

NEW ZEALAND'S

JULY/AUGUST 2023

meeting newz

● The Conference, Incentive & Exhibition Magazine

Rotorua

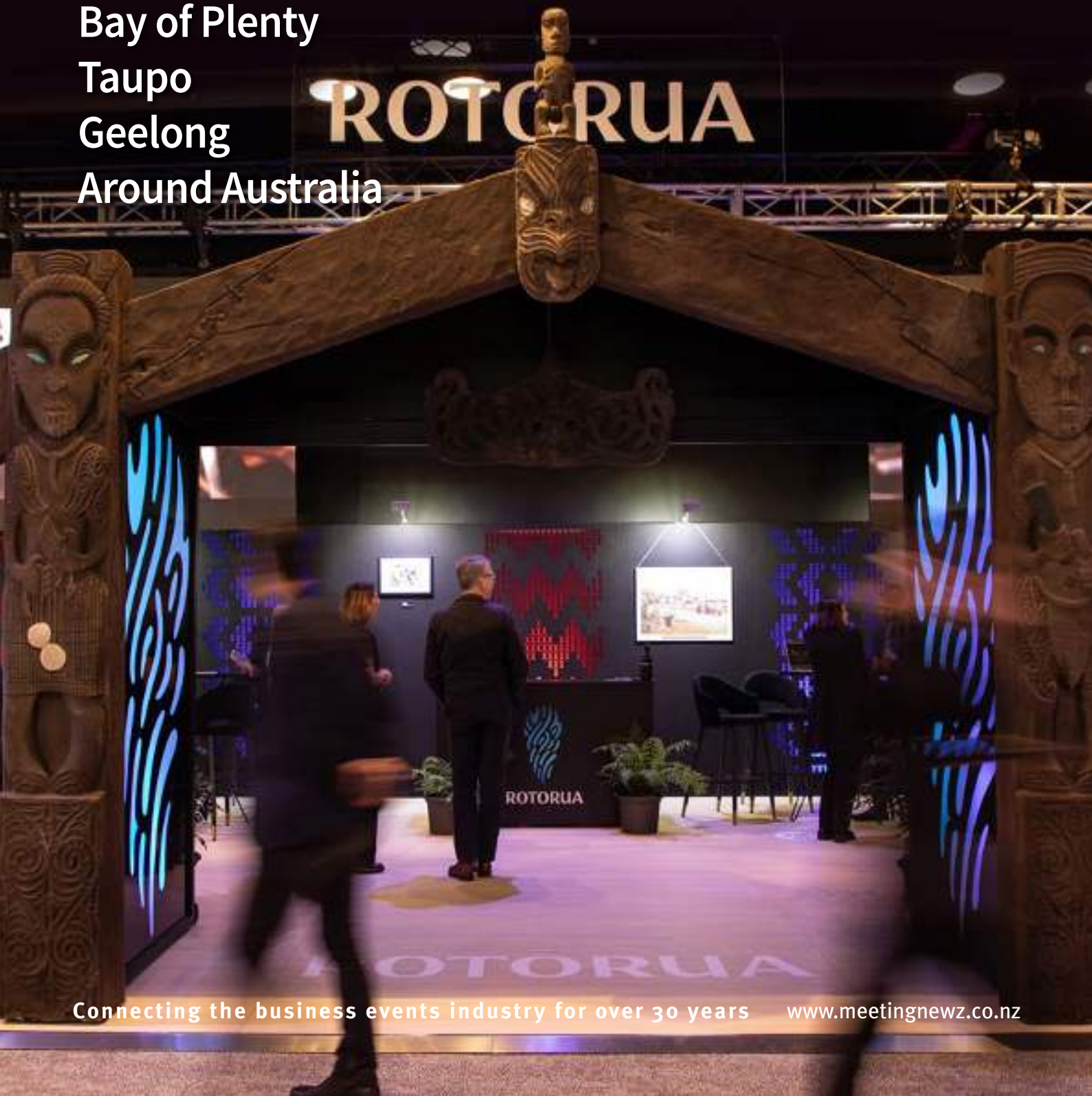
Tauranga

Bay of Plenty

Taupo

Geelong

Around Australia



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Contents

Features

Rotorua	10
Tauranga/Bay of Plenty	36
Taupo	44
Geelong and The Bellarine	49
Around Australia	54

Regular Features

News	4
People on the Move	31
Social Scene	32 & 33

Industry Insights

Dunedin Famil	24
St John Column	34
MEETINGS Review	46
NZEA Column	48
Northern Territory Famil	56
Cairns/Port Douglas Famil	58
BEIA Column	60
Coast Group Series	62

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Website: www.meetingnewz.co.nz

Publisher: Tourism Media Group Ltd.

email: info@meetingnewz.co.nz

Advertising: Terry Holt

Phone: 021 042 8232

email: terry@meetingnewz.co.nz

Advertising: Paul Hailes

Phone: 021 217 3628

email: paul@meetingnewz.co.nz

Regular contributors: Stu Freeman, Anabel Darby, Jane Warwick, Brad Foster

Design and production: Gary Covich

email: studio@meetingnewz.co.nz

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Note from the publishers...

WINNING NOT EVERYTHING BUT IT SURE DOES HELP

The country has been riding on a wave of great results for our sporting teams lately.

Along with Australia we are in the spotlight of the FIFA Women's World Cup. Both countries had a good start and having success in a major international tournament is huge not only financially but emotionally.

Couple that with the success of the New Zealand Warriors and the All Blacks so far this year and you can feel the energy, the excitement and the water cooler conversations carry on that little bit longer.

We need this, it helps morale and while things are tough at present for households, a few hours away from it all to get caught up in the theatre of winning really does help.

On a professional level, the same applies to recent achievements in the business events sector. It was revealed at MEETINGS 2023 in Wellington in June that Tourism New Zealand led 84 conference bids in the last financial year (ahead of a targeted 70) and actually won 63% of those (the target was 60%). This year the organisation is aiming to make 90 targeted bids – a number that just sneaks ahead of those achieved in 2019.

This dovetailed nicely into comments by Lisa Hopkins, head of Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA) that the sector is in a good position to be a catalyst for regenerative tourism in New Zealand.

We certainly have reasons now to feel positive after an extremely challenging start to the decade.

The capital turned on not only the weather but a great show for MEETINGS 2023 – congratulations to all those involved. We look forward to attending MEETINGS 2024 in Rotorua.

We are now heading into a busy time for exhibitions and events in New Zealand. Shows such as The Office & PA Show, NZEA Eventing the Future and AuSAE LINC are imminent.

Don't forget our Business Events Expo taking place in Auckland at The Viaduct Events Centre on 21 November. This is open for exhibitor and buyer registrations and will bring the best of both national and international exhibitors together under one roof. You can read more about the expo on pages 4 and 26.

Our cover story takes you to Rotorua and we visit Central North Island's Taupo and Tauranga/Bay of Plenty as well. In Australia we learn more about Brisbane and take a closer look at Geelong and The Bellarine. We also report on famil visits around Australia and New Zealand.

We bring you the highlights from MEETINGS 2023 along with the latest industry news, events, social scene and people on the move. Of course we have the latest happenings from our key partners BEIA, NZEA, PCOA and St John.

Paul, Terry and Gary

 Tourism Media Group

Upcoming Meeting Newz 2023/24 features

September October 2023

- Christchurch & Canterbury
- Marlborough
- Nelson Tasman
- Australia
- End of year celebrations and events
- Pacific Business Events Magazine

November December 2023

- Auckland
- Hawke's Bay
- Gisborne
- Australia
- Sustainability, CSR
- Company Profiles
- Dreamtime review
- PCOA preview

January February 2024

- Taranaki
- Palmerston North
- Whanganui
- Australia
- AIME Preview
- PCOA Review

March April 2024

- Bay of Islands/Waitangi
- Northland/Whangarei
- Queenstown and Southern Lakes
- Australia
- Pacific update
- AIME 2023 Review



May June 2024

- Dunedin
- Central Otago
- Hamilton/Waikato
- MEETINGS Preview Magazine

July August 2024

- Wellington
- Southland/Fiordland
- West Coast
- Team Building
- Australia

Features subject to change

For any enquiries regarding the upcoming features please contact
Terry: terry@meetingnewz.co.nz or Paul: paul@meetingnewz.co.nz

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Business Events Expo buyer registrations open

Buyer registrations for the Business Events Expo have opened. The event is being held at the Viaduct Events Centre on 21 November from 10am to 6pm and will showcase conference, incentive and event products and services from New Zealand, Australia, Pacific, Asia and beyond.

Professional conference organisers, corporate meeting planners, incentive practitioners, association executives and others involved in business events are encouraged to sign up early.

Details of the programme, schedule and app for the show will be progressively sent

to everyone who has registered over the coming months.

Buyers can register here: au.registration.entegy.events/bee23-buyer-registration

Meantime, organiser Tourism Media Group says the exhibitor registrations have been steady over the last month and more than 90 have already signed up.

“Exhibitors took advantage of the early bird rate before it ended on 31 July,” says director Paul Hailes.

“With space at a premium, the number of three-metre stands left is at a minimum, such is the demand, so anyone looking to confirm their place should do so quickly.”

See Page 26 for more about the Business Events Expo and a list of exhibitors.

A list of exhibitors can be viewed online at: www.businesseventsexpo.co.nz/exhibitor-list



PCO Association looks to refresh wider NZ relationship



Barry Neame

The Professional Conference Organisers Association is looking to cement and expand its relationship with New Zealand members and the wider business events community as it looks towards the post-pandemic era.

President Barry Neame and director business partnerships Maxine Tod were at MEETINGS 2023 and were impressed with

the ‘great vibe’ in the market.

Neame says one priority was to revisit the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that PCOA established with what was then Conventions and Incentives NZ (CINZ) some 10 years ago.

“We are refreshing that with Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA) and looking at what we can do to collaborate between the two organisations.”

Neame says PCOA has emerged from the past couple of difficult years with about 30 New Zealand members.

“We think we are missing a lot of people in the corporate space and people who are in-house with associations and educational institutions.

“We want to invite them into the PCOA community so that they can benefit from our educational development opportunities – such as webinars, podcasts and other

online activities and our conference in Adelaide at the end of the year.”

Neame says it is important to work with the wider industry here, particularly in light of the new product coming on line.

“With the three convention centres in Christchurch, Wellington and soon Auckland there is going to be an increased focus on New Zealand, both from PCOs in Australia and from the domestic market.”

Neame says another key priority for the association is to provide more mentoring for young women in the industry on both sides of the Tasman.

“It is important that they are able to move into leadership roles both in the association and in the business events sector generally. We do have a strong representation of women on the PCOA council, but we need to be looking at the next generation as well.”



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**SIR HOWARD
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Rotorua to host MEETINGS 2024



Rotorua Lakefront and city
Photo: Paul Michael

Rotorua has been named host city for New Zealand's 28th national business events showcase, MEETINGS to be held at the Energy Events Centre on 19 and 20 June 2024.

Following a record MEETINGS 2023 in Wellington last month, MEETINGS is heading to regional New Zealand to highlight the rich experiences on offer outside the three main centres.

Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA) chief executive, Lisa Hopkins says next year's MEETINGS will feature another part of our country's rich events tapestry, and the beating heart of New Zealand's visitor economy.

"Rotorua is a magnificent city, the birthplace of the visitor economy for New Zealand, where business events, tourism and hospitality hold a sacred place. Voted Best Regional Stand at MEETINGS 2023, Rotorua is trending as one of New Zealand's hottest destinations.

"Our intent is to amplify the taonga (cultural treasures) of the city by bringing MEETINGS back to where it all began for New Zealand tourism.

"Its people, manaakitanga (welcome), excellent infrastructure, accessible North Island location, unique landscapes, and rich Māori culture all make it an exceptional meeting place," she says.

"Our culture sets New Zealand apart from every other country in the world and it is of significant interest to our international buyers. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to showcase this, and to tap into the enormously talented community of tourism, hospitality and events experts around the Rotorua region," she says.

Andrew Wilson, chief executive of RotoruaNZ says the region is excited to be welcoming exhibitors and buyers from across New Zealand and the world to MEETINGS 2024 in June next year.

"This is a huge honour, and we can't

wait to welcome our industry peers to experience all that our destination has to offer. Recent investment into some of our signature spaces, such as the Sir Howard Morrison Centre and the Wai Ariki Hot Springs and Spa, makes Rotorua the ideal place to mix business with pleasure and we look forward to sharing our home and our manaakitanga with buyers and sellers alike. It's important that manuhiri (visitors) not only get to experience New Zealand's magnificent major cities, but also immerse themselves in a region which built its reputation on manaakitanga when tourism first began in this country," he says.

"I know I am joined by our Mayor Tania Tapsell in guaranteeing the warmth of our welcome and exceptional hospitality," he says.

MEETINGS has been well supported by the major hotel groups in Rotorua, as well as local iwi who will play a pivotal role during the event. Rotorua has been hosting a number of large, high profile events at the Rotorua Energy Events Centre, which will also house MEETINGS 2024, as well as at the spectacular Sir Howard Morrison Centre

Vanessa Wallace, RotoruaNZ business events manager says that MEETINGS offers an exceptional opportunity to showcase not only the destination, but the entire country, all under the one roof.

"This will be a very special, a very poignant MEETINGS and we can't wait to experience it with you. Rotorua is renowned for its strong sense of community and identity, which makes us ideally placed to help organisations deliver authentic and meaningful experiences that will elevate and enhance their conference, meeting or incentive programme," she says.

MEETINGS was last held in Rotorua in 2011, and attracted 400 delegates from New Zealand, Australia, key international markets and over 170 exhibitors.

Fiji Airways wins prestigious award

Fiji's national carrier, Fiji Airways has been recognised as the Skytrax Best Airline in Australia and the Pacific at the 2023 World Airline Awards, held recently at the Paris Air Show.

In 2022, Fiji Airways was ranked third in the region – behind Qantas (which has won the award for the last four years) and Air New Zealand. This year, the airline has leap-frogged its two largest competitors to be declared Best Airline in Australia and the Pacific.

This is the first time that Fiji Airways has won the accolade while also retaining the award for the Skytrax Best Airline Staff in Australia and the Pacific for the third year in a row.

Fiji Airways has also improved its ranking in the Global Top 100 airlines, moving up from 36th in 2022 to 15th in 2023 to finish ahead of Qantas (17th), British Airways (18th) and Air New Zealand (19th).

JetPark Hotel Auckland celebrates 25 years

A significant milestone has been reached for JetPark Hotel Auckland as the team celebrates 25 years of memories, achievements, and countless stories shared (and not shared) within its hotel walls.

JetPark Hotels owner Liz Herrmann says her team couldn't be prouder of their 25-year journey, the memories created, and the incredible service delivered throughout the years.

