

Final Report

World Potato Congress 2024

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Public summary

The 12th World Potato Congress (WPC) in Adelaide was a landmark event for the global potato industry, bringing together experts, growers, researchers, and industry leaders from around the world. Hosted by Potatoes Australia Ltd, and held for the first time in Australia, this congress provided a unique platform for discussing advancements, challenges, and future opportunities within the potato sector. Key highlights included sessions on sustainable farming practices, innovative technologies, biosecurity measures, and emerging market trends, all designed to address the needs of a rapidly evolving global food landscape.

A central theme of the congress was the importance of collaboration across borders to ensure the resilience and growth of the potato industry. The event featured presentations from renowned scientists and industry pioneers, interactive panels, and field tours that showcased Australia's commitment to high-quality potato production. The support of local and international stakeholders, such as government agencies, industry associations, and sponsors, emphasised the strong collaborative spirit of the event.

The WPC in Adelaide not only underscored the essential role of potatoes in global food security but also reinforced Australia's reputation as a leader in agricultural innovation and biosecurity standards. Attendees left with actionable insights and new connections, setting the stage for continued growth and innovation in the global potato industry.

Keywords

Potato. World potato congress, Processing Potato, Fresh Potato Seed Potato

Introduction

The World Potato Congress (WPC) Inc. is a non-profit organisation driven by a dedicated team of volunteer directors who represent diverse potato-growing regions worldwide. Since its inception in 1993, WPC has served as a catalyst for uniting the global potato industry. Its core mission is to create an international value chain network to foster sustainable growth and innovation within the potato sector, meeting the increasing global demand for this essential crop.

The World Potato Congress is held in collaboration with local host committees. In 2024, Potatoes Australia was awarded the competitive bid to host the Congress, a prestigious recognition that underscores Australia's significant contributions to the global potato industry. The WPC Congress enhanced Australia's position in the international potato landscape but also provide a valuable platform for local industry stakeholders to engage with global experts, drive innovation, and explore emerging opportunities.

The WPC has a long history of successful congress events, each bringing together thousands of professionals to share ideas, research, and advancements. Previous Congresses have been held in various prominent locations, including:

- 1993: Charlottetown, Canada
- 1994: Harrogate, England
- 1997: Durban, South Africa
- 2000: Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2004: Kunming, China
- 2006: Boise, Idaho, USA
- 2009: Christchurch, New Zealand
- 2012: Edinburgh, Scotland
- 2015: Yanqing, China
- 2018: Cusco, Peru
- 2022: Dublin, Ireland

The Congress has consistently attracted a wide range of attendees, including:

- Potato Industry Professionals: Farmers, growers, processors, and distributors across the potato supply chain.
- Researchers and Scientists: Experts engaged in potato research, crop science, and agricultural technology.
- Government Representatives: Policymakers and officials involved in agricultural and food production policies.

- Industry Associations: Members of potato-related organisations worldwide.
- Agribusiness Representatives: Companies offering services, equipment, and technology to the potato sector.
- Academia: Professors, educators, and students with a focus on agricultural studies.
- International Delegates: Representatives fostering cross-border collaboration.
- Environmental and Sustainability Experts: Advocates for sustainable farming practices, food waste reduction, and environmental impact.
- Trade Show Exhibitors: Innovators showcasing technologies and solutions for potato cultivation and processing.
- Media Professionals: Journalists covering agricultural trends and industry advancements.

The WPC event had a strong focus on sustainability, innovation, and collaboration, with around 70% of its delegates typically comprising professionals directly involved in the potato sector. This emphasis aligns with the WPC's broader strategy of promoting the potato crop's benefits, particularly as a healthy and versatile staple, in both developed and developing countries.

The 2024 World Potato Congress hosted by Potatoes Australia was a landmark event, leveraging Australia's strategic position in the potato industry. It provided an unparalleled opportunity for participants to network, exchange knowledge, and drive the future of the potato sector towards sustainability and growth. The event's success was not only of benefit to the Australian potato industry but also contributed significantly to the global potato value chain.

Methodology

The specific activities to deliver the project include the following:

- Contractual arrangements with the WPC in hosting the Congress in Australia
- Development of a sponsor prospectus to attract commercial sponsorship, and a trade exhibition display.
- Development of a Congress partner program
- Development of a dedicated Congress Steering Committee
- Development of the Congress technical program (jointly with the WPC Board)
- The Conference Company, a highly regarded professional conference management firm, was engaged and contracted to oversee various critical aspects of the World Potato Congress. The company has assigned a dedicated project manager to the WPC Adelaide event to ensure seamless coordination and execution, covering key areas such as logistics, speaker and abstract management, participant registration, and overall event experiences.

