

Expos at GCCEC:
**THREE EVENTS, ONE
VENUE THAT DELIVERS**



CASE STUDY





Three exhibitions. One clear pattern.

Across pharmacy, barbering and independent retail, these case studies show what matters when exhibitions are built to perform: flexible spaces that support different formats, logistics that reduce friction, strong safety and compliance processes and teams who solve problems fast - including when the unexpected hits.

From record attendance and creative activations at the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference, to the high-energy, multi-format program of Expo4Barbers, to the complex, safety-led bump-in operation behind the Metcash Food Expo, GCCEC continues to deliver exhibitions designed to grow with organisers and exhibitors year after year.



10,500
ATTENDEES



1000+
EXHIBITORS



20+
YEARS OF
PARTNERSHIPS



840+
EXPO STANDS



**3 MAJOR
EXPOS**
ACROSS 2025



250+
EXHIBITOR
ORDERS





APP 2025: Innovation at scale, delivered with confidence

The Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition (APP) is the largest event of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. In March 2025, it marked its 20th year at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC) with a record 7,500 delegates visiting the Gold Coast. As Australia's premier pharmacy trade exhibition, APP brought together 250 companies across 450 exhibition stands, creating a high-energy marketplace for innovation, partnerships and learning.

Kos Sclavos, pharmacist, former National President of the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and now Convener of APP, says the event's growth has been matched by the venue's ability to scale with it.



APP has been held on the Gold Coast since day one," says Kos. "We've grown to fill every hall, every corner of GCCEC.

Kos Sclavos, Convener of APP



A floor plan designed for movement, engagement and standout activations

With exhibitors ranging from major national brands to specialist suppliers, APP requires more than space. It needs flow, visibility, flexibility and the ability to support interactive activations without bottlenecks. GCCEC's modern layout and expansive foyers supported product demonstrations, networking lounges and customised brand experiences, while still keeping foot traffic moving.

Sustainability is also part of the event's story. GCCEC achieved EarthCheck Master certification in 2023 and continues to invest in long-term environmental goals for business events. At APP, Kos notes a practical benefit: many exhibition stands are reused year after year, reducing waste while still enabling brands to refresh their experience.

Consistency behind the scenes is what exhibitors feel on the floor

Large exhibitions do not stay seamless by luck. They stay seamless through long-term knowledge, early planning and a team that understands the event in detail. GCCEC Senior Event Manager Wade Russell has overseen APP for years, bringing 12 years' experience and a clear view of what works- and what to refine each year.

"By planning well in advance, we stay aligned with the APP team to deliver a successful exhibition," Wade says. "Our in-depth knowledge allows us to adapt, embrace change and remain flexible."

Kos describes that partnership as essential: "Holding an event of this scale takes expert planning and coordination, and we get that in abundance from the team here."



“They become an extension of our team”- exhibitor perspective

Exhibitors often judge venues on two things: reliability (do you get what you asked for?) and collaboration (do they help you elevate?). At APP, exhibitors repeatedly pointed to the GCCEC team as a genuine advantage.

Sarah Tait, Corporate Communications Manager at TerryWhite Chemmart, says: “The team at GCCEC makes the entire process seamless. From planning our stand layout to executing creative activations, they go above and beyond to ensure our presence at APP is successful every year.”

Sarah describes APP as a highlight for her team- a true B2B opportunity to connect with pharmacy owners, share announcements and keep their community informed. She also notes GCCEC’s design flexibility and height capacity as a major benefit for creating impactful displays. “We’ve outgrown some venues, but GCCEC allows us to scale up or down. Nothing is too much trouble.”

For Annette Williams, Head of Brand and Communications at Blooms The Chemist, the value is consistency, particularly when planning from interstate. “Planning a major event from another state can be stressful, but the consistency and collaboration we get from the GCCEC team gives us peace of mind,” she says. “I share my vision, and they bring it to life. They’re consistent, creative, and genuinely collaborative.”

That collaboration also shows up in food and beverage activations. GCCEC’s Exhibitor Services and Food and Beverage teams work with exhibitors to create memorable stand experiences- from coffee or juice bars through to themed menus and locally sourced elements. For Blooms, cocktails featuring native Australian ingredients (supported by local vendors sourced through the GCCEC team) became a way to stand out while aligning with sustainability values.



Adapting fast when conditions change

In 2025, APP faced a major challenge just a week out: a cyclone hit the Gold Coast- the first in more than 50 years. A marquee was nearly complete when it became clear the storm posed a serious threat.

The GCCEC team acted quickly, with contractors securing the structure immediately. Flooding damaged the surrounding lawn and impacted flooring and footings, but the team rebuilt within days, ensuring 2,200 delegates were seated in the marquee for lunch on opening day. With the support of APP, GCCEC also donated leftover baguettes and sandwiches to local charities post-cyclone to assist families without power.