"When we opened our doors a quarter-century ago, we set out to create a haven for hospitality, a place where guests could feel at home, and every moment would be cherished," Herrmann says.

"Over the years, we've had the privilege of hosting countless travellers, making their experiences unforgettable and forging lifelong connections," she adds.

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Conservation partnership protects iconic Kiwi



Ken Orr, Millennium Hotels and Resorts,
Richard Leggat, Save the Kiwi

A new kiwi conservation partnership will allow guests of one of New Zealand's largest hotel groups, Millennium Hotels and Resorts New Zealand, an opportunity to donate a meal or a 'room' for a night to Save the Kiwi. This innovative approach sees the guest simply reducing their own room servicing needs to ensure a kiwi gets food and a safe environment to grow.

Save the Kiwi, a leading conservation charity dedicated to the preservation of New Zealand's national icon, kiwi, is pleased to enter this new partnership with Millennium Hotels and Resorts New Zealand, a prominent hospitality group with 18 hotels throughout New Zealand. From 1 July, every time a guest chooses the daily 'no room servicing' option

at any of its Millennium, Copthorne, Kingsgate or M Social hotels in New Zealand, the group will donate a meal for a kiwi at Save the Kiwi's kiwi crèche in Napier. For larger conference groups, for every five rooms that aren't serviced by housekeeping, Millennium Hotels and Resorts New Zealand will donate to a kiwi a room for a night in the kiwi crèche.

This collaboration brings together two organisations that share a common vision of protecting and nurturing New Zealand's unique wildlife and natural heritage. The partnership will focus on supporting kiwi conservation efforts through various initiatives aimed at raising awareness and providing a safe environment for kiwi to hatch and grow, ready to be returned to the wild.

Stuart Harrison, managing director of Millennium Hotels and Resorts New Zealand: "Providing a safe place for young kiwi to grow, daily meals and a 'room' for their night in the Napier kiwi crèche has great synergies, as Millennium Hotels and Resorts does this every day for our guests. Our support of meals and 'rooms' for kiwi are just the start of Millennium's commitment to Save the Kiwi and an important part of our sustainability initiatives."

Save the Kiwi has been at the forefront of kiwi conservation for more than 30 years, working to ensure the survival and flourishing of this iconic bird species. Its

expertise, passion and dedication have played a significant role in increasing the kiwi population throughout New Zealand.

Michelle Impey, executive director of Save the Kiwi, says; "We are delighted to have Millennium Hotels and Resorts New Zealand join our partners in our mission to protect kiwi. With their strong commitment to hospitality and sustainability, we can continue to rear chicks in our Napier kiwi crèche until they reach a 'stoat-proof' weight of around 1kg. After this point, usually around three months, they are released into a predator-managed habitat in the wild to grow and breed the next generation of kiwi."

By joining forces, Save the Kiwi and Millennium Hotels and Resorts New Zealand aim to continue to make a significant difference in the preservation of Aotearoa's national icon, kiwi.

Auckland wins RACMA Conference

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland will welcome medical leaders from across Australasia when it hosts The Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators (RACMA) Conference this October.

The three-day event will be held at Cordis Auckland from 11-13 October and is expected to attract 250 specialist medical administrators and clinical leaders from across Australasia, including Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong and India.

RACMA is a specialist medical college that provides education, training, knowledge and advice in medical leadership and management and is recognised by the Australian and New Zealand Medical Councils. Its members occupy a range of roles including chief executives, chief medical officers, directors of medical services, heads of departments, as well as working in the university and defence sectors.

The conference, which is estimated to deliver 750 room nights and an economic impact of \$335,000 for Auckland, was supported by Auckland Convention Bureau (ACB), a division of Tātaki Auckland Unlimited.

Te Karaka Lodge set to open in rural Waikato



Te Karaka Lodge

Te Karaka Lodge in Waikaretu in Waikato is a new, architecturally designed, boutique 10-room lodge opening in September 2023. The lodge will target the leisure and corporate retreat market and is fitted out to a high standard in a contemporary farm-stay style.

Located amongst the rolling farmland of Te Karaka Station, the lodge will offer a high-

quality guest experience in a relaxed setting, including full dining, spacious common areas in which to relax and a swim spa and scenic outdoor areas.

Exclusive-use bookings will be welcomed however the lodge is also open for overnight stays for individuals.

The lodge will be managed by Aaron and Danielle Geraets who have made the move north following three seasons in senior management roles at Bay of Many Coves Resort in the Marlborough Sounds. Both Aaron and Danielle have strong management and F&B backgrounds with Danielle training at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris.

The property has been developed by Weihai Holding Limited, the owners of beef and sheep farm Te Karaka Station. New Zealand-owned Capstone Hotels & Resorts trading as Capstone Hotel Management has been charged with sales and representation support for the lodge and will be introducing it to the corporate and leisure market.

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By Stu Freeman



ROTORUA IS EXPERIENCING A PERIOD OF REMARKABLE REVIVAL AND IS KEEN TO SHARE ITS STORY WITH THE CONFERENCE, MEETINGS AND INCENTIVES COMMUNITIES AROUND NEW ZEALAND AND BEYOND.

Vanessa Wallace, business events manager with RotoruaNZ points out that over the past five years the city and the region have seen major infrastructure investment from both the public and private sectors, with plenty more to come on stream in the short and medium term.

Rotorua is also looking forward to hosting a full calendar of business events over the next 12 months, including the major showcase of the year for the sector – MEETINGS 2024 at the Energy Events Centre on 19 and 20 June. This will be the first time MEETINGS has been held in Rotorua since 2011.

The promotion and hands-on marketing of Rotorua will also be evident at many other forums, both in domestic and overseas markets. Just some of the activity on RotoruaNZ's calendar includes the Office PA & Event Planner Show, AuSAE LINC 2023, Business Events Expo, AuSAE ACE Conference & Exhibition, AIME 2024 and an Australia Roadshow.

“The investment in our community and surroundings has truly transformed the experience we offer to our manuhiri (visitors),” says Wallace. “We take great pride in our strong sense of community and cultural identity, making us the perfect destination to assist organisations in creating meaningful experiences for their conferences, meetings or incentive programmes.

“While our breath taking landscapes are extremely captivating, Rotorua is much more than just a picturesque location. It is a place rich in culture, inhabited by forward-thinking individuals who prioritise the well-being of both their own people and those who come to visit.”

Wallace says this ethos was evident in the region's MEETINGS stand design in Wellington and the ongoing MEET THE ORIGINALS campaign, both of which emphasise the concept of manaakitanga – a deep-rooted

commitment to care for our people and guests, fostering friendships and a sense of whānau (family) among all.

Investment

Over the past five years Rotorua has experienced a major public and private infrastructure investment.

“Our visitors will see the \$40 million upgrade to the Rotorua Lakefront, \$85m Spa Precinct, \$25m for Whakarewarewa Forest Investment in Tokorangi Drive and the new Putake o Tawa Carpark and Forest Hub. That’s just the big ticket items” Wallace says.

She also highlights the substantial private investment at Skyline Rotorua of \$6m, plus accommodation upgrades at Rydges, Millennium, Regent of Rotorua, and soon Novotel and Ibis.

“Pullman is less than four years old and an outstanding new five star edition to the Rotorua accommodation offering.”

Wallace also points to a number of innovations on the activities and experiences front.

“Te Pā Tū’s shift in philosophy and product offering is really fresh and innovative, elevating the product to a new level of immersive, high-end cultural experience never seen before in Aotearoa.

“Rotorua Canopy Tours has been winning international Trip Advisor Awards for the past three years, putting the experience in the Top 10 activities in

Wai Ariki Hot Springs and Spa



the world and the number one activity in the South Pacific. This level of consistent recognition really puts Rotorua Canopy Tours in a league of its own and proves that this option shouldn’t be overlooked by business events organisers.

“Skyline’s spend on creating new luge experiences is really taking this legendary experience to new heights.”

Wallace says the RotoruaNZ business events team is well geared up to support enquiries and interest from conference, incentive, meeting and exhibition planners.

Key personnel include Leah Morrison, sales executive and Jesse Tamm, sales and marketing coordinator.

“Our message to business events organisers who have not been to Rotorua for a few years, is that now is the time to come and see it in a new light. We have been proactive in the past few months running famils and site visits and we know those who have taken part have left the region impressed by what we have to offer. Come for visit and let us take care of you!”









Rotorua lake front

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LEGACY EVENT HELPS KICK~START BUSY YEAR AHEAD FOR ROTORUA VENUES



Rotorua Energy Events Centre

Major association conferences, mixed with smaller meetings, awards dinners and other celebrations, are combining to create a busy calendar at Rotorua Energy Events Centre and Sir Howard Morrison Centre for the rest of the year.

Warren Harvey, business events sales and key accounts manager at the venues, points out that the centre recently hosted one of its big legacy events – the 16th General Practice Conference and Medical Exhibition (GP CME) – which heralded in a busy winter and spring conference season.

“That is one of our regular events that we have hosted here for 16 years and we’ve

retained a strong relationship with the organisers,” adds Harvey.

“It started with about 350 to 400 participants but now it has grown to around 1200 to 1500 including delegates and exhibitors. It is an event that uses the whole arena and utilises the sports dome for break-out space.”

Harvey says sometimes it is important

to remember just how important such regular events are to the city.

“By the time you include pack-in and pack-out you’ve got seven or eight days of people at hotels, restaurants and other facilities in the area. So it is always important to perform and improve, keep up to date with the AV requirements and the catering and make sure we do a great job for them.”

Leon Olsen, director of Conference Matters – the PCO for the annual GP CME, says the event was first held in 1998 in Taupo but had outgrown the venue there by the mid-2000s.

“The most logical move for us was to the Howard Morrison Centre and then in 2007 we started using the Energy Events Centre. We have stuck with Rotorua ever since.”

Olsen says Rotorua’s central location and its proximity to places like Hamilton, Bay of Plenty and Taupo plus easy reach from Auckland and Wellington make it an ideal choice.

“As well as that, when the participants meet in Rotorua they tend to give more of themselves than they take. It’s not like meeting in a big city for a day or two and then leaving. In Rotorua there is a real social dimension to the conference. They also tend to bring their families and do things around the area.”

He says the relationships that have been built up in Rotorua are also a key factor. “Millennium Hotels, Pullman Hotel, Princes Gate, Alpha Displays/BOP Event Hire and Shipleys AV and the Energy Events Centre, among others, are all fantastic partners.



GP Medical Conference 2023

Olsen says the success of GP CME and how it resonates with delegates is evidenced by the growth of the event.

“Back in the 1990s we started with 300 and now we attract 1500 participants over the four days. We provide 13 concurrent sessions, with 300 sessions in total, and we have 180 speakers. So it is a great platform for updates and learning as well as having a real collegiate atmosphere.

“People keep continuing to come and in the current climate GPs often feel it is more important than ever to get out of the clinic and spend time with their peers. The feedback we get is that hearing from the specialists at the conference gives them an opportunity to recharge their batteries.”

Looking ahead to 2024

Harvey says the Energy Events Centre and Sir Howard Morrison Centre are gearing up for a busy year in 2024, with approximately 35 conference enquiries already in the booking system between the two venues.

“We have seven Australasian and international conferences at the EEC and SHMC in 2024, with our first event in February being an International Indigenous Summit of approximately 650 delegates. Then in November we are hosting the International Postharvest Conference of approximately 550 delegates. We’re also looking forward to hosting MEETINGS 2024.”

Harvey says the Sir Howard Morrison Centre (formerly know as the Rotorua Convention Centre) is making a mark of its own for banquet style dinners and other occasions.

“The centre is attracting a lot of business. Often this is from organisations that are holding events at various hotels and want to do something different while they are here.

“On top of this, the SHMC is also attracting a lot of conferences in its own right.” He says having two world class event and convention centres provides the opportunity to market to the association, corporate and hospitality sectors.

“We can be confident of successfully hosting and delivering first class conferences and gala dinners from 20 to 2600 attendees.

“The EEC and SHMC are working alongside industry partners like Tourism New Zealand (TNZ), the Australasian Society of Association Executives (AuSAE), Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA) and RotoruaNZ to create a busy business events calendar for this year and beyond.”

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Skyline Rotorua Luge



ON TRACK: SKYLINE ROTORUA'S EXTENDED LUGE CHOICE A POINT OF DIFFERENCE

A choice of five luge tracks, all available to ride at night, has further enhanced Skyline Rotorua's offering since the middle of last year – providing more options for delegates who may like anything from a gentle ride to more of an adrenalin rush.

Lynley Martin, business events sales executive points out that Skyline Rotorua's Hidden Forest Venue, ideal for a casual dining experience, is actually reached via (and set just off) the Tiki Tour Luge Track. The Hidden Forest takes 180

guests for a sit-down dinner.

“For people who want more luge action, we also have the Gravity, Twister, Legend and Ultra tracks. So, they can enjoy the corkscrews, tunnels, lights and other features – all with the scenic vista of Rotorua at night

in the foreground.”

Skyline Rotorua's main dinner venue is the Stratosfare Restaurant, which is reached by gondola and can take 350 delegates seated.

“The beauty of Stratosfare is that organisers don't need to do a lot to it – the spectacular view means it has its own theme already.”

Another option is the Volcanic Hills Tasting Room, ideal for partners' programmes and often used as an addition to the luge. A few different activities are also on offer to get the blood pumping include the skyswing and zipline, while there is also mountain biking available (recommended for reasonably experienced riders).

Martin says the venue overall has noticed a steady comeback after the challenges of 2020 to 2022.

“There is still a little way to go for full recovery (to pre-pandemic business event figures) but we are seeing a lot of return business. In some cases, local and other domestic groups coming back year after year.

“We've also noticed a return of international business events, a large incentive group out of India recently for example, and we're seeing a considerable amount of interest from Australia.

“MEETINGS 2023 was good for us, one of the best for a number of years, so we are expecting to get a solid return from that.”



Skyline Rotorua Luge
Photo: Clint Trahan

EVERY VALUABLE MOMENT

At Sudima Hotels we see the value in every moment of a conference, event or business meeting. That's why we take care of the little things that make you smile and help you make the most of your day. Whether it's for business or pleasure, there's nothing better than people getting together with other people. The atmosphere changes, there's a buzz in the air, and good things start to happen. Our hotels offer the perfect location and space for your next meeting.

