

NEW ZEALAND'S

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2024

meeting newz

● The Meeting, Incentive, Conference & Events Magazine

Rotorua

Bay of Plenty

Taupō

Whanganui

The Business Events
Expo 2024

Connecting the business events industry for over 30 years

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Note from the publishers...



We've all heard the saying about who gets going when the going gets tough.

There is no doubt that for many people in the business events sector (and indeed in domestic and inbound tourism generally) a number of headwinds have made this a winter of challenges.

A recent report by Horwath HTL noted that domestic demand in general was down by 9% in August 2024 compared to the same period last year. Hotels report a decline in business-related travel, influenced by weak domestic economic conditions and reduced government spending.

Moreover, international visitors arriving for business or conference purposes from January to July. While being 4% above last year were still 37% below peak pre-Covid 19 figures.

Meantime several government measures (including the increased International Visitor Levy) indicate that some levels of bureaucracy have not noticed that the golden goose has taken on a rusty tinge.

On a positive note, the recent NZ Cruise conference (a sector being slammed hard right

now) noted that the difficulties are bringing all the major tourism associations (including BEIA) together in a common lobbying cause.

At an individual business level there are also ways to combat the gloom. When the custom is not walking in the door there are opportunities for those who get out, market hard and build on relationships.

It is pleasing to note that the Business Events Expo (BEE) set for 19 November is generating strong interest from both suppliers and buyers – proving again that getting face-to-face and working out solutions collectively is key to moving forward positively as an industry.

In this issue we bring you a preview of BEE being held at Viaduct Event Centre in Auckland and we have a review of Eventing the Future.

We also focus on Rotorua and Bay of Plenty regions and we learn more about Taupo and Whanganui.

We keep you informed and connected with the latest industry news, events, social scene and people on the move. You can read about the latest happenings from our key partners BEIA, NZEA, PCOA, St John and ChristchurchNZ Business Events.

Put the coffee on and enjoy the read!

*Best wishes,
Paul, Terry and Gary*

 **Tourism Media Group**

Meeting Newz Magazine features 2024/2025

November December 2024

- Christchurch & Canterbury
- Marlborough
- Nelson/Tasman
- Australia Next Review
- Business Events Expo
- Company Profiles
- PCOA 24 Preview

January February 2025

- Auckland
- Napier/Hawke's Bay
- Gisborne
- Australia – AIME25 Preview
- PCOA 24 Review
- Incentive travel & events

March April 2025

- Taranaki & New Plymouth
- Australia
- AIME 25 Review

May June 2025

- Northland & Whangarei
- Queenstown & Southern Lakes
- Australia
- MEETINGS 2025 magazine

July August 2025

- Central Otago
- Dunedin
- Northland & Whangarei
- Waikato & Hamilton
- PACIFIC business events magazine

September October 2025

- Southland & Invercargill
- Wellington & Wairarapa
- West Coast
- Australia
- PCOA preview

November December 2025

- Rotorua, Tauranga & BOP
- Taupo
- Whanganui
- Australia
- Eventing The Future Review



NEW Zealand's
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Features subject to change

For any enquiries regarding the upcoming features please contact

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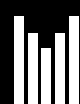
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 **MILLENNIUM**
HOTELS AND RESORTS



A strong contingent from the Pacific Islands, Australia and beyond will join a wide variety of New Zealand business events suppliers at this year's Business Events Expo.

Nearly 150 exhibitors – 10% more than last year's inaugural event – range from bespoke venues, hotels and resorts, video and technical suppliers, team building companies and purveyors of sweet treats to convention bureaux and global destination management companies.

New exhibitors include AUT Events, Barclay Suites, Liquorice, The Kind Foundation, Christchurch Casino, Eco Zip Adventures, Eden Park, Helisika, Radlab, Rapids Jet, Intense Sound & Vision and an increased Fiji presence. A full list of

exhibitors can be viewed on the website www.businesseventsexpo.co.nz

A major new product this year is silent conferencing whereby multi-channel headsets allow delegates to hear from different suppliers without distraction. This can be a gamechanger for meeting planners who have limited space in which to conduct their event. Congress Rental will demonstrate the product on the Rangitoto level of Auckland's Viaduct Events Centre. Buyers will be able to enjoy catering and refreshments on this level as well.

Pre-registered buyers will learn more about the day's programme in mid October when notifications and updates will appear on the expo App.



Read more about the Business Events Expo on page 50.

Register here
au.entegy.events/bee24-buyer-registration

New owners for Waipuna Hotel & Conference Centre

After a six-week marketing period, a new owner has been found for Waipuna Hotel & Conference Centre.

It has sold unconditionally for a confidential sum to Prime Property Group,



who will continue to operate the venue as a hotel and conference centre. Settlement is 31 January 2025.

Troy Elliott, president of Mount Wellington Licensing Trust, says the trustees are delighted that the sale means the property will continue to operate as a hotel and conference centre, providing ongoing employment for the staff.

"We are thrilled to have found a buyer at a market competitive price. It means we can invest the net sales proceeds and ensure future community giving, something Mount Wellington Licensing Trust has been unable to do for many years.

"Having a hotel operator purchase Waipuna means that our wonderful hotel and conference centre team will be employed on terms no less favourable than at present by the new owner, which is a terrific result.

"Securing a sale and preserving jobs is a win-win outcome for the community. Between now and the end of January next year, the focus will be on delivering great business-as-usual service until the new owner takes over, doing everything to prepare for a smooth handover, as well as working on completing our investment strategy for the funds generated by the sale," says Elliott.

Prime Property Group head, Antonietta Muollo-Aharoni, is excited to add Waipuna Hotel & Conference Centre to the portfolio, and be part of the Waipuna Centre community.

"We were impressed by the quality of the asset and its professional operation and are looking forward to enhancing and expanding it," she says. "Our group owns and operates hotels in Wellington and Tauranga as well as motels in Turangi, Taupō and Whitianga."

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Auckland Harbour



Auckland to host MEETINGS 2025 and 2026

MEETINGS is returning to Auckland for 2025 and 2026.

Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA) has announced dates for the next two years, with the first to be held at the Auckland Showgrounds on 11 and 12 June 2025, followed by 17 and 18 June 2026 at the New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC).

BEIA chief executive Lisa Hopkins says she is thrilled MEETINGS is heading to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland given the significant growth of the city’s business events sector

and infrastructure in the last few years.

“It’s been four years since MEETINGS was held in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and much has changed in the city,” she says.

