



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news.

ICC in person

ICC SYDNEY has welcomed its first full in-person conference to take place since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The venue hosted more than 125 health professionals who attended workshops and courses from medical education provider HealthCert Education.

The 19-20 Sep conference was delivered in line with the venue's EventSafe Operating Framework.

NSW EVENTS DOUBLE IN SIZE

THE NSW State Government has responded quickly to plummeting COVID-19 community transmission rates, allowing corporate events to host up to 300 attendees from this week - double the previous limit of 150.

The move was approved by the Premier's Major Events Taskforce, which also allowed increased capacity for NSW entertainment facilities including theatres, cinemas and concert halls.

All corporate event venues must continue to adhere to public health requirements, have COVID-Safe plans in place and adhere to the limit of one person per four square metres.

Entertainment facilities in the state are now able to sell tickets for seated events at 50% of capacity, up to a maximum of 1,000 tickets per session.

The move was welcomed

by Tourism Accommodation Australia CEO Michael Johnson, said the ability to have up to 300 people at functions was a boost for larger hotels which have the required capacity.

"We have been pushing hard for this for some time as it provides certainty to companies and organisations looking to book for late this year or early 2021, and lets bigger hotels get some events back on their books," he said.

"This is especially good news in the lead up to Christmas, and accommodation providers are hopeful many events previously on hold will now get the green light," Johnson added.

NSW Minister for Jobs, Investment, and Tourism, Stuart Ayres, said getting more people into entertainment venues and function centres was "key to re-starting the NSW visitor economy".

HK subsidies

THE Hong Kong Government has announced that a US\$130 million subsidy scheme to reinvigorate the city's convention and exhibition industry will formally launch on 03 Oct.

Originally set to debut in July, the program was postponed after the third wave of the pandemic in Hong Kong.

The subsidy scheme covers 100% of the venue rental cost for organisers of exhibitions and international conventions held at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre and AsiaWorld-Expo.

Meeting space?



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SPECIAL PACKAGES AVAILABLE

business events news

Community platform

INDUSTRY stalwart Julie King has today unveiled Bonailie, described as a "tourism industry community platform to allow global industry collaboration".

King said the initiative was a global platform that will deliver weekly engagement and collaboration through webinars, panels and the ability to connect with global sector peers.

It will also produce monthly intelligence with market snapshots and insights, and house "the world's largest engaged global directory" of leaders right across the travel, tourism and hospitality supply chain.

Bonailie will go live from late Nov, with monthly and annual subscriptions available- see bonailie.world.

Doltone hybrid

DOLTONE House Venues in Sydney has released details of its new post-COVID offering, including Virtual and Hybrid Events delivering experiences to attendees and stakeholders from their homes or offices.

More than just an online experience, Doltone's full service includes delivery of prepared meals and "virtual activation boxes" to attendees, with activities including virtually hosted pizza making, gin tasting, cocktail making, a wine and cheese masterclass & more.

Sessions can be delivered via an on-site studio and recording space, and all meals are shipped with sustainable packaging.

More information at doltonehouse.com.au.

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EVENTS in the age of COVID-19 are understandably smaller than during pre-pandemic times, but one of the exhibitors at Milan Fashion week has taken it a step further by conducting a truly scaled down experience.

The newest styles from Moschino were shown off by puppets, with model lookalikes of famous attendees also watching on approvingly.

The shrunk down show was the brainchild of the label's creative director Jeremy Scott (pictured), who enlisted the help of puppeteer Jim Henson's Creature Shop to present the miniature show.

"Not only did all the clothes have to be scaled down, and all the accessories scaled down to the size of the marionettes, but the whole audience had to be not only created but dressed, too," he told *CNN Style*.

And while creating the new type of event was an interesting project, Scott said he was keen to work with real models again - while assuring fans that the clothes would definitely be available in human sizes.



CWT Events chief

A REORGANISATION of CWT has seen the corporate travel giant's CWT Meetings & Events business now headed up by Chris Bowen, who was previously the company's Managing Director for Europe, Middle East & Europe.

CWT Meetings & Events is part of the newly created Traveler Experience & Customer business unit, with Bowen reporting into the division's President, Niklas Andreen.

Virtual Te Pae

CHRISTCHURCH'S Te Pae Convention Centre has opened its virtual doors by partnering with local XR (extended reality) technology company JIX Reality to launch a virtual tour of the centre.

"Guests" can visit the full array of spaces available which include a 1,400 seat auditorium, a 1,000 seat banquet space and 2800sqm of exhibition halls.

See tepae.co.nz/gallery.

CENTREPIECE role

CENTREPIECE at Melbourne Park has appointed Laura Reddaway as its new Conference & Events Sales Manager.

Reddaway's career has included roles with AIME and ICMSA, and in her new position she will showcase the highly anticipated venue in the heart of the city's sports and entertainment precinct in the lead-up to its official opening next year.

Confessions of a compulsive conference-goer

Andrew Klein, professional MC and presentation skills speaker and director of SPIKE Presentations, presents his front line observations on conferences in a regular feature in *BEN*.

Chat is where it's at

LIKE most of us, in the past seven or so months I have participated in a myriad of virtual conferences and events (both in front of the camera and as a viewer) and the learning curve has been steep. It seems that we are all experimenting, refining, re-imagining and making mistakes as we go - constantly discovering the limitations and advantages of the medium.

Presenters are all acutely aware of the downsides of not being able to see their virtual audience - and the reality that audiences can easily be distracted, it's just a finger-click away from your live-stream to their email or Insta feed.

But...if the content is relevant and the speaker is engaging AND you give the audience a non-intimidating opportunity to become involved, they will respond.

The easiest way to do that? The Chat Line. The chat is where it is at. Ask and they shall answer. It is easy, quick, not intimidating, involves no tech know-how and draws the audience in, allowing them to be a part of a wider conversation. A 2020 audience, that in my experience is busting in times of isolation, to feel part of a community. Your teams, membership, clients - they are mostly isolated, at home, desperate to

connect, even the introverts. And connect they will, if you let them.

Sure, there are many other more sophisticated, more fun or creative ways to keep your virtual audience engaged, but the most effective way is to ask your online audience, all of whom are a cm away from their keyboard, a simple question, their thoughts on an issue, a simple "Yes or No" question, thumbs up or down, one word to describe your thoughts on an issue, or a "on a scale of 1 - 10, what are your thoughts on..." style question.

In a recent virtual conference, we simply asked the audience "what are your Netflix / Streaming recommendations" and the Chat Line went virtually (pun intended) into meltdown. We got 100's of replies instantly. The online community connected. "Schitts Creek" seemed to be the most popular response by the way!

As an online presenter it's easy to forget you have an audience because, small Zoom calls aside, you can't see them. But you can "read" your audience any time and respond to their response. Just ask them to type a word or two and your online engagement will increase.

Any thoughts - I'm here to "chat" any time, I'm just a keyboard stroke away - andrew@lunch.com.au

Andrew Klein is 'Virtually an MC' and runs webinars on 'How to Pitch & Present in an Online Environment'. www.andrewklein.com.au