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Conference Capacity: from 15 to 70

SUDIMA AUCKLAND AIRPORT

18 Airpark Dr, Mangere, Auckland



Guest Rooms: 153

Conference Rooms: 4 to 6

Conference Capacity: from 10 to 220

SUDIMA ROTORUA

1000 Eruera Street, Rotorua



Guest Rooms: 222

Conference Rooms: 4

Conference Capacity: from 18 to 250

SUDIMA KAIKŌURA 114 Esplanade, Corner of Esplanade and Yarmouth Street, Kaikōura



Guest Rooms: 120

Conference Rooms: 1 to 2

Conference Capacity: from 22 to 130

SUDIMA CHRISTCHURCH CITY

49 Salisbury Street, Christchurch



Guest Rooms: 86

Conference Rooms: 2

Conference Capacity: from 18 to 70

SUDIMA CHRISTCHURCH AIRPORT

550 Memorial Ave, Christchurch



Guest Rooms: 246

Conference Rooms: 7 to 9

Conference Capacity: from 8 to 280

SUDIMA QUEENSTOWN FIVE MILE

22 Grant Road, Frankton, Queenstown



Guest Rooms: 120

Conference Rooms: 3 to 4

Conference Capacity: from 12 to 150



“As well as the relaxing attributes of the hot springs themselves we can offer a full range of options and activities that can be tailor made for small or large group itineraries,” Jessop says.

“These include yoga, meditation and mindfulness, naturopathy, vibrational sound bathing, health and wellbeing talks and more. We also have a multi-purpose wellness room that can accommodate private functions for up to 60 people.

“With all these options, our team at Polynesian Spa is adept at helping organisers to harness creativity and enhance private functions with combinations of our wellbeing activities.”

The world-famous and multi-award winning Polynesian Spa also has an on-site café and kitchen to cater for meals and dietary requirements easily and efficiently. As well as this, there is an on-site retail shop stocked with spa products and giftware – perfect as memorable gifts for guest speakers and other business event VIPs.

The therapeutic qualities of Rotorua’s geothermal wonders have been drawing visitors to the region for centuries.

Now, at a time when work-life balance and wellness are more crucial than ever, the business sector is increasingly realising the benefits of building health related activities into its corporate culture.

Polynesian Spa, set in a lakeside location overlooking Sulphur Bay Nature Refuge on Lake Rotorua, is ideal for groups wanting to add holistic wellbeing activities to a conference, incentive or teambuilding programme.

Vicki Jessop, sales and marketing

manager at Polynesian Spa, says that as well as giving delegates a break from the meeting room, building wellness into a schedule can also demonstrate an appreciation of team members and others involved in the business event.

“We provide an original, immersive and natural experience for delegates and other visitors. Because guests walk straight out into the pools, which are set alongside the geothermal landscape, the time spent here is completely immersive and calming.



Regent of Rotorua new room

Regent of Rotorua is increasing its inventory with the construction of a new wing of accommodation consisting of 12 superior rooms.

There will be six rooms on each of the two floors including two accessible rooms on the ground floor. This new addition will increase the total available accommodation to 47 rooms with 12 rooms being of the same category ideal for business events and incentives where everyone needs the same room type. The new wing is expected to be ready to take bookings from May 2024.

Gold award

Regent of Rotorua has recently been awarded Qualmark 4.5 star GOLD rating, lifting the hotel from Qualmark Silver. The achievement was gained through the efforts of hotel manager, Mike Eccles and his team and the work undertaken as part of the Sustainability Mentoring programme facilitated through RotoruaNZ.

NEW LOOK ON WAY FOR MILLENNIUM HOTEL ROTORUA

Millennium Hotel Rotorua is progressively revealing a fresh new look.

General manager, Pipiana Whiston says stage one of the refurbishment has commenced, which includes work on 99 rooms. Once completed, the full refurbishment will encompass the rest of the property.

“By doing this in stages we can ensure there is no impact on guests or on our daily business.”

Whiston says occupancy has been strong over the 2022-2023 summer and there are some good numbers coming through the business events market in the winter.

Overlooking Lake Rotorua, the hotel has a total of 227 rooms consisting of Superior, Superior Plus Lakeview, Deluxe Spa, Millennium Club and Suite room categories. Millennium Hotel Rotorua has seven stand-alone conference rooms able to cater for groups up to 350 theatre style or 200 for a banquet dinner.

A five minute stroll from the centre of town, Millennium Hotel Rotorua provides easy access to both the Sir Howard Morrison Centre and Rotorua Energy Events Centre for greater event needs.

Meantime, Kimberley Daniels has been promoted to national conference sales manager which will see her continue to front the hotel sales along with supporting the Millennium Hotels and Resorts national conference team.



Millennium Hotel Rotorua

Two of Rotorua's Premium Event Venues



Skyline Rotorua proudly hosts two of Rotorua's finest Events Venues.

The enchanting Hidden Forest Venue is nestled just a short Luge ride away, offering a remarkable forest ambiance where up to 180 guests can relish delectable rustic buffet.

At the top of Mt Ngongotahā, the renowned Stratosfare buffet restaurant and bar awaits, boasting breathtaking panoramic views of the entire region. This award winning venue can accommodate up to 350 guests, providing an exceptional dining experience featuring exquisite local cuisine.



RESTAURANT & BAR
STRATOSFARE
SKYLINE ROTORUA



skyline.co.nz



TE PUIA EMBRACING OPPORTUNITY

Te Puia - Pohutu Geyser
Photo: Cameron Mackenzie

Despite the challenges of recent times, Te Puia has embraced the opportunity to evolve and elevate its offerings, ensuring a bright future for this cultural icon.

Through a dedicated focus, Te Puia has introduced new experiences that cater to the changing expectations of visitors while safeguarding the natural geothermal assets and preserving Māori culture.

Jessie Emery, MICE sales manager at Te Puia, emphasises the commitment to providing intimate and authentic encounters, fostering a profound appreciation for Māori traditions, flavours, and values. Te Puia has expanded its conference capabilities to accommodate

both large and small groups. The modern event centre, meeting rooms, and acclaimed Pātaka Kai restaurant enable it to meet diverse needs.

“Being 100 per cent Māori-owned, we hold storytelling and history in high regard which reinforced our decision to offer only guided group tours, which incorporate personal touches from our generational guides, fostering genuine connections with the whenua (land)”.

Alongside this immersive experience,



Te Puia - Powhiri
Photo: Cameron Mackenzie

visitors can partake in a cultural performance, featuring a traditional Māori welcome ceremonies, songs, chants, poi, haka, and a visit to the Kiwi Conservation Centre. For a full-day experience, manuhiri can savor locally-sourced Māori-inspired cuisine in Pātaka Kai restaurant which overlooks the iconic Pōhutu geyser.

As night falls, Te Whakarewarewa Valley sets the stage for Te Puia's new evening experience – Geyser by Night. This captivating guided journey delves into the geothermal valley, enveloping visitors in the sights, sounds, and stories of the past, creating unforgettable memories.

For organisations seeking a more in-depth understanding on their Te Aō Māori journey, Te Kete Aronui offers a two-day overnight experience. This includes workshops led by renowned experts and insights into Māori culture through the eyes of masters and practitioners dedicated to preserving this precious taonga (treasure).

Working in close collaboration with the Rotorua bureau team and the wider industry whanau (family), Te Puia demonstrates a strong commitment to hosting MEETINGS in Rotorua next year, showcasing the region's warmth and hospitality.



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Te Puia - Pataka Kai Restaurant balcony, overlooking the geothermal valley and Pohutu Geyser
Photo: Cameron Mackenzie

TRACK RECORD FOR LAKESIDE EVENTS



Sudima Rotorua has a proven track record in catering for conferences, meetings and events.

Sudima Rotorua

Leigh Higgins, director of sales – corporate, points out that the hotel has successfully hosted everything from intimate high-powered business meetings and quiet small group gatherings to epic product launches and large multi-day conferences.

‘We offer various room and venue sizes, styles and set-ups, audio-visual, venue dressing and catering services, through to full event planning and everything in-between,’ she adds.

Sudima Rotorua sits on the shore of Lake Rotorua with vistas across the water. The hotel’s location is another key attribute for business events, being just a short stroll from the town centre, Polynesian Spa and the Energy Events Centre.

‘Sudima Rotorua has all the facilities and features you’d expect from a four-star hotel, as well as a few that set it apart,’ adds Higgins.

The hotel features well-appointed rooms, restaurant, bar, complimentary gym access, geo-thermally heated pool and four conference and event spaces for up to 200 people.

‘Whether an organiser has a small function with bespoke needs or a whole company of rowdy employees, our specialist events team can help with their needs to make planning easy and to ensure that the conference, meeting or event is one that will impress.’

Sustainability

Higgins says that choosing Sudima Rotorua as a venue also contributes to a more sustainable future. ‘We have won numerous awards for our sustainable initiatives and achievements. Sudima Hotels was the first hotel chain in New Zealand to be Toitū net carbonzero certified and now focuses on the Toitū carbon reduce programme with company-wide measures, processes and systems in place to mitigate and reduce carbon emissions.

‘Bulk refill toiletries in all hotel rooms, avoiding single use plastics wherever possible, and providing free organic feminine products for all guests and staff (to help eliminate period poverty) are just a small selection of some of the everyday

measures the company takes.

‘We can work with organisers to reduce an event’s environmental footprint, we even offer a discount to any event partner that chooses these extra measures.’



Contact 07 348 9047
jessie.e@tepuia.com
Te Puia Hemo Rd, Tihiotonga, Rotorua
www.tepuia.com



ROTORUA ‘WALKS THE TALK’ DURING POST-MEETINGS FAMIL

Famil Group at Te Puia

With experiences ranging from adrenalin-fuelled fun to indulgent relaxation, Rotorua’s post-MEETINGS famil was the opportunity for the destination to ‘walk the talk’ after two days of promoting its attributes to buyers at New Zealand’s premium business events expo late June.

Rotorua’s best was showcased to 25 Australian and New Zealand hosted buyers on the three-day famil led by Vanessa Wallace, business events manager for RotoruaNZ and her team of Leah Morrison and Jesse Tamm.

“Rotorua is experiencing a remarkable revival,” says Wallace. “Over the past five years we have lived through a major public and private infrastructure investment in our community and surroundings which has truly transformed the experience we offer to our manuhiri (visitors). We are the perfect destination to assist organisations in creating truly meaningful experiences for their conferences, meetings or incentive programmes.”

Guests were hosted by a variety of hotels including Rydges, Sudima, Millennium, Novotel and Pullman and had site visits of many throughout the three days.

Highlights of the famil included Go Karting, 4WD Bush Safari and Monster 4x4 Thrill Ride with Off Road NZ, who can tailor a programme to the desired

excitement level, budget and timeframe. Lunch and tour of Agrodome, a 350 acre working farm and home of the world famous Farm Show, was a must see.

For a bit more adrenalin the group also got to experience Zorb, who can tailor-make a team building programme to suit time frames and requirements. Different interactive challenges from brain teasers through to competitive team activities are all incorporated around the hilarious fun of down-hill ball rolling.

Terrace Kitchen, part of the Plenty Group, was a stop for lunch. Inspired by the Pink & White Terraces the venue is relaxed and contemporary with seasonal modern menus.

Dinner and a moving cultural experience was had at Te Pā Tū. Maori history, traditions and aspirations for the future were shared across four hours of celebration and feasting.

Rotorua Canopy tours offered its Original and Ultimate zip lining experiences,

taking famil participants deep into ancient native forest to be viewed from the top of the forest canopy. A walk at Redwoods Treewalk suspended the group high above the forest floor and up close to 75-metre high redwoods as they walked across eco-suspended bridges and platforms.

Dinner and entertainment at the recently refurbished Sir Howard Morrison Centre on the second evening was held in in the Te Whakaruruhau banquet room – an ideal space for conferences, banquets and cocktail events.

Massages at Polynesian Spa were a big hit with options including Spa Stress Therapy and Aromatherapy Relax your Body massage. An ideal venue for a corporate retreat, Polynesian Spa offers wellness options to suit most requirements.

The newly opened Wai Ariki offered a Restorative Journey (Wai Whakaora) which is a carefully planned therapeutic journey designed to maximise the wellbeing benefits of the natural environment, from the heavens to the waters and the earth. In particular, it is designed to revitalise the senses through the transformative effect of hot and cold experiences.

To keep the adrenalin going, the group had the choice of scenic tours of Mt Tarawera and Rotorua on FloatPlane Tours with Volcanic Air or a helicopter tour with a landing on Mt Tarawera to learn about the region’s history, culture and geology. A spin on the lake on jet boats finished the experience.

A visit to Rotorua wouldn’t be complete without a visit to Skyline on the gondola to try out some of the new luge tracks that have opened. Corporate groups can also Skyswing and zipline at the venue.

The farewell dinner for the group was held at Stratosphere Restaurant at Skyline – its expansive views of Rotorua provided a fitting end to the diverse and memorable experiences had by all.



Rotorua Canopy Tours



Redwoods Treewalk

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Lunch at Forsyth Barr Stadium Dunedin

By Terry Holt

DUNEDIN SHOWCASES VARIETY

From the latest in fashion design to the start of the Otago Rally, historic places, tropical spaces, and a pitch-side lunch at Forsyth Barr stadium – a group of business event and travel planners got to experience the variety that Dunedin has to offer.

Hosted by Dunedin Business Events, the goal of the famil visit was to change some possible perceptions of the city by showcasing a variety of options available to business event planners. The famil also illustrated how the destination's suppliers collaborate to create a seamless experience for visiting groups.

Behind the scenes experience

Following check-in at the five-star Fable Hotel, a private transfer was arranged for a behind the scenes tour of Forsyth Barr Stadium. There was surprise greeting by rugby coach Troy Harder (aka Doug Kamo)

who put them through their paces, before getting the chance to 'call a part of a game' from the stadium commentary box. Following the fun, they hit the turf, well close enough, on an elevated stage for a multi-course pitch-side dining experience – that was a real winner.

Cool experiences all round

Following a visit to The Dunedin Ice Centre for the chance to try curling, the short trip was made to the Octagon to visit the Dunedin Centre, consisting of the Town Hall, Glenroy Auditorium and The Terrace. The centre caters for a variety of events

for up to 500 for a banquet dinner, 800 for cocktails or a little over 2,100 in the theatre.

Historic places and tropical spaces

Oveston House, opened as a historic house museum in 1967, serves as a time capsule as little has changed inside the house since it was occupied as a family home between 1906 and 1966. The venue provides private dining and events for up to 140 cocktail or 80 for a banquet.

Continuing the history theme, the group visited Otago Museum which offers a variety of spaces for welcome functions and gala dinners. One of them, the butterfly



Otago Rally 2023 Starts from The Octagon



The Terrace at Dunedin Venues

sanctuary, provides a hint of the tropics, for those with warmth in mind.

Larnach Castle

The next stop was to see possibly Dunedin’s most iconic venue, Larnach Castle & Gardens offers panoramic views across Otago Harbour and peninsula. The venue has vast experience in providing memorable gala events for up to 200 (or 270 with the addition of a marquee) and smaller groups can enjoy dining in the castle. On-site accommodation is available in Larnach Lodge or at the nearby five-star Camp Estate.

Fashionable finale

Following dinner in the Library at Fable Dunedin, the group walked to the Dunedin Railway Station for the final night of the iD Dunedin Fashion Show. The event this year combined the ready-to-wear New Zealand fashion show with the iD International

Emerging Designers Awards show and was a sell-out.