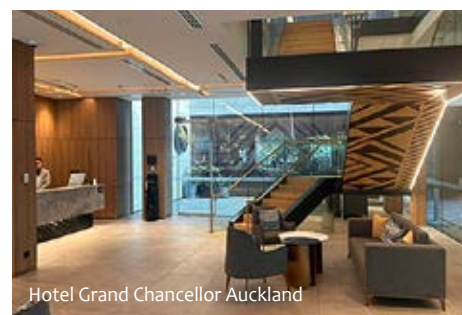
“We can’t wait to introduce buyers to the exciting transformation the city is experiencing with new major infrastructure projects such as the NZICC, City Rail Link (due to open end of 2025) and several new hotels, including five-star product at Horizon Hotel and InterContinental Auckland, as well as the expansion of the Cordis Pinnacle Tower.

“Hosted buyers, by invitation, will have the opportunity to tour the NZICC in 2025, as a prelude to 2026.

“We are already looking ahead for MEETINGS’ 30th anniversary in 2026 and NZICC will be an exciting venue to celebrate this milestone,” she says.

Tātaki Auckland Unlimited’s chief executive Nick Hill says he is delighted MEETINGS is returning to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland for two consecutive years.

“This announcement reflects Tātaki Auckland Unlimited’s strong partnership with BEIA, and our commitment to attract more high-value business events to our region. The sector plays an important role in increasing our visitation and tourism numbers and we’re looking forward to welcoming everyone to connect, collaborate and to experience all that Auckland has to offer,” Hill says.



Hotel Grand Chancellor Auckland

NZ upskills Asia Pacific business events sector

New Zealand has boosted the professional development of business events by hosting Australasia’s first in-person ICCASkills Training Programme.

In all, 18 business events professionals from New Zealand, Australia, Thailand and India took part in the three-day ICCASkills training event hosted at Te Pae Christchurch Convention & Exhibition Centre (10-12 September).

The sessions were facilitated by ICCA’s (the International Congress & Convention Association) expert international instructors Deanna Varga from Australia and Juan José García from Spain. Following the completion of their exams, attendees will receive CICE (Certified International Convention Executive) accreditation, aimed at senior professionals with management experience.

ICCA instructor Juan José García says, “Over three days, key business events leaders have come together in New Zealand



ICCASkills 24 group, Te Pae

to shape the future of business events in Asia Pacific, exchanging cutting-edge insights and best practices from across the globe. The quality of New Zealand’s ICCASkills programme marks a pivotal moment in fostering innovation and collaboration on a regional scale.”

Tourism New Zealand supported the training with an ICCASkills scholarship programme, giving New Zealand business events professionals the chance to undertake the certification by sharing costs with the scholarship recipient’s employer.

Tourism New Zealand global manager business events, Penelope Ryan says “Business events are a key part of Tourism New Zealand’s strategy to attract visitors to New Zealand year-round, with particular focus on growing arrivals in the off-peak season.”

Hotel Grand Chancellor Auckland opens

Hotel Grand Chancellor Auckland has officially opened with 191 guest rooms, Forester Bar & Grill signature dining and Nine Birds Café.

Located at 80 Wellesley St West, downtown Auckland, directly across from the soon-to-open New Zealand International Convention Centre, the 4.5-star Hotel Grand Chancellor supports Auckland’s growth as a key international visitor destination.

Hotel Grand Chancellor area general manager, Steve Martin says, “The investment of the Hotel Grand Chancellor brand in the New Zealand market is a testament to its commitment to providing exceptional hospitality experiences. The Auckland hotel is the first new build for the group and we’re thrilled to open the doors and welcome guests to this thoughtfully designed property.”

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Conferences boosting Christchurch year round

Demand for conferencing in off-peak months will continue in Ōtautahi Christchurch this spring after a strong autumn and winter business events season.

The city hosted seven large conferences from late August to late September, welcoming more than 2,600 delegates with an estimated economic impact of over \$3 million. They included 1,200 health professionals for three different conferences – paediatricians, physiotherapists and aeromedical specialists – as well as local and international groups of engineers and aerospace experts.

The city was humming with conference visitors throughout winter, keeping hotels full and hospitality outlets busy. The ChristchurchNZ business events team helped secure 20 large business events with 9,000 delegates from April to September, valued at \$16m.

In July, Christchurch hosted one of the world's biggest communication

conferences, the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) 2024 Conference. It brought 1,300 international delegates from 61 different countries together for five days in the city, worth an estimated \$2.8m.

ChristchurchNZ head of visitor economy, Kath Low says conferences play an important role in driving off-peak visitation. In 2023, 83 per cent of international delegate arrivals to New Zealand came off-peak, between March and November, compared to 62 per cent of holidaymakers.

Tourism New Zealand says the business events sector was worth \$403m to the country in 2023. Business events attendees are New Zealand's fourth largest market by visitor spend, with an average spend of \$426 per day compared to \$304 for holidaymakers.

"The wider impacts of successful conferences are incalculable. As well as providing a major boost to the regional

Taipa Beach Resort under Capstone Management



Taipa Beach Resort

Capstone Hotel Management is the new management company for Taipa Beach Resort, a 32-room beachfront resort located in Doubtless Bay, Northland.

Ideally located for conferences and events, Taipa Beach Resort is set to undergo significant enhancements under Capstone's leadership.

Plans include the appointment of a new general manager and new chef to revamp the food and beverage offerings. The resort will also undergo a rebranding, launch a new website and undertake extensive operational improvements.

economy and increasing off-peak visitation, it gives locals an opportunity to participate in world class events, share knowledge with industry leaders and promote their products and services to a national and international market," Low says.

AIME Knowledge Program



AIME 2025 Knowledge Program released

The Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) has announced details of its Knowledge Program for the 2025 event to be

held at Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) in Australia in February.

The theme for 2025, 'We Matter!' seeks to

highlight and celebrate the global business events industry as a powerful catalyst for economic growth.

Hosted and curated by BEAM founder El Kwang, the Knowledge Program will launch AIME on 10 February 2025, with keynote speakers from AIME's speaker bureau partners, along with industry business leaders and renowned professionals who will address 1,600 global event professionals attending the first day of AIME 2025.

Guiding the development of the Knowledge Program topics and speakers under the 2025 theme is the Knowledge Program Advisory Committee, which consists of eight leaders from the Asia Pacific meetings and events industry.

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conference and event
aspirations to life.**

WHERE HERITAGE AND THE NEW MERGE



Rotorua stands out as a region famed for geothermal activity, lush forests, and rich Māori heritage. The city offers an impressive combination of venues, activities, and hospitality.

