

International Conference Leaders' Fund

Business
Events
Wellington



About the fund

University researchers play a pivotal role in attracting international conferences to Wellington. Their active involvement in international associations elevates the visibility of their research, fosters global collaborations, and helps to attract international conferences to our city.

Business Events Wellington, in partnership with Tourism New Zealand, supports university researchers in bidding for and hosting successful international conferences.

To secure the right to host an international conference, the proposed organising committee, especially the nominated Chair, must have a strong international reputation. This is particularly crucial when bidding for large-scale conferences.

Our research indicates that researchers are eager to deepen their engagement with international associations and their conferences. However, building a global network can be challenging without regular attendance at these conferences, and funding is often a significant barrier. The International Conference Leaders' Fund will enable researchers to participate more often in international association activities and to help them to build their international profile.

Objectives of the fund

To support researchers to build their profile within the international association they are a member of

Align conference attraction efforts with Wellington's strategic sectors

Increase the number of international conference bids led by Wellington-based researchers

Create a sustainable pipeline of future international conference leaders who can support future conference opportunities.



Existing support

Long-serving academics are often actively involved in international associations, hold board roles or are renowned within their sector. In addition to supporting a handful of researchers to become more actively engaged in their relevant international association, support to bid to host an international conference is already available through [Tourism New Zealand's Conference Assistance Programme](#) where funding is provided.

Support available from Tourism New Zealand

Tourism New Zealand's dedicated Business Events team offers flexible, competitive and business-specific funding and support for international conferences.

TNZ's Conference Assistance Programme can assist with:

- Funding the financial feasibility for conferences with over 200 international delegates.
- Funding the production of a world-class bid document and presentation.
- Contributing to travel costs to present the bid if required
- Financial support to assist with hosting an international conference in Wellington.

Why host an international conference?



Build your profile as a global leader



Knowledge sharing opportunities for staff



Enhance awareness of research programmes to secure new funding



Forge new international links



Showcase the University's areas of strength to future staff and students

Funding support

The funding will help participants to build their profile and their international connections.

Successful applicants will:

- Attend the international conference of their chosen association during the funding period.
- Apply to volunteer for a significant role within the conference.
- Join at least one key committee outside of the conference structure.
- Submit bi-annual written reports to Business Events Wellington (maximum one A4 page).
- Attend two annual in-person meetings with other fund participants in Wellington to build a peer network.
- Ultimately lead the preparation and submission of a bid to host their association's international conference in Wellington, with dedicated mentorship support from Business Events Wellington and the Wellington Advocate Network.

The duration of participation will align with the relevant association's bid cycle (usually 1–3 years).

Funding can be used to:

- Fund travel and registration costs for conference attendance
- Fund the organisation of events at international conferences to raise the participant's profile and build relationships within the international community e.g.
 - small pre-conference workshops
 - networking events.

Exclusions:

- Participants must self-fund their association membership.
- Exclusions are as per their own university's conference leave guidelines and cannot be paid using this fund.

Fund eligibility

Be a staff member at either Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington or the University of Otago Wellington.

Be an active member of an international association.

Already volunteer within the association (e.g. conference role, sub-committee) but not yet hold a prominent leadership position (e.g. board member, Committee Chair).

Be involved in an association whose international conference averages 500–1,200 delegates that the researcher aims to bid for in the future.

Be linked to a sector that is strategically important to Wellington as outlined in the Wellington City Council Economic Wellbeing Strategy and the Wellington Regional Economic Development Plan (REDP):

Regenerative action

climate change and resilience; conservation

Computer engineering

artificial intelligence; data science; robotics

Technology

Cleantech; Fintech; Biotech; Healthtech

Business

innovation; entrepreneurship; circular economy; sustainable business

Science

chemistry; biology; physics; health; climate; hazards.

Creative arts

film; digital games; arts; theatre; music; writing

Apply to the fund

Applications will be sought twice per year, however, if all the funding is allocated in the first round in FY25/26, then the second round may not be confirmed until July 2026.

Applications are competitive and applicants must complete the application form and submit via email to BusinessEvents@WellingtonNZ.com

Applicants must provide a comprehensive proposal, including:

- Motivation for applying to the fund.
- Desired outcomes from participation.
- A proposed budget and summary outlining your request for financial support.
- Confirmation of self-funding for association membership.

Assessment criteria

Alignment with Wellington's strategic sectors

The international association's conference attracts an average of 500-1200 delegates, and it occurs at least every 3 years

Potential for applicants' leadership growth within their association

Feasibility and clarity of proposed outcomes

Strength of institutional/managerial support

Final approval of applications is at the discretion of Business Events Wellington.



"Hosting an international conference substantially raises your individual and institutional profiles, highlights New Zealand's research excellence, and exercises discipline-based leadership on an international scale."

Professor Simon Davy
Victoria University of Wellington



Get in touch

Contact Louise to learn more about hosting an international conference in Wellington.



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**Business
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