Mili Goswami, event manager at Motive Events, was surprised at the possibilities for business events that were presented by the famil.

“Prior to heading to Dunedin, I had thought of it as a small town, and a student town. The famil greatly changed that perception. I found it to be a very viable conference destination with versatile venues that can accommodate relatively large numbers. This is not something that I had anticipated.

“It’s definitely a haven for the smaller groups, especially if they don’t have a Queenstown budget but are keen to take their event to South Island. You could make a really good three to four-day programme of events flow, and capitalise on the unique venues. For the larger groups, there is room for a lot of creativity when using spaces like the Forsyth Barr and Dunedin Centre.”



iD NZ Fashion Show 2023

Event and Travel planners:

Mili Goswami, Motive Events; Ali Copeman, akB Conference Management; Alex O’Brien, Conference Innovators; Angela Webster, Anna Smith, Tourism NZ, Frankie Mulligan, Orbit.

Famil Hosts:

Nicole Carvell, Dunedin Venues; Louise Woodburn, BE Dunedin; Angela Webster, Fable Hotels.



On the steps at Larnach



Curling at Dunedin Ice Centre

Business Events Expo exhibitors



Exhibitors current as at 25/07/23

Brisbane Economic Development Agency
 Brook Serene Boutique Hotels
 Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef
 Business Events Industry Aotearoa
 Business Events Noosa
 Business Events Port Douglas
 Business Events Waikato
 Cairns Convention Centre
 Canberra Convention Bureau
 Capstone Hotels
 Celebrity Speakers NZ
 Centrepiece & Pacific Linen
 Christchurch Adventure Park
 Christchurch Attractions and Hanmer Springs Attractions
 Claudelands Conference & Exhibition Centre
 Club Med
 Coast Group
 Congress Rental New Zealand
 Cordis Auckland
 Crystalbrook Collection
 Destination Great Lake Taupo
 Destination Marlborough

Destination Queenstown - Queenstown Convention Bureau
 Due Drop Events Centre
 Dunedin Venues
 Entertainment Company
 Fable Hotels and Resorts
 Fiji Airways
 Great Journeys New Zealand
 Great South
 Hawke's Bay Business Events
 Hemingway's Brewery Cairns & Port Douglas
 Higher Perspective Conferences and Events
 Hilton Hotels
 Hobbiton™ Movie Set
 Hong Kong Tourism Board
 Hurtigruten Group
 International Antarctic Centre
 JetPark Hotels
 Lower Hutt Events Centre
 Marsden Hotel Group
 Millennium Hotels & Resorts
 Napier Conferences & Events
 New Caledonia Tourism
 Northland Events Centre (2021) Trust

Novotel Christchurch Airport
 On-Site technologies
 Outback New Zealand Limited
 Oxbow Adventure Co
 Puketutu Island Estate
 Pullman Cairns International/
 Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort
 Quest Apartment Hotels
 RealNZ
 Reef Unlimited
 Return to Paradise Resort
 Riverside Adventures - Waikato
 Riverside Kitchen
 Rotorua Events & Venues
 RotoruaNZ
 Samoa Tourism
 Scenic Hotel Dunedin City
 Shangri-La Group
 Sheraton Grand Mirage Resort Port Douglas
 Silk Estate Marquee Events
 Skyline Rotorua
 Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour & Sofitel Wellington
 Sudima Hotels

Sunshine Beach Surf Club
 TableHub
 Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre
 Team Up Events NZ & Fiji
 TEWAKA
 The Bush Boardroom
 The Events Group Ltd
 The Production Agency
 Thrillzone
 Toitoti - Hawke's Bay Arts & Events Centre
 Tourism Australia Business Events
 Tourism Bay of Plenty
 Tourism Fiji
 Tourism Malaysia
 Urban Gourmet
 Vanuatu Tourism Office
 Venues Otautahi
 Vidcom New Zealand Ltd
 Village Accommodation Group
 Visit Sunshine Coast Business Events
 Waipuna Hotel & Conference Centre
 Waitakere Resort Spa
 Waitangi Limited

Empowering event planners and promoting sustainability: Event Solutions NZ's journey

Led by its managing director, Claire Webber, Event Solutions NZ has been providing technology solutions and services for event planners for over a decade. Throughout its journey, the company has undergone various transformations, adapting to industry demands, and weathering the challenges presented by the pandemic. Today, Event Solutions NZ focuses on its partnership with Entegy, while also providing comprehensive on-site printing, equipment hire solutions, and services to event organisers who utilise other platforms.

Webber highlights the popularity of Entegy's event app, which has become a staple choice for numerous repeat customers.

"Its user-friendly interface, affordability, customisation options, and a myriad of useful features such as lead capture, meeting management, attendance tracking, and on-site badge printing make it a crowd favourite," she says. "The best part is that we offer the solution at the same price as acquiring it directly from Entegy. However, we provide the added benefits of billing

in NZ dollars and offering comprehensive New Zealand-based support services and equipment hire to our clients, further enhancing the customer experience."

Since becoming Entegy's New Zealand partner five years ago, Event Solutions NZ has witnessed the platform's evolution. By actively incorporating customer feedback, Entegy has successfully introduced sought-after features such as online registration, email campaigns and appointment scheduling.

Embracing sustainability

The Covid-19 disruptions provided Webber with an opportunity for introspection. Recognising the impact of personal and business decisions on climate change, she realised that on-site event delivery could have negative environmental consequences. More sustainable name badge options have been developed, with Event Solutions now offering a variety of choices tailored to suit clients' requirements and budgets. And for the past year, Webber has been

championing the adoption of the 'Bring Your Own Lanyard' (BYOL) trend, which reduces the need for unnecessary single-use items to be put into circulation.

Business Events Expo collaboration

Thrilled by the invitation to collaborate with the Business Events Expo team, Webber is excited about the upcoming event.

"It has been over five years since we were involved with an event like this, and the collaboration provides an excellent opportunity for us to showcase our fully integrated solution, which encompasses online attendee registration and stand booking forms, an event app with appointment scheduling, lead capture for exhibitors, and self-service on-site name tags. Notably, we will be using our new environmentally friendly, full colour double-sided name tag stock for on-site printing at BEE2023, aligning with our commitment to sustainability.

"And don't forget to bring your own lanyard."

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Need to impress highest achievers? It's all here on the West Coast

The West Coast of the South Island has again shown how extraordinary it is as an incentive destination, says Ali Smith, head of product and Innovation at Scenic Hotel Group.

Scenic Hotel Group, in conjunction with Development West Coast, hosted another famil group to the West Coast – Glacier Country after MEETINGS 2023.

Collectively, the famil participants had over 205 years of business events experience.

“When you have that calibre of professionals, you know you need to have your game face on,” Smith (who led the group) points out.

“The big question I had was why did we get such a high calibre of people saying yes to this famil? These are well travelled clients, who are offered destinations all over the world. The answer was they wanted to learn about the West Coast for themselves. They had heard good things, but never been, so they were unsure of connectivity and what there was to do.”

Smith says getting qualifiers to the coast has become easier with Air New Zealand

flying into Hokitika twice daily, one in the morning and one in the evening.

“These flights create the building blocks for a great itinerary, and it is easy to add the TranzAlpine and the new Scenic Plus service. We love the name Scenic Plus and the pun.”

One objective was to show guests Scenic’s hotel Te Waonui Forest Retreat in Franz Josef, a 98-room hotel surrounded by native rainforest and ideal as an incentive property.

The experience combined accommodation in natural and sustainable luxury, champagne, farm to plate produce, good company, and great service.

“Our group called it the ultimate coming together of luxury escape and environmental awareness,” Smith says.

“Creating an incentive programme that leaves delegates wanting more is easy on the West Coast. I have years of tricks up my sleeve, and spectacular activities in my West Coast toolbox. I only scratched the surface of what is possible with these event veterans, and was rewarded time and time again with the looks of awe.”

Highlights included the soothing sounds of the Tasman Sea lapping at the Hokitika Beach sign, the turquoise blue of the glacier fed waters, delicious dishes packed with

Champagne on the Hokitika Gorge Track, Sharon Auld BEIA; Anne-Marie Quinn, All Occasions Group; Mary Sparksman, YRD Events; Deborah Vaughan, Corporate Leisure Events; Sally Pickford, Mike Pickford ASN Events, Tania Barnes, WellingtonNZ; Ali Smith, Scenic Hotel Group; Helen Bambray, Tourism NZ



Walking in the ancient Jurassic rainforest of Okarito Kiwi Sanctuary are Sharon Auld, BEIA; Anne-Marie Quinn, All Occasions Group; Deborah Vaughan, Corporate Leisure Events; Sally Pickford, ASN Events; Tania Barnes, WellingtonNZ



Ali Smith, Scenic Hotel Group; Deborah Vaughan, Corporate Leisure Events Enjoying bubbles in the snow on Franz Josef Glacier

flavour and imagination, the snow and fresh the mountain air on the glaciers, the ancient Jurassic rainforest, the restorative hot tubs in the wilderness and the welcoming hospitality of ‘Coasters’.

The Wonderful West Coast Famil showed how easy connectivity is from Wellington, Christchurch or Queenstown, and what can be packed into a three-day, two-night itinerary.

A number of famil participants already have proposals well under way.



Mary Sparksman YRD Events; Anne-Marie Quinn, All Occasions Group at Hokitika Driftwood Beach Sign



Mike Pickford, ASN Events on the top of Franz Josef Glacier



Arthurs Pass, halfway on the TranzAlpine train journey

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ChristchurchNZ launches BE Purposeful tool kit



Otautahi Christchurch, Waka on the Avon

ChristchurchNZ's BE Purposeful awareness campaign and website have been designed to provide ongoing resources and practical tools to support clients when planning their events.

ChristchurchNZ head of business events, Megan Crum says business events have the ability to play a huge role in transformative change and to leave lasting legacies when they are planned with intention.

“New Zealanders and international visitors value our natural environment, and Christchurch city is making moves to become the most sustainable place possible – especially in its events and conferencing

sector where our partners are invested in sustainability,” she says.

“As a new city we are innovative, and the city has been redesigned to embrace purposeful business events. We embrace welcoming visitors to our city through manaakitanga and our commitment to protecting our natural environment (kaitiakitanga).

“We can connect business event organisers to a wide range of suppliers who are passionate and purposeful,” Crum says. **View the kit www.christchurchnz.com/meet/purposeful**

Wellington to host TRENZ 2024

Aotearoa New Zealand’s biggest tourism trade show business event will be held at Tākina Wellington Conference and Exhibition Centre on 8-10 May 2024.

“TRENZ was back with a bang in May and it’s safe to say the event is rapidly evolving and innovating,” says TIA chief executive Rebecca Ingram. “As a passionate Wellingtonian, I’m especially excited to be bringing TRENZ to the capital city for the very first time.”

Each year TRENZ brings hundreds of international travel buyers, sellers and media delegates together to meet with New Zealand’s leading tourism operators.

TRENZ creates significant economic benefits for the host region, with more than 1500 people attending the event. Delegates stay with local accommodation providers, experience local tourism attractions, and many spend extended time in the region.

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Lee Watkins

has returned to Accor Hotels as director of sales and marketing for Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour and Sofitel Wellington. After 12 years, he returns to re-launch the Viaduct property while continuing to grow the success of Sofitel Wellington.



Ben Dalton

has been appointed chief executive of Waitangi Ltd from 1 September 2023. Dalton is currently deputy chief executive – place, with Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.



Clive Wardle

is the new general manager Rydges Formosa Golf Resort. With 15 years of hotel experience, Wardle has climbed the hotel career ladder from concierge to managing hotels in New Zealand and Australia.



Jana Kingston

has been appointed national business development manager, C&I for Millennium Hotels & Resorts based in Melbourne, Australia. Well-established in market, Kingston brings invaluable experience and knowledge from her 18 year tenure with Destination Queenstown.



Marcus Keenan

is the new group general manager - asset Management for Heritage Hotels based in Auckland. Keenan has held general management positions with Fable Hotels and Resorts, Rydges Formosa and Rydges Wellington. He first worked for Heritage Hotels nearly ten years ago, as interim resident manager at Heritage Christchurch and then moved to Auckland to manage Heritage Auckland.



Xanthe Smythe

is the new conference and business groups sales manager for Sudima Hotels. Smythe comes to Sudima with a wealth of knowledge and experience having held previous management roles within the event, hospitality and hotel industry. Smythe is based in Auckland and will be responsible for all national sales activities driving conference, event and group business into all Sudima Hotel locations nationwide.



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Your team deserves a well-earned break this year. So why not treat them to our outdoor adventure activities of rafting, kayaking, flatwater kayaking and paddleboarding at Vector Wero Whitewater Park. Our packages are perfect for groups of 10 to 100, and we have a wide range of menus from a casual BBQ through to walk and fork style dinners, curated by Collective. DJ and entertainment options are also available!



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Foraging and grazing with **Accor**

Accor invited hosted buyers to Forage & Graze at a selection of food and beverage stations during an evening at Movenpick Hotel Wellington at MEETINGS 2023



Ali Howard, Conferences & Events Ltd, Wellington; Lee Watkins, Sofitel Wellington and Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour; Amanda Denholm, Avenues Event Management, Christchurch



Kate Schulz, FCM Meetings & Events, Australia; Marion Bausse, Pullman Auckland Hotel & Apartments



Raymond Faulkner, Sofitel Wellington; Jessica Carlson, Accor Hotels; Lee Watkins, Sofitel Wellington and Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour



Purple and green... group guides get together at Movenpick Hotel Wellington over lunch, Brooke Batemaan, Venues Wellington; Lizzie Lovegrove, NW Group



Zealandia guide Paul Wilson and Danielle Brayne, Infrastructure Sustainability Council



At Southward Distillery on Cuba Street, Natalie Le, The Event Room, Sydney; Michelle Stanyon, Freeman Media Wellington

Out and about on **Wellington famils**

About 140 hosted buyers in 13 colour coded groups took advantage of Wellington hospitality (and fine weather) to explore the city and surrounds before the MEETINGS 2023 programme got into full swing.



Ready for lunch at Movenpick Hotel Wellington... Nickylee Anderson, University of Auckland; Atif Khan, Movenpick Hotel Wellington; Kylie Williams, Health Informatics NZ (HiNZ)



MEETINGS 2023

People out and about during MEETINGS 2023 at Tākina Wellington Convention and Exhibition Centre.



Mary Sparksman, YRD Event Management, Brisbane; Megan Crum, ChristchurchNZ; Karen Hamilton, ICMS Australasia; Roger Taitt, Safari Hotels; Ali Smith, Scenic Hotel Group.



Victoria Wales, HOT Events; Malcolm Jordan, Total Event; Meegan Ruff, ChristchurchNZ



Karen Sorensen, K&M Events Sydney; Amanda Denholm, Avenues Event Management; Glenda Harding, Harding Conferences.