Vanessa Wallace, business events manager at RotoruaNZ says a robust infrastructure for conferences, world-class experiences, and RotoruaNZ's dedicated Business Events team, make the city perfectly positioned to host memorable and impactful events.

"Rotorua is constantly innovating to meet the demands of business events and conference organisers," she says.

Whilst the Energy Events Centre remains a flagship venue for large-scale conferences and exhibitions, Rotorua has seen an increase in boutique event spaces and other venues that offer something different.

The recently refurbished Sir Howard Morrison Centre is a prime example. After a multi-million-dollar redevelopment, it boasts state-of-the-art facilities, including advanced AV technology, flexible meeting spaces, and a 950-seat concert hall. It's a blend of heritage and modernity, ensuring that events held here leave a lasting impression.

Properties like Pullman Rotorua provide a sophisticated and central hub for business events, while options like On the Point – Lake Rotorua and Solitaire Lodge offer more secluded, nature-immersed settings.

In terms of experiences, the spa and wellness offerings in Rotorua have grown significantly. The new, luxury Wai Ariki Hot Springs and Spa, and longtime favourite



Jesse Tamm, Vanessa Wallace, Leah Morrison,
RotoruaNZ Business Events



Polynesian Spa

Polynesian Spa, provide delegates with the chance to unwind and rejuvenate after a day of meetings or workshops. These contribute to the increasing demand for conferences to incorporate wellness elements.

Rotorua's appeal lies in its ability to offer more than just functional conference spaces; it delivers an experience that is truly distinctive. Its unique selling points create a key drawcard for event organisers, setting the destination apart from others in New Zealand.

Rotorua's geothermal attractions, including the bubbling mud pools that can be found at Te Puia, provide an exceptional backdrop for any event. Beyond geothermal activity, the expansive Whakarewarewa Forest offers opportunities for outdoor team-building activities such as mountain biking or forest walks.

Heartland of Māori culture

Business events in the city can integrate authentic cultural experiences that add a unique dimension to conferences. From



Te Puia

traditional pōhiri (welcoming ceremonies) to guided tours through Māori villages like Te Puia and Te Pā Tu, international delegates, in particular, will appreciate the chance to engage with the living culture of New Zealand's indigenous people. These cultural elements not only enrich the event but also foster a deeper understanding and connection with the destination.

Rotorua is ideal for adrenaline seekers, and the city is well known for its world-class adventure activities. Whether it's ZORB rolling, white-water rafting, or mountain biking through Whakarewarewa Forest, Rotorua provides thrilling team-building activities. These can be integrated into conference agendas to encourage collaboration and create memories long after the event ends.

Rotorua's central location makes it easily accessible for both domestic and international delegates. With the Rotorua Airport offering direct flights from Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch, as well as

convenient connections for international arrivals via Auckland, getting to Rotorua is straightforward and hassle-free.

For domestic organisers, this ease of access is a significant draw, as delegates from across New Zealand can reach the destination in just over an hour from major cities.

Once in Rotorua, the city's compact nature ensures that delegates are rarely far from their accommodation, conference venue, or leisure activities – unless they prefer to be. A well-planned city layout and reliable transport options, including shuttles and private hire services, make moving around the city stress-free.

A standout feature of hosting business events in Rotorua is the exceptional support provided by the RotoruaNZ Business Events team. Known for their professionalism, knowledge, and commitment, the team offers comprehensive services to ensure the success of any event, regardless of its size or complexity.

From assisting with venue selection to organising off-site activities and managing logistics, the RotoruaNZ team is on hand every step of the way. They understand the intricacies of delivering successful conferences and are well-versed in the latest trends, such as hybrid event formats and sustainability practices, which are becoming increasingly important in the conference world.

The team also facilitates partnerships with local service providers, ensuring that everything from catering to audiovisual support is taken care of. Their close ties with Rotorua's accommodation and hospitality sectors mean that they can offer tailored solutions to meet the specific needs of event organisers, ensuring that delegates have a seamless and memorable experience.



Pullman Barrel & Co Dining Room



POLYNESIAN SPA

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AN ARRAY OF SPA AND WELLNESS OFFERINGS AT POLYNESIAN SPA

Deluxe Lake Spa Hot Mineral Bathing

Polynesian Spa has immediately seen the benefit of some amazing feedback following the hosting of MEETINGS in Rotorua this year.

Vicki Jessop, sales and marketing manager at the spa, says the opportunity to host industry on famils was vital for the complex to showcase its array of geothermal spa and wellness offerings.

“We are seeing an increase in inquiries and bookings from corporates, association groups and conference organisers,” Jessop adds.

“Our proximity to the Energy Events Centre, Sir Howard Morrison Performing Arts Centre and accommodation providers see us regularly offering promotion codes for delegates to visit at leisure.

“Daily open times to 11pm are popular for post-event programme completion and delegates enjoy the option of a late-night soak

in rich mineral waters for a restful sleep.

