



## Today's issue of BEN

*Business Events News* today has two pages of news.

## NZ reef win

**TOURISM** New Zealand has confirmed a successful bid for the International Coral Reef Society's Symposium, which will be held in Auckland's NZ International Convention Centre in 2025.

The Auckland Convention Bureau worked alongside the University of Auckland, Victoria University of Wellington and the Wildlife Conservation Society's office in Fiji to secure the event.

Around 2,500 experts are expected to attend the Symposium which is forecast to inject NZ\$6m into the New Zealand economy.

Tourism NZ Global Manager Business Events, Lisa Gardiner, said "we are proud to be working in partnership with the Pacific, an area that due to its remoteness is often forgotten, despite the fact that its reefs are under considerable threat".

Other recent conference wins for NZ include the International Association of Women in Police Conference which will be held in Auckland in 2023.

Gardiner said having events like this in the pipeline was key to help the industry keep staff employed and ensure high value visitors continue coming to New Zealand.

## GRANT APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

**MORE** than 700 expression of interest applications have been lodged for the Schedule of Approved Events under the Government's Business Events Grants Program (**BEN** 15 Sep), with applications now open for organisations seeking funding to take part in the scheme.

The program allocates \$50 million to support the industry, funding Australian businesses to participate as buyers or sellers at pre-approved business events including exhibitions, conferences and conventions from 01 Jan to 31 Dec 2021.

Funding of \$10,000 to \$250,000 is available, with full guidelines now available at [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au).

Expressions of interest to have events included in the official Schedule remain open until 26 Feb, but may be closed earlier to manage demand or if all program funds are committed.

An initial Schedule of

Approved Events is now live on the Austrade website at [austrade.gov.au](http://austrade.gov.au), and currently lists an already approved cohort of 99 conferences, exhibitions and trade shows across 2021.

Austrade is assessing applications for additional events, prioritising those which are scheduled for early this year so event owners are not disadvantaged.

Advice is being provided on the program and applications from an Industry Advisory Panel comprised of Tourism Australia Executive GM Events, Penny Lion; Leo Jago, Director of Tourism and Business Events International; and former Destination NSW and Melbourne Convention Bureau CEO Sandra Chipchase as Chair.

Funding applications can cover up to 50% of eligible project expenditure, including hire of exhibition space, delegate attendance, sponsorship (up

to a maximum of \$10,000), event and display set-up costs, catering for networking activities, promotional material and domestic travel.

If events are cancelled due to COVID-19 then the non-refundable costs allocated will be entirely met by the Australian Government up to the value of the grant provided.

A comprehensive application guide along with examples of supporting documentation are now on the website.

The program aims to support events aligned with one or more of the Government's designated "priority sectors" which include mining, food and agribusiness, medical products, clean energy, oil & gas, recycling, defence, space, design, fashion, media, enabling digital technologies and tourism.

The Business Events Grants Program will close on 30 Mar - more info on 1800 048 155.

## Hilton launches hybrid offer

**HILTON** has announced a new set of EventReady Hybrid Solutions which will be rolled out globally from this month.

The platform will showcase Hilton's portfolio of hybrid-ready properties, which satisfy baseline requirements for clients hosting a small hybrid event such as IT readiness, a multi-site offering, express contract agreements and an expanded EventReady Playbook (**BEN** 01 Dec) to support organisers.

"Hilton has remained a leader in the meetings and events industry for more than 100 years by listening intently and innovating quickly to changing customer needs," said Hilton Chief Brand Officer, Martin Rinck.

He said Hilton EventReady Hybrid Solutions included assessing the group's global portfolio, a suite of extensive event planner resources, and team member training to ensure optimum delivery.

## TCEB optimism

**THE** Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) is upbeat after securing 52 leads during the recent IBTM World Virtual 2020 show (**BEN** 15 Dec).

The Thai delegation featured 30 MICE operators, with TCEB President, Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya, saying the results reinforced the organisation's confidence about Thailand's attractiveness in European business events markets.

## Meeting space?

Let's talk about how our space can help fill your space.