Ken Pereira, Auckland Convention Bureau; Doris Dou, China Travel Service (NZ) Ltd



Tania Barnes, Business Events Wellington; Janette Lewis, Altus Window Systems

Beautiful Samoa Roadshow

The Samoa Tourism Authority completed its Roadshow of New Zealand at the Pullman Hotel in Auckland in late May.

Sonny Rivers, sales and marketing representative says it was a great success with close to 250 buyers attending over the week. Initiatives including self famils were revealed during the roadshow, Rivers says the activities were planned before Covid but were postponed as a result of the pandemic. "Now that things are back on-line and operators and accommodation providers are getting organised we're able to get these back on track."

The four-city roadshow visited Christchurch, Wellington and Hamilton before its conclusion in Auckland.



Kristian Scanlan, Samoa Tourism Authority; Natalie Von Dincklage, House of Travel; Sonny Rivers, Samoa Tourism Authority



Peter Manase, Manase Travel Studio; Pativane Petaia-Tevita, Samoa Tourism Authority

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The Christchurch
Convention Centre

Medical services basics from St John

St John Event Health Services



St John is New Zealand’s number one provider of medical services at events. We provide medical coverage at some of the largest and most high-profile events in the country such as music festivals, sporting events, large concerts and shows as well as small events, like school gala days and community fairs.

If you’re an event organiser, you can trust us to look after your competitors, participants, spectators, officials and event staff. By choosing St John as your medical services provider, you can be confident that first aid requirements are in safe hands.

Event organisers are required to ensure people attending and impacted by their event are safe and that the event venue is secure.

When adequate medical services are provided at events, emergency response time is minimised, ambulance call outs are

reserved for those who really need them, and emergency department admissions are reduced. It all adds up to a more successful event and less chance of negative publicity.

Here are some medical service tips for the events organiser:

- Medical services should be provided for the entire event, including the installation and breakdown of the event if this is a large scale or dangerous operation.
- Medical services may also be needed for attendees queuing to get in and out of the event.
- If the event is a multi-day festival with attendees camping overnight, you may need around-the-clock medical services.
- Locate first aid/medical teams carefully, so that emergency response times are minimised.

- Provide information about the location of medical facilities to attendees. Use signs and print the information on programmes or tickets.
- Stewards and all other event personnel should know where the medical services are located.
- Ambulances and other emergency vehicles need to have clear access in and out of the venue, in case casualties need to be transported.
- At events with large crowds or difficult access, medics on foot, golf carts, mountain bikes or even motorcycles may be required.

To find out how we can help you with your event please call us on 0800 ST JOHN (0800 785 646) Monday - Sunday 7am - 7pm or complete our event enquiry form.



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Optimism, Patience, Imagination and Courage - Recreating the world's greatest journey of survival



Tim Jarvis

Survival over the past few years has been a reality for many involved in the business events industry. Battling away with restrictions, constant change, not knowing what is to come and for how long it will last. The need to improvise, to adapt and overcome the challenges faced. That is exactly what Tim Jarvis, author, explorer and scientist, and his hand-picked team of adventurers needed when embarking on their trip to recreate the 'world's greatest journey of survival.'

Ernest Shackleton listed the qualities he required in a Polar explorer. First, he listed Optimism, secondly it was Patience,



Loren Heaphy

followed by Imagination and Idealism, that he grouped together and finally Courage.

During MEETINGS 2023, ChristchurchNZ's business events team hosted buyers from around the world to an evening of fine food and wine all bought up from Canterbury, catered by The Food Lab at Wellington's Public Trust Building.

Guests received a warm welcome from Loren Heaphy, general manager, destination, and attraction, ChristchurchNZ before getting to know each other over sharing plates of some of Canterbury's finest produce. Following dinner, guests were mesmerised by tales of adventure, courage, determination,

excitement, and fear when Tim Jarvis, took to the stage to talk about his role in recreating the world's greatest journey of survival by replicating Ernest Shackleton's epic journey from the early shipwreck of the Endeavor, slowly being crushed by pack ice in Antarctica with a 1330km+ journey needed to reach help, with only a lifeboat to make it in.

16 Days at sea, only to discover that to reach help, they still needed to cross the island, taking 4 days in extreme conditions. A story of inspiration, determination, courage and the need to adapt. Not unlike life in the business events industry.



Guests

Together, we can give kiwi a chance.

Every little bit counts towards creating a sustainable future for kiwi, so Millennium Hotels and Resorts have partnered with Save the Kiwi, giving you the opportunity to help protect our national icon.

By choosing to not have your room serviced during your event, the money saved will provide kiwi chicks a safe place to sleep and grow, helping them to reach the all important 'stoat-proof' weight of 1kg.

For every five rooms that are not fully serviced, we will donate one bed for a kiwi on behalf of your organisation at the Save the Kiwi crèche in Napier.

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IT'S ALWAYS A PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS BY THE BEACH

Spring and summer offer ideal conditions for conducting business by the beach in the Bay of Plenty. Whether it's meetings, brainstorming sessions or team-building activities, the panoramic ocean views and white sandy shores will lift morale and inspire creativity, leaving teams feeling valued and rejuvenated.

Waterside venues

Trinity Wharf Tauranga, The Cargo Shed and the Mt Maunganui Surf Club are exceptional waterfront venues where meeting planners can seamlessly combine work and relaxation, setting the scene for a unique and enriching business networking experience.

Trinity Wharf Tauranga offers a premium hotel and conference waterfront experience, and features panoramic views across Tauranga Harbour. Delegates will enjoy state-of-the-art conference facilities and

there's even an optional pre-dinner harbour cruise that leaves right outside, from the hotel pontoon.

The Cargo Shed has been a feature of the Tauranga waterfront for years, and has recently been revived to serve as a new business events venue just a short walk away from Trinity Wharf Tauranga. This presents an enticing over-the-water conference or dinner option for delegations.

The Mt Maunganui Surf Club provides several practical event spaces where

gatherings can be hosted right next to New Zealand's most famous beach. Delegates can take a sunrise walk along the sandy shores or an adventurous climb up Mauao | Mount Maunganui, then simply wipe the sand off their feet and enjoy all the modern amenities this club venue has to offer.

Meeting planners can generate excitement for delegates with an exhilarating Aqua 360 jet ski ride or an immersive team building experience with SUP (stand up paddle boards) and a guided cultural walk around

EXPLORING NEW OPTIONS

Mauao with Mauao Adventures.

Accommodation can be had at the recently opened Quest Mt Maunganui, right in the heart of the main street of this trendy beach town.

Further along the coastline are many more accommodation and conference options, such as Tasman Holiday Parks Papamoa Beach which features a lounge and conference venue and executive beachfront cabins, providing the perfect setting for team-building activities.

For a resort-like experience, the Pacific Palms Resort offers accommodation options that will encourage delegates to relax during their downtime. The resort provides one, two, and three-bedroom apartments right in the heart of Papamoa. Each apartment has a fully equipped laundry and kitchen, perfect for longer stays, and groups can enjoy the expansive grounds and the swimming pool that's heated year-round.

More venues

The Hotel Armitage & Conference Centre offers 80 freshly refurbished accommodation rooms, a poolside restaurant and bar, and the choice of several conference rooms. This hotel is centrally located in the CBD, with on-site parking. Also in the CBD is the beautifully restored, historic former post office, Clarence, with 13 boutique guest rooms, a private board room, the Bistro and Centrale restaurants, and a private dining lounge inside a glass marquee.

For a gala dinner for 1,200 attendees or a large-scale meeting and entertainment extravaganza for up to 4,600 people, Mercury Baypark has the premier facilities and expertise to make events unforgettable. Its dedicated team will ensure the seamless execution of a business event, allowing organisers to focus on creating meaningful connections and lasting memories.

The Historic Village is a cultural gem which showcases the heritage and modern-day diversity in the Bay of Plenty. It's a versatile venue and is an ideal setting for hosting events and exhibitions. Within the village is The Incubator, a vibrant hub for artists and creatives. This dynamic space provides an opportunity to engage in team bonding activities within a creative environment. The artists and their studios will inspire teams to think outside the box and will foster a collaborative spirit.

Cultural activities

Delegates can engage in traditional hunting and gathering techniques, guided by Muirs Tours' experts as they share Te Ao Māori (the Māori worldview)



Big Kanu Glow Worm Tour with Waimarino Kayak Tours

and demonstrate the importance of manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga and whanaungatanga. Delegates can also discover the fascinating history and stories associated with our lesser known landmark, the Papamoa Hills, with a guided walk led by Travel Ed.

Water-based activities

With the sun shining and the waters beckoning, it's the ideal time for thrilling on-the-water team activities that will invigorate and inspire. The stunning coastline can be explored with a dolphin-watching trip aboard the Bay Explorer.

More options

Other gems that will leave a lasting impression on delegates include exploring

picturesque cycle trails on an e-bike tour with Te Ara Tourism, discovering local craft breweries on a BrewBus tour or paddling through enchanting glow worm-lit waters on a night time adventure with Waimarino Kayak Tours.

Foodie experiences

The Bay of Plenty has many 'gate to plate' experiences where delegates can engage with growers to learn about the region's rich horticultural provenance, and then travel to popular eateries where they can taste top chefs' creative culinary interpretations.

The Flavours of Plenty Festival is an annual multi-day event, held in autumn, created for food lovers. Many of the events can serve as unique opportunities for team building or as incentives, allowing

BAY OF PLENTY

**BUSINESS BY THE BEACH
IT'S IN OUR NATURE**

Mount Maunganui

DISCOVER MORE AT BAYOFPLENTYNZ.COM/MEET



Business meetings at Clarence, Tauranga

attendees to savour the region's gastronomic delights and experience the incredible flavours that make the Bay of Plenty a food lover's paradise.

Culinary cravings can also be savoured at Fife Lane Kitchen & Bar, a local favourite in the heart of the Bay of Plenty which offers multiple group dining spaces. This award-winning dining establishment epitomises the region's culinary excellence, using the finest local produce to create dishes that will tantalise the taste buds.

Personal assistance

The business events team at Tourism Bay of Plenty is available to personally discuss meeting or conference needs and create an interesting itinerary of refreshing and unforgettable experiences to ensure delegates will enjoy every moment.

The team can introduce meeting planners to some of the other hidden gems in the region and they can also provide a local perspective and help business events organisers make the right connections to support their planning.

Check the conference section on the Tourism Bay of Plenty website: bayofplentynz.com/meet



Tasman Holiday Parks - Papamoa Beach

TIMES PAST MEET MOD-CONS IN HISTORIC VILLAGE

Tauranga's Historic Village stands out with its range of boutique venues that promise to leave a lasting impression on delegates.



Historic Village Cinema

Five indoor venues and five outdoor spaces each have distinct character and ambience while offering all the modern technology required for business events.

Ever had a meeting in an army barracks? The village's latest venue, Durham Barracks, is a replica of the officer barracks which were occupied by the Durham Light Infantry in Tauranga.

The School House building, originally the 1913 Mount Manganui School, has recently undergone renovations and can comfortably seat 20 guests. Offering a nostalgic atmosphere, it comes with the original chalkboard and large sash windows.

The newly updated Village Hall, with its exposed beam ceiling, built-in bar and kitchette can accommodate 150 guests theatre-style.

Hosting a seminar or presentation in the art deco Village Cinema is likely to leave delegates talking about it for years. Fixed tiered seating with individual foldout tables can seat 60 guests. The theatre is equipped with a plug-and-play audio-visual system, commercial laser projector and 7.2 surround sound.

The village also lends itself to market-style welcome functions or gala events.



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WHEN PLANNING YOUR NEXT BUSINESS EVENT, HOW ABOUT THE GOLD COAST OF NEW ZEALAND?

SPONSORED



The Mercury Baypark Stadium Lounge transformed for an evening of glitz and glamour.
Photo: Realty Group

Mercury Baypark, located just minutes from the white sand beaches of Mount Maunganui, has a lot going for it.

The location, for one. Who doesn't fancy a business trip to the Gold Coast of New Zealand?

The venue also happens to have everything you could possibly need in one place.

Meetings, conferences, workshops, exhibitions, annual awards evenings, AGMs – there are rooms and spaces to suit every type of event imaginable at Mercury Baypark.

There is onsite catering, audio visual experts on hand with all the media equipment you will need, and an experienced event team that will help every step of the way.

There is also ample parking, including EV charging stations, and opportunities for team building activities including a wide range of social indoor sports and fun games.

Vicki Semple, Sponsorship and Events Manager at Realty Group, organised three different events at Mercury Baypark this year – the EVES annual conference, the EVES annual awards evening, and the Bayleys annual awards evening.

"The event operations manager, the catering manager and the audio visual team were all fantastic to work with," she said.

The conference hosted 200 people – property managers, sponsors, salespeople, and guest speakers including Hilary Barry,

Nigel Latta and Sacha Coburn.

"We had 12 sponsor booths in our designated sponsors' space, where we held morning tea and lunch, so our agents could engage with our partners through fun activations," Semple said.

"This worked incredibly well and sponsors were impressed with the professional setup."

The annual awards evenings for EVES and Bayleys were held in the Mercury Baypark Stadium Lounge, with a grand entrance, high-profile MCs, and live bands.

Each event had its own theme, with the space transformed for an evening of glitz and glamour.

Semple said the onsite catering for all three events, led by top executive chef Anthony

Lawler, was "incredible".

"I have received extremely positive feedback in our attendee survey. Baypark was happy to work with all our requests – lunch was 'walk and fork', dinner for 300 was champagne and welcome canapes, with alternate drop entrée and main, and dessert was a delicious dessert grazing table."

So, what are the options at Mercury Baypark for your next event?

There are four suites that can be configured for any occasion, whether you are expecting 50 people or 250 people.

There is a conference space that can host up to 1,000 people for a banquet dinner or 4,000 people for a cocktail evening.

And then there is the Corporate Lounge, the Premium Lounge, and the Stadium Lounge – all offering different outlooks, natural light, and capacity options.

With virtual events now a necessity, Mercury Baypark is also the perfect venue for events with complex technological requirements.

There is high-speed internet available and audio visual staff to set it all up and run it for you. Whatever tech you need for your event, Baypark will have it ready.

And at the heart of all of this is a friendly and accommodating team who will make you feel at home and bend over backwards to ensure your experience at Baypark is a memorable one.

Visit mercurybaypark.co.nz to find out more.



Hilary Barry (centre) was a guest speaker and MC at the EVES Real Estate annual conference and awards evening at Mercury Baypark.
Photo: Realty Group

UPGRADES CONTINUE AT HOTEL ARMITAGE AND CONFERENCE CENTRE

After four years of work, Hotel Armitage and Conference Centre is nearing completion of its refurbishment of all 80 guest rooms, common areas and exterior.