Then, as if the weather was not enough, the Prime Minister’s attendance was confirmed days out, requiring rapid adjustments to security and logistics, delivered with professionalism and precision.

APP returns to GCCEC in 2026, and Kos says the destination seals the deal: a place where delegates can walk the beach in the morning and enjoy Broadbeach dining at night, with everything close, easy and walkable.



Expo4Barbers 2025: High energy, multi-format, and growing fast

In May 2025, Expo4Barbers returned to GCCEC for its second consecutive year and continues to build its reputation as Australia's leading barbing event.

The expo attracted more than 2,000 attendees and nearly 40 exhibitors from across Australia and New Zealand , combining education, competition and community into a program that stayed busy from open to close.

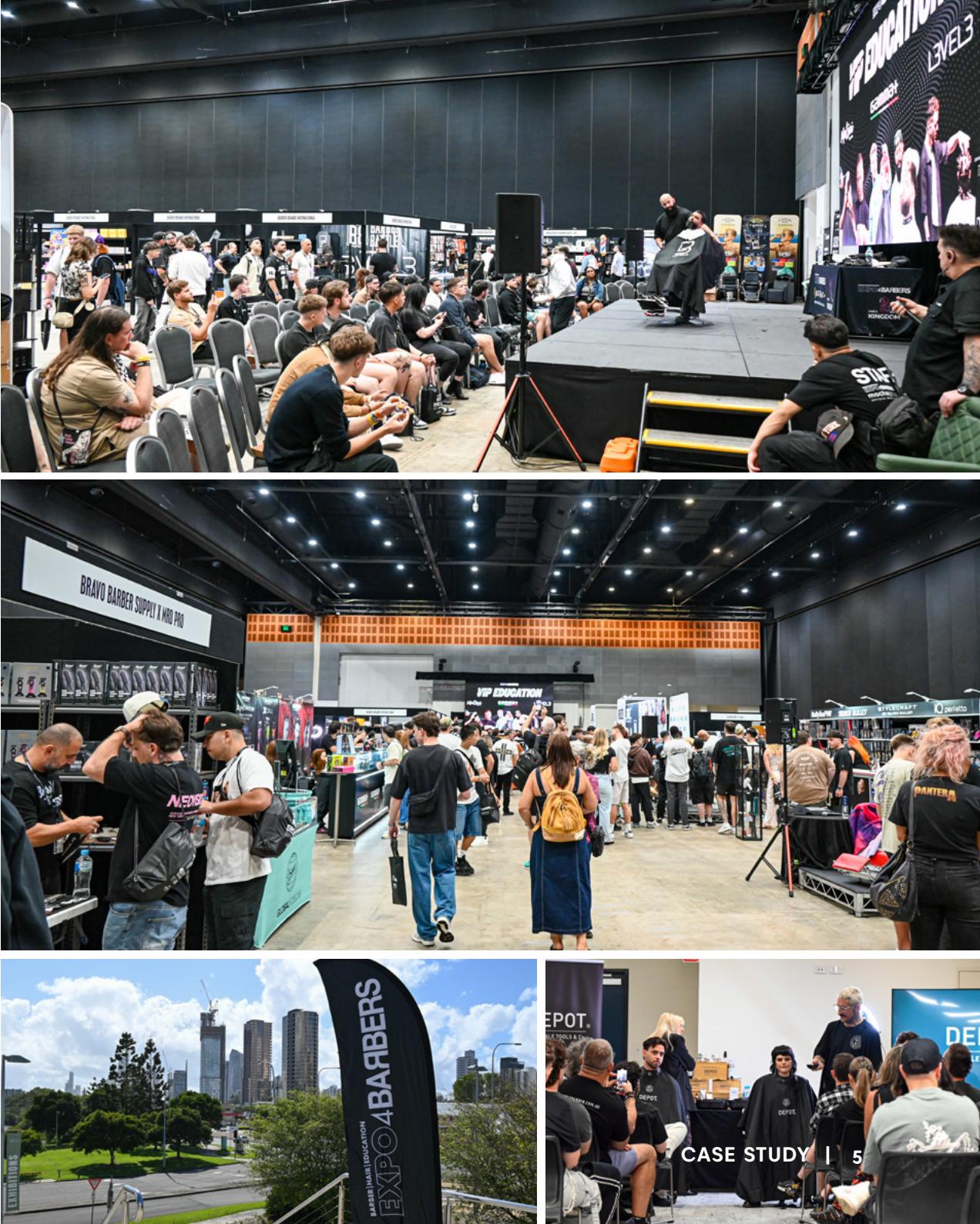
From live demonstrations and hands-on workshops to high-energy barber battles, live podcasts and multi-brand showcases, Expo4Barbers needs a venue that can support simultaneous activity- without the experience feeling crowded or chaotic.