**SPECIAL PACKAGES AVAILABLE**



business events news



**WHILE** Spain, alongside the rest of Europe, is currently in the grip of a third wave of COVID-19, there was a brief moment of pandemic optimism back in Jun during a special rendition at Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu opera house after an initial lifting of restrictions. The first performance at the world famous venue in three months saw a string quartet perform a special "Concert for the Biocene" to a packed house - but there wasn't any health risk, because rather than humans, the venue's seats were occupied by almost 2,300 house plants. The organisers of the unique event said they were aiming to "reflect on the absurdity of the human condition in the era of the coronavirus, which deprives people of their position as spectators".

"Nature advanced to occupy the spaces we snatched from it," said Executive Producer Eugenio Ampudio.

A music-loving audience was also able to enjoy the concert featuring Giacomo Puccini's *Chrysanthemum* performance, with the event being live streamed online.

After the concert the plants - which were of course clearly rooting for an end to COVID-19 restrictions - were donated to Spanish frontline health workers.

## W Melbourne's debut

**THE** brand new W Melbourne has announced it will open its doors on 04 Feb, after its initially planned Dec launch was delayed by the pandemic.

The highly anticipated property in Flinders Lane will feature 294 guest rooms and 29 suites as well as four distinctive restaurants and bars.

There's also 830 square metres of state-of-the-art conference and event space - including the GREAT ROOM, a 426 square metre pillarless ballroom featuring a gigantic LED wall.

## New ADMEI head

**LORENZO** Pignatti, CEO of European-based Terraevents, has been appointed as the 2021 President of the Association of Destination Management Executives International (ADMEI).

Pignatti (pictured) was instrumental in the 2012 formation of the organisation which aims to be the "single global voice for DMC professionals".

Terraevents is part of the DMC Network, a community of accredited, owner-managed DMCs in the US, Caribbean, South and Central America and Europe which requires 100% accreditation of its members by ADMEI.



# 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*.

## Postage Stamp Presenters:

**HAPPY** 2021.

As things stand, it looks likely that many of us will continue to be presenting online throughout 2021. The recent lockdowns, border closures and restrictions are sadly likely to mean the 2020 trend for virtual and hybrid events is more than just a passing trend.

So we simply can't avoid the need to become better online presenters. As many of us discovered in 2020, there are an abundance of skills and techniques required to become a dynamic and engaging online presenter. This article will focus on only one of those skills.

That is, when you share your screen and show PowerPoint (or Keynote slides) don't take your face out of the equation. You always were and always will be (online or face-to-face) one of the key parts of your presentation. It's not just about the content. It's about YOU delivering the content and you (and your face or body) are central to the critical audience engagement piece.

Time and again during virtual conference presentations in 2020, I observed presenters sharing their screen (showing PowerPoint slides) leading to the presenter's face disappearing altogether - so now we only have your voice to engage with - and be honest, how many presenter's voices are animated and expressive enough to keep you engaged for an entire presentation?

Or just as often, we saw the presenter's face shrunk to the size of a postage stamp on the top corner of our screen, while 95% of the screen was dominated by a dull PowerPoint slide with way too many words, bullet points and lines of text.

In short, last year, as we battled to learn a new presentation medium, we got the balance wrong, the proportions were skewed wildly in favour of the slide on the screen, leaving the presenter's face, eyes, expressions and body language as a tiny flicker on our screen.

If your slides need to be used online (and maybe they don't!), then play around with your presentation platform (Zoom, Teams etc) - there are a myriad of options to make YOU larger - to change the dimensions and proportions, to ensure as much as possible that you are clearly able to be seen. As intimidating and uncomfortable as you may feel seeing your face writ large on screen, hiding behind your screen or shrinking your importance will lessen the impact and engagement level of your presentation. That helps nobody.

And remember - you can always stop sharing your screen when you are telling a story or explaining things. You don't need to keep screen share the whole time.

More virtual presenting tips to come in future articles but for now, Happy New Year and Happy Virtual Presenting.

Andrew Klein is 'Virtually an MC' and runs webinars on 'How to Pitch & Present in an Online Environment'. [www.andrewklein.com.au](http://www.andrewklein.com.au)