Further upgrades will focus on the lobby, bar, restaurant and swimming pool area.

The hotel also has also plans for a new gym.

The aim is to position the property as an upper mid-scale option for corporate, conference and leisure guests.

“We feel privileged to lead some transformations in the beautiful Bay of Plenty and to be working with the ongoing support and commitment of Prime Property Group owners who have renewed their intention to continue ongoing upgrades,” says Nicolas Caffardo, group general manager of Prime Hotels.

Having received consent to increase its footprint in the future, the hotel is looking at more restaurant and bar capacity with an indoor / outdoor flow to suit the warm Bay of Plenty climate.

Plans to add more guest accommodation are also under review.

“We are grateful to work with some amazing partners and a passionate and dedicated team led by Hotel Armitage and conference centre manager, Tiffany Antoine,” continues Caffardo. “The team of professional Hoteliers with experienced conference manager and head chef have built a strong experience together in creating and customising events for our facilitators and delegates.”

Situated in Tauranga’s city centre, Hotel Armitage and Conference Centre is four kilometres from Tauranga Airport and 10 minutes drive to the beach.

With five versatile function rooms, the conference centre can cater for small board meetings through to events for 200 delegates, and is equipped with new audio-visual equipment.

The hotel offers free car parking and complimentary wifi.



Washington conference room



Catering at Hotel Armitage



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New Zealand's Business Events industry set to meet in Marlborough



Marlborough Convention Centre

Registrations are open for Business Events Industry Aotearoa's (BEIA) annual conference in Marlborough which kicks off New Zealand's inaugural Business Events Week on 18 September.

'Experience Extraordinary' is the theme for three stimulating days of speakers, panel discussions and workshops at ASB Theatre, Marlborough, and Marlborough Events Centre in the heart of Blenheim.

BEIA chief executive, Lisa Hopkins says 'Experience Extraordinary' reflects the calibre of speakers at this year's conference, the stunning destination, and ways the industry can fulfil visitor expectations.

"Leading into Business Events Week, our conference is focused on elevating the discussion on the impact of business events – their impact on our economy, our society, our culture, and our environment.

"We are working to shine a light on our industry from a global perspective, looking at the data, and amplifying the legacies created by knowledge sharing and connecting at business events.

"We will be looking at how the industry continues to raise the bar given the

pressures and opportunities we have in front of us. Our speakers will be challenging us all to rethink how we view the business events industry," she says.

International keynote speakers, Senthil Gopinath and Martin Sirk have been invited to New Zealand with support from Tourism New Zealand.

Senthil Gopinath is the CEO of International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) – Global Meetings Industry Association headquartered in Netherlands. Martin Sirk is a former CEO of ICCA and a leading expert on the social and economic impact of meetings, and the future evolution of the meetings industry.

On the eve of the general election, leading New Zealand economist Cameron Bagrie will be sharing his views on the economy. Leaders of New Zealand's key tourism, hospitality, event and hotel industry associations will also be on hand for panel discussion and the latest sector updates.

On Monday 18 September first-timers will be welcomed, Regional Convention Bureaux and BEIA PCOs will also meet before the conference Welcome Function at Wither Hills Winery. The BEIA Mentorship Programme for 2023 will wind up with a chance for mentors and mentees to meet in person and celebrate their achievements.

"While this will be a showcase for Marlborough, the conference is primarily about the content and we are very excited about the thought-provoking discussions we believe will be generated," Hopkins says.

Delegates are set to experience the region first-hand with an afternoon of activities including exploring the Marlborough Sounds by boat, wine tasting, nature walks and wildlife. Before and after the conference,



Martin Sirk

Team Up Events expands into Fiji

Team Up Events has opened a branch in Fiji.

Based in Denarau, Nadi, the company's expansion signifies its commitment to providing team experiences to the meetings, incentives, conferences and events (MICE) market in Fiji and across the Pacific region.

"The MICE industry in Fiji has been growing steadily in recent years, attracting a diverse range of businesses and organisations looking for unique destinations to host their corporate and incentive events," says Stu Robertson, Team Up Events.

"We are thrilled to expand our footprint beyond New Zealand. Fiji is a remarkable destination with its pristine beaches, lush landscapes, and vibrant culture. By establishing a local presence, we aim to bring our expertise and passion for team events to both inbound and domestic clients in Fiji creating unforgettable experiences that strengthen relationships, improve teamwork and enhance overall performance."



delegates can experience the Coastal Pacific train between Christchurch and Blenheim, one of the world's most picturesque rail journeys. They can also add a stopover in Kaikōura with a special accommodation package at the new Sudima Kaikōura.

The conference wraps up on Wednesday 20 September with a dinner at Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre.

Registrations for the BEIA 2023 Conference in Marlborough can be made online on the conference website: www.beia.co.nz/conference-welcome

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Jane Warwick

FINE TUNING A PROVEN DESTINATION

There is a tendency among some, who should know better, to think that there is no such thing as a conference or event destination outside of a main centre.

But if there is one place that can prove them instantly and comprehensively wrong it is Taupō.

Yes, it is small; yes, it is a town, not a city; yes, there are few buildings more than two storeys high. But that doesn't prevent it from having class, having style, being sophisticated and sumptuous. It has five-star accommodation, chefs who have worked in Michelin-starred restaurants worldwide, there are wine bars and craft breweries, curated fashion boutiques and art galleries.

What Taupo doesn't have is congestion, smog, incessant noise and crowded pavements.

It has the biggest lake in Australasia under a high clear sky that is unpolluted by artificial light, is well-connected with the rest of Aotearoa/New Zealand and therefore easily accessible and exactly the place you should be following through on to base a conference or event.

What also makes Taupo a great

conference destination is that it is fully aware of the importance of maintaining good infrastructure and product. Latterly this has included the upgrade of its airport, and the opening and upgrade of new and existing venues.

Canny PCOs are already sitting up and taking notice.

"There has been an increase in incentive enquiries to the region with a lot of BE organisers wanting to branch out to the smaller regions," says Louise Toulmin Business Events Executive for lovetaupo.com.

"We are also noticing within the conference business coming through they are also tagging on a day to do activities," she says. "The beauty with Taupo is the close proximity to all venues/ activities and the diverse range of business events products we have on offer – one morning you can be in a conference room and in the

afternoon, you can be out sailing on our beautiful lake!"

TAUPŌ AIRPORT'S NEW TERMINAL COMPLETE

Taupō's new \$9.72 million terminal was completed on schedule and formally opened in early March, adding much needed capacity as a gateway to the region. The upgrade also included improved car parking facilities.

However, the District Council has kept its eye on the future and provision for further upgrade and extension is included in its 2018-28 Long-term Plan.

NO SHORTAGE OF OPTIONS FOR EVENTS

There's a reason while the stalwarts of the Taupo conference and events scene continue to thrive; they know what they're doing.

And they should – all three have had a

presence in the lakeside town for decades.

Millennium Hotel and Resort Manuels Taupo has three options – the Boardroom catering for 20 people, Regency One (150), Regency Two (80) and Regency One and Two combined (190). Hilton Lake Taupo has seven meeting rooms with capacity from nine to 260 people, and Wairakei Resort Taupo 11 spaces in various combinations catering for up to 600, or 1,000 if utilising the South Lawn.

Two new venues are the Taupo International Motorsport Park and Mavericks Gastro Pub.

TAUPO INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT PARK

A change of ownership and what has been described as sweeping upgrades to the raceway means the Taupo International Motorsport Park can now offer its facilities to the business events and conference markets.

All eight corporate suites have been refurbished and a new on-site caterer is available to deliver smaller cocktail parties and a seated black-tie dinner for 60, or casual mix-and-mingle affairs for a larger crowd. The suites can be configured to accommodate small meetings or lecture-style seating for 100 people.

Sales and functions manager, Anna McDonald says the park ticks every essential box for event organisers – oodles of parking, an on-site café, wheelchair access, bar facilities and all audio-visual necessities.

The venue is also continuing to build and tailor unique options for the conference market, including driver training packages and the opportunity to join a crowd of thousands for a live motor racing experience.

MAVERICKS GASTRO PUB

Within walking distance of the airport, Mavericks Gastro Pub has a ground floor restaurant and bar and an upstairs



Taupo International Motorsport Park

conference venue for up to 120 delegates.

Owner/developer Jamie Keehan has based the concept on the American eateries he visited while living in the USA. There's a floor-to-ceiling rock fireplace façade, big neon lights, booth seating, leather armchairs, and wood and stainless-steel trim. Hanging above it all is a replica WWII US Navy spotter plane, that was flown down from Tauranga before being decommissioned and suspended in the venue.

Sales and marketing manager, Louisa Redward says the Mavericks is exactly what conference organisers are looking for, a statement she can back up by the number of bookings the venue was taking before it even opened.

Complete with kitchen and bar, the multi-purpose conference space is big enough for a gala dinner but can also be configured with break-out rooms. AV is included. The entire complex is bookable, including a casual restaurant in the Drop Zone entertainment area offering pizzas, burgers and fried chicken. The Mavericks kitchen can cater for anything from simple morning and afternoon teas to elaborate a la carte or buffet lunches and dinners, as well as canapes or a dessert bar.

NEW CRUISING OPTION

Taupo Sailing Adventures has added the 53-foot catamaran, Tiua, to its offering.

The vessel has a spacious saloon that can accommodate 35 passengers should the weather close in. Bean bags are available on the deck to lounge on and blankets are provided if the weather gets a little nippy.

Tiua is sail-powered and therefore sustainable. There are several itineraries to choose from including a full day Hidden Wonders tour to the Western Bays which takes in Ngatoroirangi Mine Bay Māori rock carvings, considered one of New Zealand's most extraordinary contemporary Māori artworks.

BIKES, BREWERY, BURGERS, BEER

FourB Bike Tours offers a team builder to please just about everyone. It begins with cycling a section of the Great Lake Trail, then up to Codger's Rock for superb views over the lake. At the end of the trail, riders are transferred to the Lakeman craft brewery for a look behind the scenes of the whole operation before being driven into town to the Lakeman's craft bar – Jimmy Coops - on the waterfront. There participants relax with a tasting paddle accompanied by burgers and snacks.



Hilton Lake Taupo

PHOTOS BY SMOKE PHOTOGRAPHY LTD



Welcome Function at Te Papa

MESSAGE FROM MEETINGS: BE SECTOR IS BACK

MEETINGS 2023 provided tangible proof that the post-Covid rebound for business events is well and truly underway. At the same time it introduced Wellington's Tākina to the market, consolidated and renewed industry connections, and helped set up the sector for a strong year ahead.



MEETINGS Celebration at TSB Shed 6

The positive mood was backed up by reports of tangible success. Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) chief executive René de Monchy pointed out that the organisation had exceeded targets for the year 2024 and is looking towards ambitious goals for FY2024.

“In 2023 we targeted 70 conference bids but we actually achieved 84. We had a target of 60% wins from those bids and the result was 63%.

“The goal for 2024 is set at more than 90 targeted bids – that would exceed 2019, when we made 89 bids.”

de Monchy says TNZ is developing a strategy around attracting more incentives to the country and is also keen to maximise the opportunities provided by New Zealand's three new conference centres –including the NZICC set to come on line in Auckland in 2025.

“Business events globally are in full recovery mode and have a big role to play for New Zealand.”



THE NUMBERS

MEETINGS, owned and managed by Business Events Industry Aotearoa, marked its 27th year in 2023 and was the first large B2B exhibition held at Tākina Wellington Convention and Exhibition Centre. It was the first time the event had been held in the capital and included a full programme of city famils for hosted buyers (as well as other pre and post activity around the country).

Tākina's location across the road from the National Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (where the MEETINGS opening function was held) meant that many delegates could easily walk to the event from their accommodation – one of a long list of sustainability attributes that was emphasised during the programme.

MEETINGS participants included 100 hosted and semi-hosted buyers from Australia, 134 hosted buyers from New Zealand and 10 from international markets including North America and Singapore. Day buyers from Wellington and beyond numbered 265.

REPORTS FROM THE FLOOR

While much of the focus was on Wellington and its new venue, visitors were also able to catch up with the latest news from Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre, which hosted MEETINGS in 2022.

Te Pae's general manager, Ross Steele, says the past year finished with 275 events in the venue, a number which looks like being met again this year.

"TRENZ was one of the highlights for us," says Steele. "That wasn't just for us as a conference centre, it also showed people the changes in Christchurch and what the city is able to deliver.

"The feedback we received was that the hurdles are over and Christchurch is on the home straight to being a vibrant world-class city."

First time exhibitor HOT Events also reported strong interest in Christchurch.

"The city has so much new product that it really helps to have an expert on the ground to pull everything together. Christchurch has got its Mojo back," say HOT Events' Vic Wales.

The Sudima Hotel Kaikoura, which opened in 2022, had a mission to raise the new hotel's profile at MEETINGS 2023.

"We had a great summer with leisure traffic in particular but we are also seeing an increase in business events, including incentives and residential conferences," says Leigh Higgins, director of sales – corporate.

"Our focus at the show has been to spread the message that we are now open for business."

Caroline Blanchfield, group marketing manager of GCH Aviation, placed emphasis on a new heli and jet boat combination on the Hurunui River – a partnership between Kaikoura Helicopters and Energy Jet.

"The opening of the Sudima has been a game changer for the area. It means groups can have their conferencing in Kaikoura and then experience something like the heli-jet boat."

Buyer Gordon Bayne, of Showponi, says MEETINGS is his favourite show on the industry events calendar.

"Everyone is hungry for business and they are open minded. We have a challenge with availability at the moment, so it is useful to get one-on-one with the exhibitors and talk about the business we can give them."

Bayne says he would like to see an area dedicated to venues that could offer something completely different to organisers – forest setting, historical buildings etc.

"This could include spaces that allow us to be really creative, even if it was just on a pop-up basis. It could be a boat shed, a tennis court or a carpark – anything that can be converted into something spectacular but may not traditionally be thought of as an event venue."

Jess Ogg, events leader NZ with Event Travel Management says she enjoyed her experience as a day buyer at MEETINGS.

"I like how suppliers are separated by region. Having the show over two levels was different but once you figured it out was fine."



RotoruaNZ Winners of Best Regional Stand

By Elaine Linnell

general manager
New Zealand Events
Association (NZEA)

As we dive into the heart of 2023, the New Zealand Events Association is thrilled to witness the nation come alive with the exhilarating FIFA tournament. It is great to see the passion and excitement displayed by fans across the country. We extend our best wishes to everyone in the industry who has a part to play in bringing this event to life, and may the tournament be an unforgettable experience for everyone involved.

Of course, our annual conference, Eventing the Future, is just around the corner. Set to take place on 22 and 23 August, the event promises to be a dynamic platform for event professionals to learn, network, and

exchange innovative ideas. We have curated a stellar lineup of speakers and workshops that will cover a wide spectrum of topics, aiming to inspire and equip attendees to face the ever-evolving challenges of our industry.