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We've been asked to take it to other locations, but we choose the Gold Coast. It's destinational: the climate, the vibe. What better place to be?

Fraser Forsey, Director and Lead Educator of Expo4Barbers

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“Everything just works so well”

For Lino D'Adderio, Owner and Founder of King Louis IX, GCCEC is a strong fit for both the vibe and the practical demands of exhibiting.

“It’s been fantastic for us at the venue- it’s a very cool vibe. I love the high ceilings, the all-black and concrete floors, and the lighting is great for our work. As a facility, it’s fantastic,” he says.

He also highlights the convenience of the precinct: “All the interstate exhibitors love that accommodation is right across the road. Team dinners within walking distance - everything just works so well.”

Jarred Stedman, General Manager of Mocha Group, attended to build brand awareness and praised the venue for being easy to find, with strong staff support, great food and the practical details exhibitors love. He also noted GCCEC’s flexibility in supporting a program with multiple moving parts, and the backstage operational space that helps organisers keep everything running.

For Arne Compagne, Managing Director of Global Scissors, the event delivered a strong vibe and repeat customers, and the operational side made it easy. “It’s very convenient, well-spaced, and the GCCEC team has been really supportive,” he says, adding: “The bump-in was seamless- fantastic, actually.”

Tanya Nelson, National Education Manager at Dateline Imports, travels extensively to attend industry events and called out the atmosphere as refreshingly different, with GCCEC support making logistics stress-free. “They’ve been great- reconfiguring stands, making sure we had what we needed. Nothing’s been too much trouble.”



A venue that supports growth, not just delivery

For organiser Fraser Forsey, Director and Lead Educator of Expo4Barbers, year two brought significant growth, including six international artists. Despite interest from other cities, he’s committed to the Gold Coast and GCCEC.

“We’ve been asked to take it to other locations, but we choose the Gold Coast. It’s destinational: the climate, the vibe. What better place to be?”

On the venue partnership, he adds: “Everything I ask for is always accommodated. I want to book it again for the next five years.”



Metcash Food Expo 2025

Two decades of partnership, and logistics built for scale.

Some exhibitions impress because of what you see on the floor. Metcash is also impressive because of what you do not see - the detailed coordination underneath it all.

First held at GCCEC in 2004, the Metcash Food Expo has returned year after year and remains a highlight of the independent retail calendar. The 2025 expo (13 to 15 July) brought together 350 exhibitors and 1,000 delegates from across Australia, showcasing new food products, retail technologies and business insights, while strengthening networks and celebrating the impact of shopping local.

GCCEC General Manager Nick Jeffrey says Metcash returns because the venue delivers on what matters: consistent service from planning through to execution, and a location that keeps logistics contained and simple. He also points to the value of the precinct, where accommodation, restaurants and public transport are right on the doorstep.



Safety and compliance that scales with complexity

Metcash involves extensive truck movement, forklift activity, pallet deliveries and hundreds of contractors during bump-in and bump-out. GCCEC Risk and Compliance Manager Matthew Barton oversees safety, security and wellbeing during these critical stages.

Every participant must complete inductions and provide insurances prior to arrival. Contractors check in with security onsite and receive wristbands, helping ensure controlled access and consistent compliance.

Matthew summarises the approach: "It doesn't matter the size of the event; we manage it in the same way. The bigger the event just means more resources, but the approach remains consistent to ensure success."

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The exhibitors love coming here. Bumping-in, bumping-out couldn't be easier for them.

Madeleine Fitzpatrick, General Manager Retail at Metcash

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Suppliers and stand builders value early collaboration and strong onsite support

Metcash demands months of planning for suppliers and stand builders. Exponet's Matthieu Desprez describes the scale: hundreds of trucks, more than 1,000 power points, and countless custom builds that must work seamlessly.

Visible Projex Director Dean Fenwick says early, detailed collaboration with the venue is essential, particularly with perishable product requirements and the number of trades involved. He also notes the importance of venue security once the expo is operational, including overnight coverage to support food safety and monitoring.

Exhibitors and retailers notice the “easy”

For retailers and exhibitors, the location and walkability are part of what makes the event enjoyable and efficient.

Ben Ryan, Group General Manager at Ryan's IGA, says: "I love the expo. I catch up with people I haven't seen for twelve months, we do some great deals, and we see some fantastic new product. GCCEC is great, I can walk to wherever I need to."

Monique St Pierre, Head of Grocery at Unilever, echoes the convenience: restaurants and hotels across the road, easy movement, and a Gold Coast setting that makes attendance appealing.

For Metcash itself, exhibitor satisfaction is a key measure of success. Madeleine Fitzpatrick, General Manager Retail at Metcash, says: "The exhibitors love coming here. Bumping-in, bumping-out couldn't be easier for them. They love coming back and their stands just get bigger and better every year." She also highlights GCCEC's high ceilings as a rigging advantage, enabling spectacular stands.



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