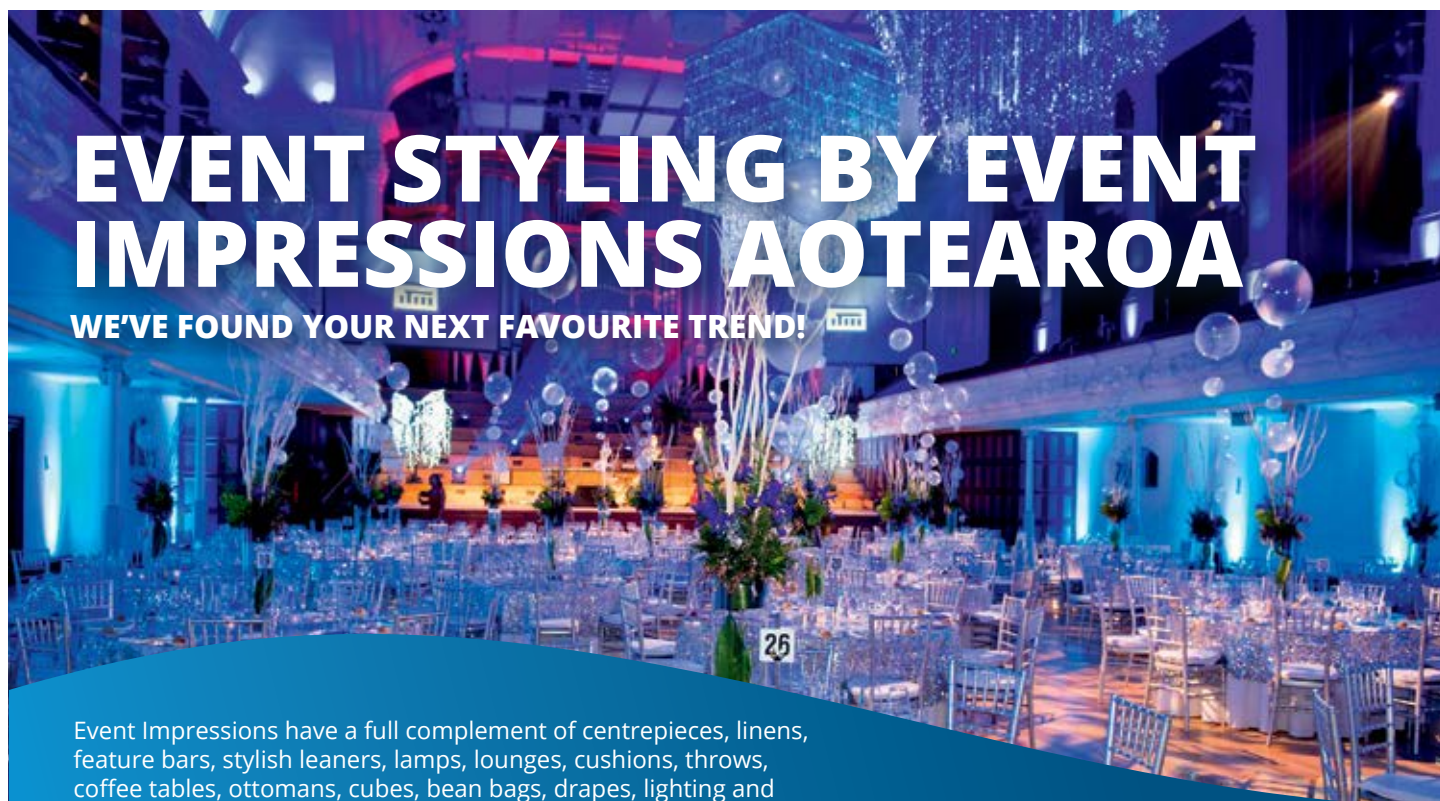
“At Polynesian Spa, we offer more than just geothermal bathing and spa therapies; we provide a holistic wellness experience designed to enhance both physical and mental well-being.

“Our tailored wellness programme include yoga, meditation, mindfulness, sound healing, and expert sessions with naturopaths and herbologists.”

Jessop says these offerings are the perfect addition to MICE events, helping attendees reset, recharge, and find focus. “Wellness is no longer a luxury; it’s a necessity. Incorporating wellness into events ensures attendees leave with a sense of renewal, ready to take on their next challenge.”

Polynesian Spa has a range of packages designed to simplify proceedings for business event organisers. These include options like Blissful Journey, offering vibrational sound healing, lunch, meditation and mindfulness, followed by yoga and ending with therapeutic hot soaking in the Pavilion Pools.

Other options include Serenity Fusion, Revitalise & Enlighten, Refresh & Rebalance, and a Vitality Day Escape. A Deluxe Lake Spa Mineral Pool breakfast buy-out, meantime, is a great way to start a conference day.



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Recent developments have been the opening of a new wellness centre and establishing regular classes offered by leading experts on site.

Newly revamped dual therapy suites with private lounge facilities offer welcoming biophilic spaces for treatment guests.

“This has all enhanced our reputation as a well-being destination and built on the history of being a World-Top-10 Spa. We were also voted New Zealand’s Best Hot Spring & Pool Experience by Lux Life in 2024, for the second year running.

“At Polynesian Spa, our distinction lies in our deep historical roots and heritage status. Established in 1878, we are New Zealand’s original geothermal spa, offering a timeless experience honed over more than a century,” adds Jessop.

Products for gifts

A popular new signature range of body and spa treatment products was launched earlier this year under the name Rachel by Polynesian Spa Signature Range.

This was inspired by the name of the spring that is the source of the spa’s alkaline geothermal water. These are perfect for room drops and a sense-of-place gift that captures the spirit of Rotorua.

ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE TO FORE

Te Puia in Rotorua reports a growing demand for venues with a difference.

Inspired dishes at Te Puia

“We’ve seen this trend for some time now, as well as a desire for locations that don’t require elaborate theming or complex audiovisual setups,” says Jessie Emery, MICE sales manager at Te Puia.

“We work closely with the The Production Agency, who has a permanent install within our large event venue, and Activities Unlimited/Event Impressions who complement our venues with their styling.

“Heading in to 2025, we will have completed minor upgrades to our admission and arrivals lounge area to

make it a pre-dinner cocktail function space in the evenings.

“Groups can utilise the large screen which provides a live feed to Pōhutu geyser, and features an ‘exhibition feel’ of both recent and historic carvings.”

Te Puia is emphasising its commitment to kaitiakitanga, honouring the site’s environment and legacy.

Emery says a big highlight for Te Puia has been celebrating 60 years of the NZ Māori Arts & Crafts Institute Act. “Although it was (officially) in December 2023, we are celebrating throughout 2024.”





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Rotorua's premier venues, the Energy Events Centre (EEC) and Sir Howard Morrison Centre (SHMC) have had a strong 2024 when it comes to business events.

Gala dinner in Unison Arena

"We have hosted a range of domestic and international conferences, supported by professional conference organisers (PCOs) and Tourism New Zealand (TNZ)," says Warren Harvey, business events sales manager for the venues.

"Their involvement was key in achieving the desired delegate numbers and exhibitor participation, ensuring successful outcomes for our association clients."

Harvey says one of the major highlights this year was hosting the BEIA MEETINGS tradeshow in June.

"The event received excellent feedback from the business events industry, attracting hosted and day buyers, exhibitors, and more. The success of

MEETINGS has opened doors to numerous conference and banquet enquiries for the EEC and SHMC for the years 2025 through to 2027."

He says next year is shaping up to be exciting, with Rotorua set to host the TRENZ expo in May. This event will draw approximately 1,200 tourism buyers, delegates, and exhibitors from across the globe.

"It presents a fantastic opportunity for us to showcase the capabilities of both venues, further solidifying Rotorua as a top destination for major events," he adds.

"Despite the challenges brought by the Covid-19 lockdowns and the current economic climate, business events at the

EEC and SHMC remain largely unaffected. Our strong relationships with associations and PCOs, built over years of collaboration, have allowed us to remain competitive and resilient. I am currently managing about 50 conference enquiries for 2025."