Mark your calendars for an exciting date, 7 August, when we will reveal the talented finalists of the NZEA NZ Event Awards! These remarkable individuals, events and suppliers have demonstrated excellence and creativity in their respective fields, pushing the boundaries of event management in New Zealand. The prestigious Gala Dinner celebrating the winners will be held at the splendid Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre, creating an atmosphere of celebration and recognition for the industry's finest.

At the New Zealand Events Association, we continuously strive to champion the interests of our members and the broader events industry. Our commitment to advocacy, means we are actively working on several crucial issues that impact our



community. Eventing the Future will provide us with an excellent platform to share these endeavours and collectively explore potential solutions for the betterment of our industry.

Looking forward to seeing you all at Eventing the Future.

Ngā mihi,
Elaine Linnell



REOPENING DATE FOR SOFITEL AUCKLAND VIADUCT HARBOUR

Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour will reopen on 1 September after an extensive refurbishment of the ground floor.

Library lounge

The makeover includes refreshed furnishings and décor, as well as new AV and technology in the four meeting and event spaces which cater for up to 130 seated.

La Maree remains Sofitel's signature restaurant with indoor and outdoor alfresco dining harbour side with a view.

Three new dining experiences include a Mediterranean-influenced restaurant and

French patisserie. A 1920's underground speak-easy lounge bar can be found in the moody basement of the hotel. Capturing the essence of murmuring voices and discreet gatherings, its plush decor and rich dark tones add a touch of intrigue and exclusivity to the experience.

The hotel also returns with a refurbished Club Millésime, Sofitel's club lounge



Superior king guest room

offering. The lounge access and privileges are included with the hotel's luxury rooms and suites. Alternatively, they can be purchased as an added benefit for individuals and groups. Club Millésime offers a relaxing lounge retreat that is ideal for exclusive breakfasts, afternoon tea, evening drinks and canapés.

Health and wellbeing facilities include a full-equipped gym, indoor heated lap-pool, sauna, and Sofitel Spa.

Located on the water's edge of the Waitemata Harbour and just a stone's through to both the Viaduct and Wynyard Quarter Precincts, Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour is celebrating its reopening with Special Day Delegate Packages from \$89 per person per day and special group accommodation rates.

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BIG CITY VIBE, SMALL TOWN WELCOME

Jane Warwick



It's easy to be swept away by the excitement of big city Melbourne and all it can offer when it comes to planning a conference or incentive. And with an easy four-hour flight from Auckland delegates can hit the ground running.

Geelong

But what if, at the cost of a mere extra 60 minutes, delegates could enjoy something altogether different? And what if those extra sixty minutes were seaborne, sitting on deck, glass of wine or icy beer in hand, watching the coastline drift by until the ferry reaches the seaside town of Geelong, nowhere near the size of Melbourne but with commensurate fun and activities?

Ashore there are laneways with five-star restaurants and snug and almost secret bars up darkened stairs, there's breweries and distilleries, over-the-water dining, galleries and shopping, world-class accommodation and event space. And just outside of town there is The Bellarine, hugging the sea and spreading down the Bellarine Peninsula, with vineyards, golf-courses, and more distilleries and superb restaurants.

Tamie Ryan, business events and international manager, Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine affirms that Geelong and The Bellarine is a must-include destination for any incentive programme.

"Our region offers a diverse range of experiences for groups of various sizes. Whether it be a small or large group, we can tailor the offering to suit your group's requirements," she says. "The proximity of Geelong and The Bellarine makes it the perfect choice for either a day adventure, two days or more. From country to coastline, Geelong and The Bellarine is a place where you can explore the best parts of Australia, all in one place. We are a city of natural delights, unexpected experiences and incredible food and wine. We are also a premier destination for delegates.

Our meetings and events offering is ever-changing and constantly providing a list of new reasons to host business events in the second largest city in Victoria."

New venues, extra space

Geelong's accommodation and conference space is about to be increased exponentially, with several projects completing this year.

"Geelong and The Bellarine is the fastest growing region in Australia for more than one reason," says Tamie Ryan. "We are welcoming over 4.3 million visitors each year, and we place a high priority on ensuring our region is accessible to all.

"There are also an abundance of new experiences to add to your group itinerary, including and available exclusively within our region, Portarlington Mussel Tours

EXPLORE COUNTRY TO COASTLINE

and Executive Chef Masterclass Lunch experience @ Tarra Queenscliff, both of which launched this year.”

The art of good function space

The current transformation of the Geelong Arts Centre will make it the largest regional arts centre in the country. It will feature multiple venues/spaces, three world-class theatres with the capacity to seat 1,400, an outdoor atrium and dining/function options ‘aplenty’. A dedicated team is available to work collaboratively with conference and event organisers from start to finish to create what the centre says will be ‘an inspired, unrivalled event that will dazzle your guests and be the talk of the town long after it has ended’.

Holiday Inn & Suites Geelong new-build

Holiday Inn & Suites Geelong is due to open on 1 September this year and will bring an additional 180 contemporary, spacious rooms and suites to the region.

The property will include 23 suites, an all-day restaurant and bar, swimming pool and fitness centre. Three meeting rooms will cater for boardroom-style meetings or up to 100 people in a theatre-style when combined. There is unlimited wifi, AV facilities and event planning services.

Stadium extension

A 300-seat banquet/conference facility and fully equipped media centre is being added to GMBHA Stadium, home of the Geelong Cats AFL team. The extension will boost the already existing conference and event spaces which combined can accommodate up to 2,450 delegates. The stadium is just one kilometre from the city centre.

Multi million dollar investment on Geelong waterfront

The developers of a conference facility with a 650-seat auditorium, on-site with a 168-room luxury hotel, promise that the Cunningham Place new-build will bring an inclusive and vibrant feel to the Geelong waterfront.

The A\$250m tower is due to open in 2026 and Amber Property Group co-director, Jevan Clay says it is envisaged that Cunningham Place will be a world class business hub by day, transforming to a world-class leisure destination in the evening.

The development will also include bars and restaurants, a supermarket, co-working spaces and a medical centre.



GCEC Proposed design

Exhibition and convention centre on track

The much-awaited Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre will feature a 1,000-seat plenary and 3,700sqm of multi-purpose space to accommodate small and large events, the waterfront precinct will also include a 200-room upscale hotel. The addition of the Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre will enhance Geelong’s position as a premier city and an events leader in Victoria by enabling more international events, exhibitors and attendees. The venue will be run by Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Trust (MCET) and is due to open in 2026.

Stepping out the back door

Geelong’s other great drawcard is its back yard. The Bellarine includes long

beaches, surfing and other water activities, vineyards, distilleries, restaurants, markets, a cider house and golf courses.

On the tip of The Bellarine Peninsula is the historic township of Portarlington. Almost centre piece is the Portarlington Grand Hotel which has undergone an A\$10m refurbishment.

The renovation included adding 18 boutique rooms and upgrading dining spaces. The Atrium (seating 120) is over three tiered levels with a covered open-air space, outdoor kitchen, wood-fired pizza and bar and in winter offers heaters and a fire. The Bistro (140) is a mixture of booths and low tables for seated functions and home to the hotel’s signature seafood risotto. The Front Bar (60) is an intimate cocktail space and The Lawn (100) offers picnic tables and colourful umbrellas.



The Grand Hotel



Curlewis Golf Club and Event Venue



Larger incentive group experiencing Mussel Tour

Almost better than a hole in one

Curlewis Golf Club on The Bellarine Peninsula is a bona fide golf course, but it is also a destination with accommodation, restaurants, and meeting space. The Club opened new eco-accommodation earlier this year that sleeps up to 126 people in 60 rooms including two accessible and six Eagle Suites offering more space. The rooms are described as luxe and contemporary, and each has a private balcony, custom robes, ‘divine bedding’ and ‘guarantees every creature comfort is catered for’. Part of the club’s fresh look includes signature French restaurant, Claribeaux offering contemporary fusion based on sustainable local produce. There are four event venue options – Clubhouse, Ivor’s Spike Bar, Claribeaux and The Range @ Curlewis. For an event with a difference the club also offers a fully private closed-course event from approximately 80 people up to a field of 120.

Jack Rabbit Restaurant & House of Jack Rabbit

The Jack Rabbit Vineyard Restaurant has gained a reputation as a gastronomic

showpiece of The Bellarine. The stunning a la carte menu showcases fresh, local produce - fabulous, approachable food – including the famous Mussels, where groups can enjoy a Mussel Masterclass and two course lunch, hosted by executive chef Dwayne Bourke. The venue can host up to 200 for private events.

Muscle in on fine seafood

Sixty per cent of Australia’s mussels are harvested from the cool depths of Port Phillip Bay off Portarlington. For a conference event with a difference, a luxury small group tour (maximum 12 people) is available from Portarlington Mussel Tours, which includes a cooking demonstration as well as mussel tasting. If seafood or mussels is not to the taste for everyone, other locally curated Bellarine produce is also offered as well as local wine, beer, cider, and spirits.

The tour is aboard an especially refurbished mussel trawler run by Lance and Lizzie Wiffen, who have been in the mussel farming business for over 30 years. Portarlington Mussel Tours and Port Phillip Ferries have together created a premium

incentive experience for larger groups that can board Port Phillip ferries and experience a mussel farming demonstration out in the bay by anchoring next to Portarlington Tours vessel – Valerie.

Meetings with an ocean view

Searoad Ferries plies the gap between Sorrento at the bottom of Port Phillip Bay and Queenscliff at the top of The Bellarine Peninsula. The company has recently completed a \$A415.9m internal fit-out of its Queenscliff Ferry Terminal which now includes room for events. The building, called Tarra, can cater up to 1,000 delegates and offers a café and restaurant with spectacular views of Port Phillip Bay and Port Phillip Heads. Searoad Ferries also offers event space on board its vessels with the ability to cater for up to 300.

Suggested Itineraries for business events and incentive travel can be found on the Business Events Geelong website: www.tourismgeelongbellarine.com.au/community/trade-itineraries/



Jack Rabbit Business Events Incentive



Port Lonsdale

MEET
Geelong



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For all of you



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For the Cultural Craver



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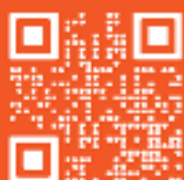


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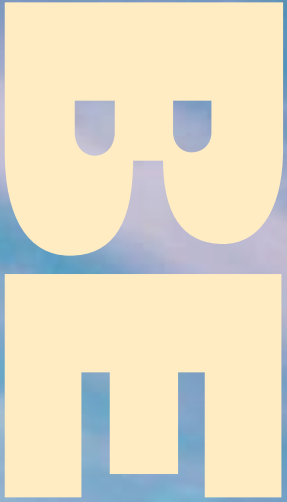
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QUEEN'S WHARF PRECINCT

Brisbane's new integrated resort precinct Queen's Wharf will add a new dimension to Queensland's thriving capital city. Set to open from 2024, Queen's Wharf Brisbane covers more than 12 hectares of river frontage in the heart of the city.

The \$3.6 billion dollar development will be home to four luxury hotels offering 1,000 additional rooms; Brisbane's largest hotel ballroom, an open-air rooftop Sky Deck 100m in the air with event spaces, a range of unique outdoor activation areas; more than 50 new bars and restaurants and a new pedestrian bridge connecting directly across to the South Bank cultural precinct and the award-winning Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.



This makes it easy for delegates to walk from their accommodation to the acclaimed Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre and other world-class event spaces around the city, as well as the cultural hub of South Bank, the famed live entertainment precinct of Fortitude Valley, and the sophisticated culinary fare of Howard Smith Wharves and West End.



VIBRANT AND CONNECTED PRECINCTS

Queen's Wharf adds even more variety to a city that is already filled with bustling precincts. The city centre is seamlessly connected to the vibrant entertainment and dining precincts nestled along the river via parklands, walking tracks and pedestrian bridges, and is located just 20 minutes from Brisbane Airport, offering ease of access both domestically and internationally.



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With clear blue skies and a warm and welcoming subtropical climate all year round, Brisbane enjoys an active outdoor lifestyle that showcases the best of what Australia has to offer. From award-winning alfresco dining and rooftop bars to World Heritage rainforests and world-famous islands on the city's doorstep, Brisbane offers a memorable and unparalleled delegate experience.

For more information or to contact the Brisbane Business Events team head to choose.brisbane.qld.au

ONCE IN A LIFETIME

INCENTIVE TRIP THROUGH THE HEART OF AUSTRALIA

By Terry Holt

Dinner on the Lawn at Mindil Beach Resort Darwin



A group of business event planners from New Zealand had the adventure of a lifetime recently. They joined hosts from Northern Territory Business Events (NTBE), Journey Beyond and Tourism Australia to experience first-hand the vastness and magic of outback South Australia and Northern Territory from onboard the comfort of The Ghan.

Partnering with Tourism Australia on this family afforded NT Business Events a valuable opportunity to raise awareness and increase consideration of the territory to New Zealand incentive planners.

“The option to showcase entry into and travel within the destination by rail, aboard The Ghan, made for a unique and distinctive family experience,” says Vanessa Johnson, marketing executive at NTBE.

“Australia’s Northern Territory is different in every sense for business events. It offers authentic and meaningful experiences where delegates can immerse into our iconic landscapes, engage with our 65,000-year-old culture, and be inspired by our pristine and natural environment.

“We look forward to welcoming the New Zealand planners and their clients back to the NT to experience our competitive offering.”

All aboard

A relaxing afternoon at Hotel Indigo and an evening of fine food and beverage at the nearby Aurora Restaurant at Light Adelaide was a great start to the almost 3,000km trip through the heart of Australia to Darwin on board one of the world’s greatest train journeys. There was clear excitement and anticipation of what to expect as the group travelled the short distance from Adelaide CBD to Parklands Station for check-in and welcome briefing before being escorted on board to their cabins, home for the next two nights.

Sunrise at Marla

At just before dawn, in the middle of outback Australia, around 1,000km into the journey, guests were woken in time to alight for sunrise. Fires were lit, hot tea and coffee and bacon baps were served as cameras were recording the magic of the central Australian sunrise, before heading back on board for the trip through to Alice Springs.

Alice Springs, The Macdonnell Ranges, and the spy base at Pine Gap

Mid-afternoon The Ghan arrived at Alice Springs for off-train experiences, including the opportunity to see Alice from the air by helicopter, fly over the Macdonnell Ranges



The Sunrise at Marla



Helicopter from Crowne Plaza Alice Springs



The Group and the Ghan

and get a glimpse of the not-so-secret Pine Gap Australian/US facility – the topic of a recent series on Netflix. On return from the skies, the group enjoyed lunch and tried their hand at finger painting, Aboriginal style under the guidance of local indigenous painters.