Results and discussion

Summary



Over 40 countries



927 delegates



Fully sold out gala dinner
over 800 delegates
attending



Over 600 delegates
attending welcome
reception



Industry panel extremely
successful



All sectors of the Australian
supply chain engaged



Sold out post congress tours showcasing regional South Asutralia



Positive feedback from delegates



Successful Innovation and technology transfer in exhibition space

Photos/images/other audio-visual material

Copies of images from professional photographer are listed at [WPC 2024 Photos - Dropbox](#)

Copies of PowerPoint presentations at listed at [on this site](#)

Outputs

Table 1 Output summary

Output	Description	Detail
Successful completion of the congress and post congress tours.	Post Congress Tours	Post congress commenced on Wednesday 26 June 2024 and offer a range of industry and tourism visits (see appendix on tour details) Tours to SARDI, Mitolo, Pye Group and Kangaro Island
Attendance of 1000 delegates from across the world at the congress	Registration of delegates	927 delegates registered from 40 countries
800 people participating in post congress tours.	Registration of delegates	425 delegates participated in the post congress tours
Successful trade exhibition with 30+ sites allocated.	Trade registrations in exhibition hall	Trade Hall was successful and included 39 exhibitors
Attendance of 50 young growers, researchers, and students to attend the event at the 50% subsidised price (cost covers registration, 3 nights accommodation and \$500 towards transportation). These young growers will be selected based upon an application that is submitted to the board of Potatoes Australia Ltd for consideration.	Registration of delegates	A total of 50 growers were supported in attending the conference (list attached see appendix)
A list of attendees subject to privacy laws	Registration of delegates	927 delegates were registered
A report from the congress proceedings produced and distributed to industry via	Congress app showing proceedings	Congress app was developed

Output	Description	Detail
PotatoLink		
Australian potato industry showcased on a global level to a global audience.	Post Congress Tours	Post congress commenced on Wednesday 26 June 2024 and offer a range of industry and tourism visits. Tours to SARDI, Mitolo, Pye Group and Kangaro Island
Evaluation report compiled from survey completed by attendees	Post congress evaluation	Post congress evaluation completed (see appendix)
The contribution of Hort Innovation Levy Funding will be acknowledged on the congress website, congress app, and social media.	Hort Innovation funding acknowledgement	Hort Innovation funding acknowledged during and throughout the Congress Hort innovation hosted a side meeting "Industry Ideation" CEO of Hort innovation included on international industry panel day 2
Communication & Extension (industry)	CSC Meetings	Congress steering committee were held as required
	Articles to PotatoLink and other industry publications	Potato link hosted a side meeting to the WPC on regenerative agriculture. Various articles captured by Potato Link team

Outcomes

Table 2. Outcome summary

Outcome	Alignment to fund outcome, strategy and KPI	Description	Evidence
Increased industry awareness and knowledge of issues affecting the global potato industry.	Outcome 1; Building capability and innovative culture, Outcome 2; Improving industry productivity to maintain local and international competitiveness and viability of supply.	Improved networks and cross-industry collaboration to increase efficiencies and use of R&D outputs to build a stronger, more resilient industry y Strengthened networks between potato industry participants in Australia and internationally	Participation in the congress – delegate registration The program included leading presentations covering global topics from around the world
Increased involvement of young growers, researchers, and students in the Australian potato industry.	Outcome 1; Building capability and innovative culture, Outcome 2; Improving industry productivity to maintain local and international competitiveness and viability of supply.	Improved networks and cross-industry collaboration to increase efficiencies and use of R&D outputs to build a stronger, more resilient industry y Strengthened networks between potato industry participants in Australia and internationally	50 young industry people attended the WPC event supported through this grant

Outcome	Alignment to fund outcome, strategy and KPI	Description	Evidence
Increased knowledge of global best practice in managing potato diseases and other issues	Outcome 1; Building capability and innovative culture, Outcome 2; Improving industry productivity to maintain local and international competitiveness and viability of supply.	Resources for precision input management to reduce costs and maintain yield and quality in a changing climate, including water and nutrient use efficiency and salinity management Advances in automation and emerging technology opportunities to support labour use efficiency, compliance and input management Regulatory support and co-ordination for crop protection regulatory activities with the potential to impact plant protection product access, both in Australia and internationally*	Participation in the congress – delegate registration Program included presentations covering various aspects of disease management, soil health and other technological advances from around the world. Also included topics of regulation of pesticides and the development of pesticide resistance
Increased global understanding and recognition of the Australian industry’s capacity and capability (advancing international trade of product and technology)	Outcome 1; Building capability and innovative culture, Outcome 2; Improving industry productivity to maintain local and international competitiveness and viability of supply.	Improved networks and cross-industry collaboration to increase efficiencies and use of R&D outputs to build a stronger, more resilient industry Strengthened networks between potato industry participants in Australia and internationally	Participation in the congress – delegate registration. Inclusion of the post congress tours Trade exhibitions included Australian companies Program included Australian presenters
A better understanding by congress participants of the value of the levy system and the potato industry levy investments, that will encourage further engagement with the national R&D program and its outputs.	Outcome 1; Building capability and innovative culture, Outcome 2; Improving industry productivity to maintain local and international competitiveness and viability of supply.	Improved networks and cross-industry collaboration to increase efficiencies and use of R&D outputs to build a stronger, more resilient industry Strengthened networks between potato industry participants in Australia and internationally	Participation in the congress – delegate registration CEO of Hort Innovation involvement in industry panel session