"We will be hosting large domestic conferences at the EEC like TRENZ, Water NZ Stormwater Conference, CSANZ25 Cardiac Conference, RANZCO Conference, GPCME Conference and international event, the 5th International Conference on Timber Bridges. "The SHMC is hosting smaller conferences like Women in Governance Conference, Grip Leadership Student Conference, Harcourts Awards Dinner and much more in 2025."

MILLENNIUM HOTEL ROTORUA REFURBISHMENT ~ STAGE ONE COMPLETE

"It's been almost 20 years since our last major refurbishment, so we wanted to make sure our new rooms reflect our long-standing tradition of excellence and our vision of the future," says Millennium Hotel Rotorua's general manager, Pipiana Whiston.

The renovation features NZ-designed furniture and bespoke pieces that reflect the essence of Rotorua. "The look and feel of each space has been meticulously chosen by the Millennium Rotorua team to ensure a welcoming aesthetic that meets the needs of group tours, conference guests, and leisure travellers alike," adds Whiston.

Guests will find updated bathrooms with new walk-in showers that benefit from a geothermally heated water system, New

Zealand-made cedar hot tubs in deluxe rooms, and luxurious touches such as 100% NZ wool throws on the beds

The burnt orange and azure blue colour accents in each room have been inspired by the volcanic and lake tones of Rotorua. The floor-to-ceiling photo panels in every room display one of a series of carefully curated images capturing the events, attractions, and landscapes of Rotorua.

Throughout the refurbishment, Millennium Hotel Rotorua has prioritised local contractors and designed the rooms with sustainability in mind. This includes reducing plastic use with big bottle amenities, introducing clearly marked recycling bins and repurposing material



Costumers Masquerade Ball at Millennium Hotel Rotorua

where possible during the construction.

Phase two is expected to commence in October 2024 and will include the remaining 129 rooms.

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HOT SPRINGS AND SPA

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07 349 7111

www.wai-ariki.co.nz

 [wai_ariki_spa](https://www.instagram.com/wai_ariki_spa)

Wai Ariki Hot Springs & Spa

REJUVENATING MIND, BODY AND SOUL DURING A BUSINESS EVENT

Wai Ariki Hot Springs and Spa is already making a mark in Rotorua's conference and incentive scene.

General manager Debbie Robertson says the new venue has already hosted a number of exclusive events within its Grand Foyer, Spa Sanctuary and Restorative areas.

"We've also had conference delegates and incentive groups book our multisensory two-hour Restorative Journey experience and traditional Māori massage treatments.

"The stand out for us leading to strong advocates and business, has been 'how people feel after their experience'. They love that Wai Ariki relaxes and rejuvenates the

mind, body, and soul."

Robertson says being centrally located within the inner city with ample parking and a beautiful outlook of Lake Rotorua and Mokoia Island add to the compelling decision for clients to include Wai Ariki in their programmes.

"We are the only luxury cultural wellness spa purposely built where traditional Māori healing practices are weaved into every experience.

"We have a holistic wellbeing approach...

from the moment guests arrive and enter our building they know they have come to a special place. People often mention how spiritual and soulful Wai Ariki is. The cultural architecture, designs, location, and stories all add to the ambience and overall experience."

Robertson points out that Rotorua has much to offer, with world class experiences and landscapes all within a few minutes-drive. "We've also got great people that work well together. As a 'newbie' into this industry, we've had fantastic support





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TE PUIA
ROTORUA, NEW ZEALAND

Marsden Stay Rotorua



NEW HOTEL BRAND LAUNCHES IN ROTORUA

Marsden Hotel Group has opened its 15th property, Marsden Stay Rotorua, which marks the inception of the Marsden Stay brand.

The revitalised property is situated on the corner of Fenton and Seddon streets, just a stone's throw away from the city's CBD. It features new carpet, beds, linens, bathrooms, televisions, incidental furniture, and décor.

Fifty-six guest rooms include Superior King and Superior Two Bed Queen room types.

Versatile event spaces accommodating up to 80 and 60 delegates respectively will open soon, along with two outdoor pools, one of which will be heated. Complimentary parking is available on-site.

Michael Osborne, Marsden Group's executive director of development and planning, says the brand epitomises value-driven accommodation, tailored for both business and leisure travellers.

nationally and from our local RTO (regional tourism organisation) team, tourism operators, and accommodation providers recommending us to existing and new clients. We also attended MEETINGS this year, giving us the opportunity to showcase what we offer. As a result of hosting key DMCs, PCOs and corporates from New Zealand, Australia and further afield we've received extremely positive feedback followed with enquiries and bookings for venue hire and pre and post excursions.

"Our offering is special and beneficial for people, particularly those leading busy lives and high-stress roles. Seeing guests looking and feeling amazing when they leave is really rewarding for us."

Groups can use the entire building as a venue or access several distinctive areas for private and exclusive events ranging from 10 to 250 people.

"Our spaces are ideal for cocktail evenings, president dinners, welcome events and product launches. We have an experienced caterer and access to professional entertainers, speakers, artists and cultural performers," adds Robertson.

Wai Ariki also offers an exclusive range of wellness products including herbal tea, mud mask body scrubs, shampoo, conditioner and lotion range. These are ideal for thankyou and welcome gifts.

As an pre or post activity, Wai Ariki has experiences that range from two to four hours.

The Restorative Journey (Wai Whakaora) blends cultural commentary with the healing powers of geothermal heat, water, mud and steam. This therapeutic five-step process can be enjoyed from 9am to 10.30pm with up to 16 people every 30 minutes. In addition, the exclusive Spa Sanctuary area offers traditional Māori, muscle focus and wellness massage treatments with pre-bathing in mineral rich waters.

"We offer immersive workshops for small groups, while exclusive access for small to larger sized groups is also available."



Hydrotherapy at Wai Ariki

Rotorua's Two 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.



rotorua.skyline.co.nz



Skyline Hidden Forrest Venue

arrival, adding an extra touch of celebration to their event.”

Martin says Skyline Rotorua provides flexible, customised event solutions, ensuring a smooth experience from planning through to execution.

“With our stunning location, top-tier facilities, and dedicated team, we make sure each event is stress-free and memorable.”

She says Skyline Rotorua offers experiences that blend adventure, dining, and entertainment in one hub.

“Our aim is to elevate every visit, ensuring that guests leave with a desire to return.

“In addition to our venue offerings, delegates can take advantage of on-site activities, including the Luge, Skyswing, and Hyfly Zipline. These activities provide an excellent way for delegates to unwind and enjoy some adventure before dining or attending their event.”