Back on board and with time to reflect on a wonderful day, the group enjoyed pre dinner drinks in the Outback Explorer Lounge, before heading for dinner in Queen Adelaide Restaurant. The final overnight journey took them to Katherine where they explored Nitmiluk Gorge by boat.



Cyaround Australia Tours, Mark and Jack

Darwin – the capital of NT

Darwin is the capital of Australia's Northern Territory and a former frontier outpost. It is also the gateway to the huge Kakadu and Litchfield National Parks. Its popular waterfront area has several beaches, parks, museums, and attractions. Darwin's harbour is dotted with sunken ships from World War II, Cyclone Tracy and confiscated Indonesian fishing vessels and is surrounded by scenic mangroves and pristine tidal waters, meeting at Darwin's cosmopolitan foreshore.

The harbour offers a range of recreational activities, supports a diverse range of marine ecosystems, has significant cultural heritage and is a vital transport hub for northern Australia.

Mindil Beach

On arrival into Darwin, the group transferred to the impressive Mindil Beach Casino Resort, set right on the waters of Fannie Bay and just a few kilometres from Darwin CBD.

A welcome to country ceremony was followed by cocktails and canapes, to watch the sunset whilst enjoying a taste of local entertainment and magnificent Mindil Beach hospitality on the lawn, by the beach and under the stars.

The resort celebrated its 40th birthday earlier this year and provides 152 accommodation rooms, a day spa, four restaurants and event facilities for 400 undercover or 700 on the lawn. The property hosts onsite conference and incentive groups and works closely with the Darwin Convention Centre, providing an ideal option for gala dinners.

A trip to remember

Nicolette Brown of Fortis Events says that travelling on The Ghan was incredibly special.

“The experience begins right from check-in, with live music and bubbles in the departure lounge, and on board the staff all contribute to making the passenger experience exceptional. The trip offers a unique opportunity to disconnect from every day and experience the vast beauty of Australia's outback landscape while

journeying in style and comfort, connecting with fellow travellers and locals alike.”

Brown's feedback was echoed by her fellow travellers.

“Adelaide to Darwin via The Ghan is a bucket list experience ideal for a small group who are ready for an adventure whilst not compromising on great food, wine and comfort,” says Jackie Coyne of S2N.

An incentive programme to remember is how Jenny Walsh of Motive Events describes the trip.

“What an action-packed adventure ticking off some bucket list experiences. As always, Australia exceeded my expectations. The rugged landscape and engaging history of the central country, the hidden gems of the Top End and, more importantly, the local hospitality we received and the people we met made the trip.”

The Ghan famill visited South Australia & Northern Territory and included the following participants and key hosts.

Event planners:

- Adair Cameron, Red Hot Events
- Winne Fong, C&I Travel Specialists
- Jess Ogg, Event Travel Management NZ
- Jackie Coyne, S2N Events
- Nicolette Brown, Fortis Events
- Jen Walsh, Motive Events

Hosts:

- Emily Elkington, BE Australia
- Karla Clancy, Northern Territory BE
- Joanna Gruenberg, Journey Beyond



Lunch on board in the Queen Adelaide Restaurant



Cruising the Nitmiluk Gorge



INSPIRATION AND EDUCATION IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

Snorkelling at Great Barrier Reef

Some of Australia's best was served to a group of Kiwi business events planners recently when they were hosted to Cairns and Port Douglas by Business Events Australia and Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef. Immersive experiences in the world's oldest rainforest and largest coral reef system were topped off with luxury accommodation and cuisine to match.

The group's first taste of the region set the scene for the next few days. After a mid-morning arrival into Cairns and a 30-minute drive north to Palm Cove, the group was hosted for lunch at Nu Nu Restaurant. The beachfront restaurant specialises modern

Australian cuisine using delicious local ingredients and flavours. Nu Nu can also design custom menus for corporate events.

The group then set off north to Silky Oaks Lodge, part of the Baillie Lodges portfolio, set among the tree tops of the World

Heritage-listed Daintree Rainforest and home for the next two nights.

The luxury lodge is ideal for conference and incentive groups, featuring several event spaces both inside and outdoors, set against a spectacular rainforest backdrop.

The rest of the afternoon was spent 'river drifting' with Back Country River Bliss Drifting. Just five minutes' drive from Silky Oaks Lodge, the eco-immersive adventure had the Kiwis drifting on their own sleds as they navigated down a rainforest river with crystal clear water. It was snorkelling, floating and a rainforest walk all in one with knowledgeable guides talking about the natural environment and animals.

A luxurious three-course dinner with matching wines at Silky Oaks' Treehouse Restaurant wrapped up an impressive day.

Joelle Talbot from Fortis Events found the



The famil group at Silky Oaks Lodge Left to right: Kylie Brand, Tourism Tropical North Queensland; Alison Burn, Baillie Lodges; Amelia Lowe, ETM; Clair Wilson, C&I Specialists; Liz Maxwell, ESP Ventures; Malcom Jordan, Total Event; Philippa Beams, Williment; Joelle Talbot, Fortis Events; Emily Elkington, Tourism Australia; Simon Coxhead, Motive Events

first day a real highlight of the trip.

“Lunch at Nu Nu Restaurant in Palm Cove was spectacular,” she says. “They showcased local produce and were passionate about the experience they are creating. It was a great first taste of the region. Our stay at Silky Oaks was also a highlight. The lodge is a great option for a buy-out and offers a relaxed luxury experience that would appeal to Kiwis.”

On the reef

A Quicksilver Great Barrier Reef tour started the second day for the group with “an experience of a lifetime” at Agincourt Reef on the outer edge of the Great Barrier Reef. Here, special reefs known as ‘ribbons’ run parallel to the Continental Shelf. There’s plenty of choice of activities from the reef platform – members of the group could dive, snorkel or stay dry and explore the reef in a semi-sub just one metre underwater.

After lunch onboard, the group enjoyed a spectacular perspective of the reef from high above, courtesy of a specially arranged helicopter flight back to the lodge.

The day on the reef was a real highlight for Amelia Lowe, event manager at Event Travel Management (ETM).

“Diving at the Great Barrier Reef and seeing the beauty below the surface, then helicoptering over the top of the reef and seeing the vastness and larger beauty of the reef from above is something I will never forget,” says Lowe.

The Kiwis were back on the water that evening for a sunset sail off the coast of Port Douglas on board Sailaway’s first class sailing catamaran. Drinks and canapes were accompanied by a tranquil tropical sunset.

Day three saw the group bid farewell to Silky Oaks Lodge and head to Mossman Gorge Cultural Centre for a Dreamtime Walk to start the day.

The walks are conducted by the local indigenous people who share Ngadiku (Nardi-gul), which means stories and legends from a long time ago in local Kuku Yalanji language. A traditional smoking ceremony to cleanse and ward off bad spirits was held before the group strolled through rainforest as the guide explained traditional plant use, identified bush food sources and provided a narrative of the rainforest and the local people’s special relationship with this environment.

The group headed south back to Cairns for lunch at Hemingway’s Brewery, an independent craft brewery and a heritage-listed venue located at the cruise terminal. The venue can cater for exclusive meetings of 20 and up to 1,000 guests for a cocktail-style occasion. Some gin tasting at Three Wolves



Lunch at Nu Nu Restaurant, Palm Cove

followed. Located in the heart of Cairns CBD, Three Wolves offers patrons a premium restaurant and bar experience.

A short walk down the street was the accommodation for the final night of the famil, Crystalbrook Riley. Part of the Crystalbrook collection and located on Cairns Esplanade, the luxury panoramic sea view rooms in the tower were the perfect place to unwind before a tour of the hotel and event spaces.

Pre-dinner drinks at Whiskey and Wine at Crystalbrook Flynn were an opportunity to sample award winning cocktails before dinner in a private dining room at Salt House, located at Marina Point. And then it was just a short walk along the waterfront to the hotel.

Conference with a conscience

“Cairns is a true ten-minute city,” explains Kylie Brand, business development manager with Tourism Tropical North Queensland. “The international airport is a short 10-minute drive to the CBD, and business events accommodation, conference facilities,

restaurants and events spaces are all within easy walking distance, getting delegates out into our beautiful environment.”

“The village of Port Douglas is a spectacular, one-hour coastal drive from Cairns and offers bespoke high-end incentive delegates incredible, off-site event venues and immersive touring experiences.

“Our region takes pride in making it easy for event planners to deliver exceptional business events. And our point of difference is our natural environment, where events can conference with a conscience in the most eco-certified destination in Australia,” Brand adds.

Joelle Talbot says it was great to meet a range of suppliers with different offerings for both incentive and conference groups.

“The region offers so many great options for groups, from a day trip to the Great Barrier Reef, a visit to the rainforest, river drifting, five-star hotels and amazing dining experiences,” she says. “The appeal of Cairns/Port Douglas to groups is its tropical climate providing the perfect destination for Kiwis to escape to during our winter.”



Final night dinner at Salt House, Cairns

A Rocking Success!

Kia ora. I think I have finally run out of superlatives to describe MEETINGS 2023. It was a rocking success. For many, business was brought to the table and finalised. For others, buyers had some ideas and were looking for the right partner to fulfil their vision, with a view to getting in touch later.

While for most just reconnecting with their customer was the most important objective. We observed stands still full of people at the end of the show, sometimes with a wine in their hands, most times just engaging with someone new.

MEETINGS yet again proved itself to be the ultimate event for the business events sector. The team are currently collating the results from the survey and we will be sharing those once we have them. Feedback has been strong and positive, so we hope we got most things right.

Chris and the team have embarked on a five-year strategy to find ways to improve MEETINGS and it is important we are in lockstep globally, especially with the advent of technology. There is always a need to seek new and improved ways of doing things, without diluting the basics. Some of these changes may be operational, and others may relate to supporting sustainability goals. The overall objective is to ensure the experience of buyers is constantly exceeded and that doing business in New Zealand is straightforward and simple.

Easy to do business with

At the recent Australia New Zealand Leadership Forum in Wellington which BEIA chair, Steve Armitage and I attended, we were reminded that in this new age where we have an opportunity to 'build back better', competition has never been more fierce. As a destination so geographically disadvantaged, how do we remind the world that New Zealand is ready to welcome visitors back?

The conclusion is simple. We must be the easiest country to access, to do business with, to enter, to negotiate, to contract with.

This is why it is so important relationships with officials at government departments

are maintained. For those of you who met McLeish Martin from Immigration New Zealand (INZ) at MEETINGS, he is someone who is ensuring he truly understands our sector and its nuances. The relationship we have with INZ is positive as we are both learning from each other, quickly providing support or clarity for those tough immigration matters.

Rotorua, the birthplace of tourism

It was a real honour to announce Rotorua as the next location for MEETINGS, and the entire team have been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm from the sector. We know that the Tourism Export Council of New Zealand (TECNZ) will be hosting their conference in the city this year, which I am sure was a major coup.

Now with MEETINGS, we are highlighting not only a region, but a region with immense pride and history in welcoming visitors. Its been a long time since MEETINGS was in a region, and that city was Rotorua in 2011, when Christchurch was due to be host.

Since then, the city which already had amazing assets, has taken giant strides forward with new venues and infrastructure, new tourism propositions and a real thirst to be front and centre of the BE industry.

Therapeutic Products Bill

Why is this bill important to the business events industry? That same question was asked when I appeared before the select committee on this issue. What do medicines and their distribution have to do with us?

Very simply, it determines whether a medical conference of international standing with an attached trade show will proceed.

Under the old Medicines Act, which this bill will supersede, a pharmaceutical company is unable to promote or present any medicinal product in a t-trade environment to a medical professional if it has not been approved by Medsafe, as it is deemed to be "advertising". We wanted to ensure that the language in the new bill was changed to ensure this practice was allowed, to an audience of medical practitioners.

We believe we have been successful and are now awaiting clarity from the Ministry

By Lisa Hopkins

chief executive
Business Events Industry
Aotearoa (BEIA)



of Health. This is all part of being able to be the easiest country to do business.

FIFA

What a way to kick off this exciting event with the Football Ferns beating the heavily rated Norwegians 1-0 at the opening game of the World Cup. I sincerely hope this has sparked the enthusiasm this event so richly deserves.

It is worrying when you see tickets given away to an event which boasts some of the most formidable female athletes in the world – an event for a sport which is played in more countries than New Zealand. An event of this calibre deserves more and my fear is that this apathy may stop others heading our way.

Events like this are more than just dollars in the pocket. They offer spending across a broad sector. They give fans exposure to their heroes. They allow little girls to dream that they too can become international stars in a sport they love. They remind us that there is pride and passion when cheering for anyone who wears the Silver Fern on their chest.

To all those involved in the hosting, holding, match day, and play aways — good luck and be proud of what you have achieved. Win, lose or draw, our girls are giving us much to celebrate!

*Nga mihi nui,
Lisa Hopkins*



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ALL ABOUT CONNECTIONS ~ COAST GROUP'S PEOPLE TO FORE AT MEETINGS

Stand designs by Coast Group



Having exhibited at MEETINGS for nearly 30 years, Exhibition Hire Services and other Coast Group brands regard this year's edition in Wellington as heralding a bold new era for New Zealand's business events industry.

"This year's MEETINGS was particularly successful and really showed that we have moved on as an industry from the challenges experienced a couple of years ago," says Dane Botherway, national manager at Exhibition Hire Services (Coast Group).

"It has been excellent to have the second of the new convention centres, Tākina, showcased as a venue following on from Te Pae in Christchurch the year before."

He says MEETINGS has always seen a

collaborative effort from the sector and that was well and truly evidenced this year.

"Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA), the venues, bureaux, regions, suppliers, accommodation and service providers all put so much effort in this year and it obviously paid off when it came to doing business on the floor."

He says the company exhibited for the first time under the Coast Group banner, part of an education process to present

all the different services and divisions on offer. These include Exhibition Hire Services, Displayworks, Show Light and Power, Generator Rental Services and Carlton Events.

"We had team members at MEETINGS from all over the country, with about eight people exhibiting over the two days but another 50 being involved in the preparation and the build. So there were a lot of touch points across our portfolio."

Botherway says that the annual MEETINGS expo fits in well with the philosophy of the Coast Group.

"It has always been about people for us, making and retaining connections as well as being product and service conscious. That's why we enjoy being involved in MEETINGS so much – nothing beats a face to face conversation."

The Coast Group team moved straight into the New Zealand Veterinary Association Conference at Tākina straight after MEETINGS. Botherway points out that other major events in the last couple of months included TRENZ in Christchurch, National Fieldays in Hamilton, plus Mega Expo and Fine Food New Zealand, both in Auckland. This was in addition to a number of smaller events.

The next major focus is the FIFA Women's World Cup being co-hosted (with Australia) all around New Zealand.

"One of our projects has been building a double skin inflatable roof marquee, used by one of the teams as a training facility. We're also involved in various activations for the players, family and friends and corporate hosting around the football."





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