centres**, avoiding political issues and respecting the identity of each institution. They should foster collaboration between centres and encourage the sharing of resources and expertise.

## ASTEN FELLOWSHIP REPORT

**By Vicki Shegog, Manager  
Imaginarium Science Centre  
Devonport, Tasmania**

As I write this report I am still 'riding high' on the renewed vigour and focus, the newly inspired ideas and plans, and the infectious enthusiasm that I experienced during the five, full days of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Science Centre World Congress. Networking with many of the 400 plus delegates from almost 40 countries, gave me the opportunity to tap into a wide range of talent, skills and years of collective experience.

I know it is not only me who still feels the effects of the Congress, two weeks ago. Speaking with other Congress participants since the event, it is clear that they too are still buoyed by whatever benefits they gained.

I particularly benefited from the three levels of focus that the Congress provided me in the form of international, national and individual centre perspectives.

The international perspective provided me with an increased awareness of the global trends and issues and how centres plan to remain sustainable in the future. Sessions such as *Crisis management* and *Shaping the future of science centres and museums* were most revealing and beneficial.

The Australian science centre network, of which I am now formally a part, provided me with a national "sense of place" and not feeling so "isolated" professionally. As Paul Bayly, General Manager of The Investigator so aptly put it, we are no longer "rowing a lonely boat". We can regularly communicate our centres' plans for the future and ways that we can support each other.

On an individual science centre and personal level, I was able to benefit greatly from such sessions as *Science centres on a shoestring*, *Leadership from the inside out*, and the science show sessions that were inspirationally led by such "icons" as Paul Doherty, Moshe Rishpon and Art Sussman.

I have returned to the Imaginarium Science Centre in Devonport, Tasmania, with renewed energy and creativity and have a much clearer vision of where Imaginarium will be heading in its future years.

I deeply thank the ASTEN Committee for awarding me the ASTEN Fellowship so I could take full advantage of such a unique opportunity as attending the 3<sup>rd</sup> Science Centre World Congress.

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### ASTEN EXECUTIVE: 2001-2002

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