Skyline Rotorua is reporting a positive outlook for business events in 2025 despite experiencing a slower pace in the sector currently.

“We’re seeing a lot of last-minute enquiries and bookings, indicating growing interest and potential for future events,” says Lynley Martin, business events sales executive.

“We’ve been actively reconnecting with our clients through sales calls, including hosting BEIA’s farewell function for MEETINGS this year.

“We’ve participated, for the second year,

in RotoruaNZ’s roadshow to Australia, where we’ve met with clients and established new contacts, further strengthening our relationships and driving business from across the Tasman.

“We are promoting an exclusive offer for those who book our Hidden Forest venue within the next six months – delegates will receive a complimentary bubbly drink on



Skyline Luge



Regent of Rotorua room re-style

General manager Mike Eccles says the rooms have been upgraded to a similar feel and design as the new accommodation wing that was added to the hotel last year while retaining their own individual style.

“The only thing that has not changed

are the physical walls of the rooms. There is new glazing on the windows, new tapware, carpets, lights, soft furnishings, cabinetry and more. The 47-room hotel has two small meeting rooms including a Club Lounge ideal for private dining and board

meetings,” says Eccles.

“The hotel is also ideal for business groups attending larger events in Rotorua, that would like a base for their team to catch up and hold separate meetings and events if needed.”

The Regent of Rotorua is managed by Brook Serene Hotel Management which recently claimed another three prestigious awards for two of its properties, The George in Christchurch and Hulbert House, in Queenstown.

The George was awarded New Zealand's Leading Boutique Hotel for 2024. This is the 16th time the hotel has earned this distinction, continuing its reign as a symbol of hospitality excellence. Bruce Garrett, managing director of Brook Serene, expressed his delight from the World Travel Awards ceremony in Manila: “Receiving the title of ‘New Zealand's Leading Boutique Hotel 2024’ is a true honour. This accolade is a reflection of our steadfast dedication to delivering unparalleled guest experiences and the relentless efforts of our team to set new benchmarks in boutique luxury.”



Bayleys gala dinner

The new owners of Event Impressions Aotearoa say they are looking forward to building on the solid foundation and strong reputation that the business already holds.

Daniela Olphert and Deb Wootton took over the business a little more than six months ago and say they are excited to continue creating unforgettable experiences while infusing their own fresh perspectives.

“With our local presence in Auckland, we are positioned to bring our own personal touch to events across the region, connecting with a broad network of clients and communities,” says Wootton.

She says one of the most rewarding jobs the company has had the privilege of working on recently was for a local community event in Rotorua.

“Supporting events that have a positive impact on the community aligns with our company philosophy. In August we had the privilege of styling the well-known Harcourts Dancing for Hospice at the Energy Events Centre in Rotorua.”

Wootton says the event drew 1,500 guests, all there to enjoy an incredible show in support of hospice care.

“For us, this was a perfect example of how event styling can contribute to a cause while creating an unforgettable atmosphere.

“In a similar vein, we are excited to be styling the upcoming Rotorua Business

Awards. This prestigious event, which brings together nearly 800 professionals, stands out not only for its scale but for its ability to bring the community together in recognition of success and innovation. Our team is hard at work, making sure that the ambiance will be just as remarkable as the achievements being honoured that evening.”

Olphert says the team at Event Impressions Aotearoa believe that every event has a story to tell.

“Our goal is to translate that story into a fully immersive experience, from the smallest details to the grandest gestures. Whether it’s an intimate gathering or a large-scale production, our team approaches each event with creativity, passion, and a commitment to exceeding expectations.

“As we look to the future, we remain dedicated to continuing the growth of Event Impressions Aotearoa. With a growing presence in Auckland and a strong connection to communities across New Zealand, we are excited to keep building relationships, styling extraordinary events, and leaving a lasting impression on every guest we serve.”



FMC gala dinner

Regent of Rotorua

Escape the ordinary

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OF ROTORUA**

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ROTORUA ROADSHOW



ROTORUA BRINGS CULTURE AND AROHA (LOVE) ON AUSTRALIAN ROADSHOW

Following on from the successful hosting of MEETINGS in June, Rotorua's manaakitanga, tradition and culture were again showcased to Australian buyers when a contingent from the city visited Melbourne, Sydney, Gold Coast and Brisbane in September.

The second annual roadshow of Australia, organised by the Rotorua Business Events team, gave Rotorua suppliers the opportunity to network with more than 150 clients.

“Collaborating with the operators to represent Rotorua as a united destination, and sharing what makes it so special with our

Australian counterparts was an honour,” says Vanessa Wallace business events manager RotoruaNZ. “The trust in me to lead our destination forward and believe in my vision for Rotorua’s continued success has meant the world to me.

“The format of the roadshow was

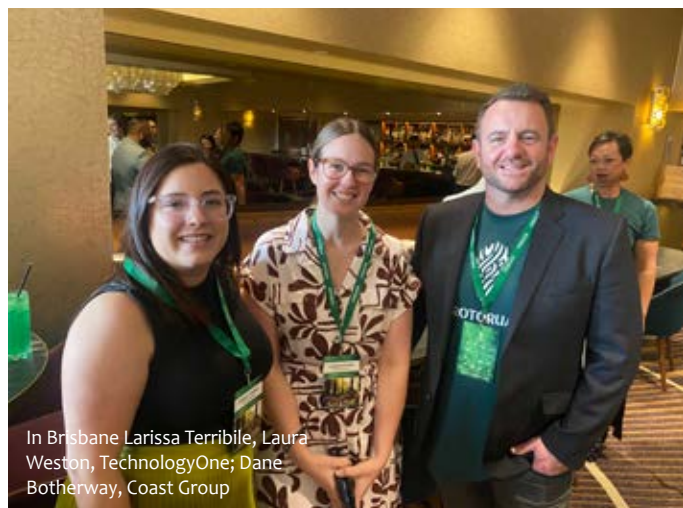
At the Sydney leg of the roadshow

Back row

Deb Wootton, Event Impressions; Vicki Jessop, Polynesian Spa; Helen Bambry, Tourism New Zealand; Vanessa Wallace, RotoruaNZ; Vanessa Price, Novotel Rotorua Lakeside Hotel; Leah Morrison, RotoruaNZ; Mary Charisse Jimenez, Pullman Rotorua; Chantel Booysen, JetPark Hotels

Front Row

Lynley Martin, Skyline Rotorua; Jessie Emery, Te Puia; Kimberley Daniels, Millennium Rotorua; Dane Botherway, Coast Group; Jesse Tamm, RotoruaNZ; Stu Robertson, Team Up Events; John Robertson, The Production Agency; Joeline Elliott; Rotorua Events & Venues; Debbie Robertson, Wai Ariki Hot Springs & Spa; Andre Ahipene, AUAHA



