

Perth Convention Bureau Scholarship Brings Life Changing Rewards

When former chronic stutterer and President of the WA Speak Easy Association Peter Dhu won a Perth Convention Bureau Scholarship, he had no idea just how far it would take him and his career.

As a teenager and young adult he struggled to speak and was ridiculed and treated unfairly by his employer.

“At stages in my life I chose to be an elective mute, writing down what I wanted to say rather than risk the humiliation and embarrassment of trying to talk and not get any words out.

This was how I survived my university years - without once speaking in class,” Mr Dhu said.

Mr Dhu’s first job saw him in a basement with no customer contact and a directive not to answer the phone. When he began to see junior staff promoted, he went to see his director who told him he would never be in a senior position because of his stutter. This was his watershed moment.

“At 23 I undertook speech therapy and joined a self help group for people who stutter called Speak Easy. I learnt to control my stutter and over time, I became a group leader, State President and finally was elected national president of the Speak Easy Association,” he said.

Eager to expand Speak Easy’s reach and support, Mr Dhu applied for and won a Perth Convention Bureau Scholarship which saw him travel to the International Fluency Congress in Denmark to investigate what it takes to run a world congress.

“When I returned from Denmark, we decided we’d like to host the 4th World Congress for People Who Stutter in Perth, so we worked with Perth Convention Bureau to mount a bid.

“PCB is a non-profit organisation that promotes WA as a top conference destination and assists organisations like ours to secure and host conferences here,” Mr Dhu explained.

After working with PCB on presentations and supporting documents, Mr Dhu travelled

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to Belgium where he outshone several international contenders to present the winning bid on behalf of the Australian Speak Easy Association.

With the world congress now secured for Perth, the next challenge was funding.

“We brainstormed a range of fund-raising strategies and came up with the idea of starting an outdoor movie cinema for charity – so Movies by Burswood was born.”



LIFE CHANGING: Winning a PCB Scholarship had a positive impact on Peter Dhu’s life and career; he’s now a public speaking coach.

Run entirely by volunteers, Movies by Burswood is now in its 10th year and supports a host of charities. Its first few seasons allowed Speak Easy to

charity success with Movies by Burswood.

“Plus, all this had led me to a career as a public speaking coach and trainer - using my journey to help anyone who fears and struggles with public speaking.”

For more information on scholarships or hosting a conference contact Luana MacDermott: luana@pcb.com.au

raise enough money to fund what remains the largest ever World Congress for People Who Stutter.

“I’ve just returned from presenting at the most recent world congress in Croatia and while it was great, people agree that Perth still remains the benchmark.

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