Monitoring and evaluation

Table 3 Key Evaluation Questions

Key Evaluation Question	Project performance	Continuous improvement opportunities
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Key Evaluation Question	Project performance	Continuous improvement opportunities
<p>To what extent has the project contributed to increased knowledge of global potato industry:</p> <p>Are participants more likely to undertake practice change through project activities?</p>	<p>The Congress included 927 delegates from 40 Counties and involved an international program covering a diverse range of topics.</p> <p>Participants are more likely to be informed on global issues</p>	<p>Opportunities for international collaboration in R&D</p> <p>Industry exchange on topics such as marketing and promotions</p>
<p>How has the project contributed to improved practice change for potato growers?</p>	<p>The Congress program included a range of topics relevant to Australian potato growers such as regenerative agriculture and disease management. The Congress was a unique opportunity to expose the Australian growers to global trends and experiences</p>	<p>Continued international engagement and collaboration.</p> <p>Participation in future WPC events including Congress and webinars</p>
<p>Have sufficient numbers of growers and/or areas of production been engaged in the congress?</p> <p>Have all major producing areas been adequately covered?</p> <p>What level of engagement (Outreach) has occurred beyond the congress?</p> <p>Have the agreed levels of communication (presentations, articles fact sheets etc) been delivered. Were industry extension and communication programs utilised for this (PT2000)?</p> <p>Were corporate growers engaged to contribute to the congress, and how was their feedback incorporated into further development of the techniques?</p>	<p>579 Australian delegates were involved in the Congress</p> <p>All sectors of the industry were involved and engaged. The South Australian industry hosted a trade site in the exhibition Hall. As did Seed Potatoes Victoria and AUSPICA.</p> <p>Potato link hosted a side meeting on regenerative agriculture that was well received</p> <p>Potato Link will be the primary outreach beyond the Congress. In addition, social media on the Potatoes Australia and WPC channels will be utilised.</p> <p>A range of corporate growers were engaged in the Congress.</p> <p>Feedback surrounding the congress was extremely positive and well received</p>	<p>Continued international engagement and collaboration.</p> <p>Maintain contact list for industry stakeholders</p>
<p>How well were the extension materials (e.g. sessions) adopted by participants, and was the information considered appropriate by the growers?</p> <p>Has engagement with the Congress Steering Committee been utilised to extend</p>	<p>The Congress app and pre-Congress communication were effectively used to provide information.</p> <p>A dedicated website for the Congress was hosted</p> <p>Congress steering committee was effective</p>	

Key Evaluation Question	Project performance	Continuous improvement opportunities
engagement to industry?		
<p>Did the planned collaboration with WPC Inc and Potatoes Australia Ltd take place?</p> <p>What (if any) efficiency improvements were evident in using combined media releases with WPC and Potatoes Australia Ltd? How was this assessed?</p> <p>What efficiency improvements were achieved by collaboration with WPC executive committee? Did this add to the project team's ability to test ideas and innovations?</p> <p>Were meetings undertaken with industry actors (growers, processors) effective at improving uptake of information?</p>	<p>WPC and Potato Australia entered in to contractual arrangements for the delivery of the WPC2024. The outcome was the hosting of an extremely successful event.</p> <p>Efficiency was improved through consistent messaging and branding of the WPC event, avoiding wasted energy by not focusing on a specific social media channel for WPC Adelaide promotion.</p> <p>Collaboration with WPC executive was fundamental in capturing international presentation topics and exhibitors and broadening the global industry exposure</p> <p>Feedback both formal and inform regarding the congress was extremely positive and all delegates found the topics and importantly the connection and networking opportunities were valued</p>	

Recommendations

The WPC Adelaide highlighted practical applications of project findings that can directly enhance industry practices. Future RD&E opportunities emerged, focusing on optimising disease management, improving seed quality, and increasing sustainability. To maximise value, targeted development and adoption activities were proposed, including industry workshops, technology transfer initiatives, and ongoing engagement with stakeholders. These efforts will ensure that the project's results are fully integrated into industry practices, driving long-term benefits for productivity and resilience.

Refereed scientific publications

Nil – not applicable

Intellectual property

No project IP or commercialisation to report

Appendices

Copy of the WPC Program <https://tcc.eventsair.com/world-potato-congress-2024/program-2024>

Speakers included <https://tcc.eventsair.com/world-potato-congress-2024/speakers>

List of the 50 delegates sponsored by Hort Innovation (attached)

Post Congress evaluation (attached)