In Brisbane Larissa Terribile, Laura Weston, TechnologyOne; Dane Botherway, Coast Group



In Gold Coast Helene de Poortere, Travel Associates Broadbeach; Stu Robertson, Team Up Events; Joeline Elliott, Rotorua Events & Venues



In Brisbane Lynley Martin, Skyline Rotorua;
Fonri Myburgh, EventSmart; Vanessa Price,
Novotel Lakeside Rotorua



Chantel-Anne Booysen, JetPark Hotel
Rotorua; Mabel Connor, HelmsBriscoe;
Vicki Jessop, Polynesian Spa

changed up this year,” continues Wallace. “The feedback from both operators and attendees has been overwhelmingly positive, with many praising the new format for its fresh, engaging approach. The networking flowed seamlessly into seated sessions, allowing for deeper connections, and I’m thrilled with how well it went – it truly showcased Rotorua’s dynamic spirit and fostered meaningful relationships.”

Strong engagement from Australian buyers and the positive response to Rotorua’s business events capabilities, made Wallace confident that it would translate into future opportunities.

The theme of the roadshow was ‘Pounamu – Shades of Green’ which celebrated the beauty and significance of greenstone in Māori culture. A highlight included cultural speaker, Andre Ahipene from AUAHA who shared stories that brought Rotorua’s rich heritage to life.

“Having Andre speak about the mana and manaakitanga of our operators was a powerful addition this year,” says Wallace. “I was delighted with how well it was received. His message resonated deeply, reinforcing the authentic cultural values that set Rotorua apart. The blessing of a pounamu for a select few buyers added a significant touch, symbolising not only good fortune but also a deep connection to the spirit of our land and its people, creating a lasting memory of Rotorua’s unique hospitality.”

Sally Gatenby from IDP in Melbourne was impressed with the cultural aspect of the roadshow.

“I met many great people and loved the presenter and how the Māori spirit is

very much embedded throughout what they do,” Gatenby says. “I’ll be sure to keep Rotorua on our list of future venues for our conference.”

Joelene Elliott, director events, Rotorua Lakes Council, a first-timer on the roadshow, says the roadshow was everything she expected and more.

“The format demonstrated how Rotorua, a place rich in manaakitanga and cultural depth, would present itself. It felt like whakawhanaungatanga in action, where the one-on-one interactions gave us space to truly connect, listen, and understand each other. It wasn’t rushed, but rather a chance to share kōrero and build relationships, which really stood out to me,” she says.

“Rotorua’s collective approach shone through. There was a clear sense of unity, a deep understanding that by working together, we can draw more visitors and delegates to our region. It was more than

just a sales pitch – it felt like a true, shared vision for the future of Rotorua. Overall, I felt a strong sense of purpose throughout the roadshow, and it left me feeling inspired about Rotorua’s potential to bring more people to this special place.”

Event partners that participated included Coast Group, Higher Perspectives Conferences & Events, JetPark Hotel Rotorua, Millennium Hotel Rotorua, Novotel Rotorua Lakeside, Polynesian Spa, Pullman Rotorua, Rotorua Events & Venues, Skyline Rotorua, Team Up Events, Te Puia | NZMACI, The Production Agency and Wai Ariki Hot Springs & Spa.

RotoruaNZ will continue the momentum with a New Zealand Roadshow planned for mid-October visiting Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

Meeting Newz travelled courtesy of RotoruaNZ



In Brisbane Kimberley Daniels, Millennium
Hotel Rotorua; Sharon Hudson, Talent Lab;
Jessie Emery, Te Puia

The 2024 NZEA event awards were held at the Fly Palmy Arena

EVENTING THE FUTURE

More than 230 event professionals converged in Palmerston North recently for Eventing the Future 2024 Conference.

The conference, held at Fly Palmy Arena, took place over two days and featured a packed agenda of 30 expert speakers.

A wide range of topics was explored – from cutting-edge technology trends to meaningful iwi engagement and effective crowd management.

“Pulling together an event for the events industry is no mean feat, and it takes a lot of suppliers coming on board and helping out,” says Elaine Linnell, general manager, NZEA.

“We put expressions of interest out for where this year's event should be hosted, and the team at Palmerston North came out on top and have been amazing to deal with,” she says.

Opening the conference was Palmerston North Mayor Grant Smith, who says that while Palmerston North doesn't have the most obvious natural amenities, such as geysers, mountains, lakes or beaches, or features such as bungies, gondolas or Sky Towers, its appeal is much more subtle.

“What we do have is well-connected centrality, great amenities and a raft of local organisations and associations that add the muscle and volunteer input to multiple successful events,” he says.

“For us it is about making the most of our

strengths and advantages. We use our event funding across a wide spectrum supporting expos, conventions, conferences, concerts, sporting and cultural events – large and not so large – to drive the activities and vibrancy that stimulate our retail, accommodation and visitor sectors, all of which bolster the city and the wider region's economy.”

Jessica Papple, marketing manager at Palmerston North City Council, says holding ETF at Palmerston North was a major milestone for the city.

“We're trying to showcase that Palmy can hold great events,” she says.

“Our primary visitor market is business events, and our city wants more community events and more major events – the people here want to go to more events.

“We've got a history of hosting great events and we want to encourage people to bring more of them to our city.”

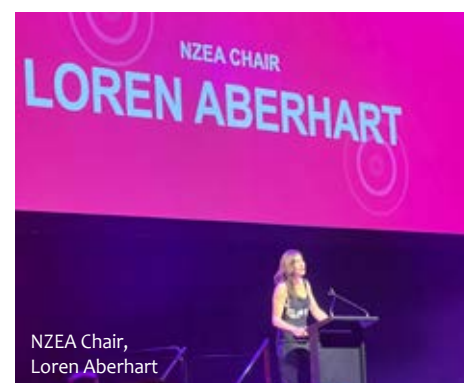
NZEA chair Loren Aberhart says ETF's programme of speakers and workshops was designed to add value and give additional tools and practical advice to event professionals.

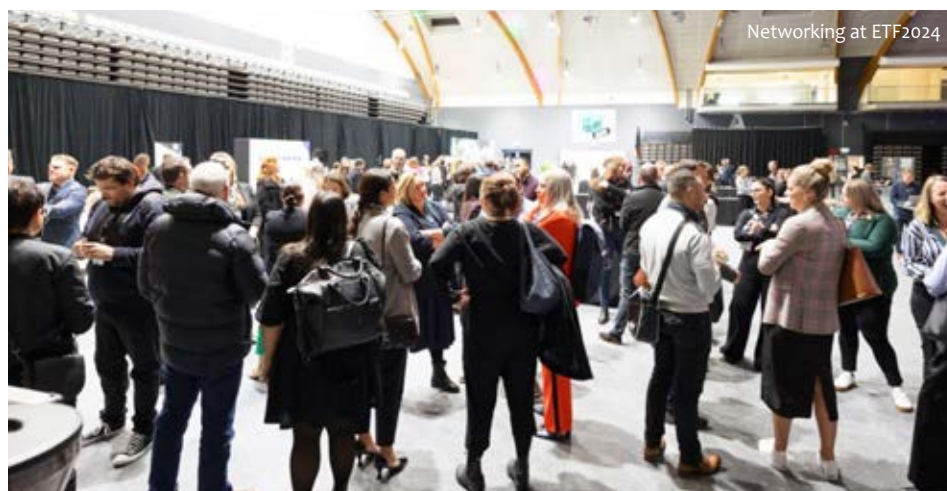
“It's particularly great to see all of you as we face another challenging period off the back of our post-Covid high,” she says.

“It is remarkable to reflect on the swing that has taken place since our last conference, when the top challenge indicated by our members was a skill shortage and being too busy to keep up in the enthusiastic post-Covid event resurgence, to now when the impacts of the recession are resulting in event cancellations and postponements.”

Aberhart says that while many significant events are understandably opting to take a year off to return in the ‘hopefully brighter times’ of 2025 and 2026, the phrase ‘survive to '25’ is already starting to feel a bit trite.

“It continues to be imperative that we are able to tell the value of our industry to central and local government,” she says.





NZICC made for the event

NZICC general manager Prue Daly says NZICC will give New Zealand event organisers the chance to scale up events that may have been limited by the venue in the past.

Speaking at Eventing the Future, she said NZICC will be the largest and most versatile conference, exhibition and entertainment space in New Zealand. It will offer 32,500sqm of gross floor area, with 33 meetings spaces available at any one time.

"We've found New Zealand event organisers are really excited about the chance to develop and expand their events," she says.

"When we open, the convention centre means event planners will no longer have to plan their event based on the venue – NZICC's offering, all our different spaces and configurations, not to mention our capacity, can be scaled to suit the requirements of any event. The space can be made for the event, rather than the other way around."

Daly says around 80% of events at the NZICC are expected to be domestic.

Sustainable Events Hub launched at ETF

Born out of the industry-wide need to work together towards a more sustainable events sector, NZEA launched Sustainable Events New Zealand at the Eventing the Future Conference. Although currently led and launched by NZEA, the content has been curated by an industry-wide working group and will be owned by the industry going forward. The hub looks to drive positive change in the events industry by highlighting sustainable practices and connecting event professionals with the resources needed to make events more sustainable.

NZEA membership fee Increase

The NZEA Board has made the tough decision to increase membership fees, effective 1 September 2024. The fee increase is a

reflection of the economic climate and the fact that the association needs to move away from reliance on the ETF conference and awards events to supplement operational expenses – a situation brought about by a desire to keep membership fees low through the Covid years.

MBIE launches new Major Events Strategy

The Government has released a new Major Events Strategy to ensure future government investments in major events generate significant immediate and long-term benefits for New Zealand. The strategy puts greater emphasis on securing major events that deliver strong economic benefits for New Zealand, but it retains a focus on ensuring the vast social, cultural and environmental benefits major events can deliver are realised.

And the awards go to...

Fly Palmy Arena set the stage for a glittering celebration for the NZEA NZ Event Awards 2024, which took place following the Eventing the Future conference. The evening honoured the very best of the events industry, with 69 finalists across 17 categories.

This year's awards celebrated the innovation, creativity, and resilience of New Zealand's event industry.

Some major winners included Karli Dungey - Dunedin Venues, for Best Emerging Event Professional, while Chris Simpson was recognised with the Outstanding Contribution to the Industry award. Karena Finnie from ChristchurchNZ was named Best Established Event Professional for 2024.

The winner of New Zealand's Favourite Event 2024 went to Warbirds Over Wanaka International Airshow 2024.

Waitangi Day 2024 Porirua City took home the award for Best Arts, Cultural or Heritage Event, while the Takapuna Winter Lights event won Best Community or Not-for-Profit Event with over 3,000 participants.

LACK OF INVESTMENT IN EVENTS RISKS LONG TERM REPERCUSSIONS

The combination of challenging economic times and a government that has a focus on austerity is concerning for the events industry, according to NZEA chair Loren Aberhart.

Speaking at the recent Eventing the Future Conference, she says this industry relies on investment from the public sector, "while also needing an economy where consumers have enough discretionary income to spend on the experiences we provide."

The recent call by the Taxpayers Union calling Auckland Council and Central Government's funding for the World Dance Crew Championship a "wasteful investment" misses the point, she says.

"The previous Labour Government invested over \$50 million into events to restimulate our economy post-Covid. And we saw the way that it ignited domestic travel, consumer spending and confidence.

"The current government's minimal investment in events is woeful to say the least. And it will leave a major and mega event hole in our pipeline for future years to come that we will all notice if this is not addressed."

Aberhart says Prime Minister Christopher Luxon calling convention centres 'shiny white elephants' was also not particularly helpful.

"Although venues can be challenging investments to justify, we must continue to advocate for the wider benefits of the events sector that go beyond economics," she says. "They drive a thriving retail, hospitality and accommodation sector and deliver amenities to our residents. They stimulate conversation, drive art and culture, inspire people into sport and adventure."

The Best Food, Beverage or Lifestyle Event category went to Taste Hastings, and Best Music Event went to Electric Avenue. Best Major or Mega Event went to FIFA Women's World Cup 2024. The Best Venue award was won by Wellington Regional Stadium for the FIFA Women's World Cup.

New era blooms for Hamilton Gardens



Hamilton Gardens' new visitor entrance
Photo: Hamilton Gardens

Hamilton Gardens has begun a new era with the opening of its enhanced entry precinct and the start of paid entry to the Enclosed Gardens.

The precinct includes a new visitor hub, cafe upgrades, additional seating and improved venue spaces.

Hamilton Gardens director, Lucy Ryan says the new entrance will deliver a more accessible and welcoming area, which features layers of historical meaning.

“We wanted a design that honours the significance of the site to mana whenua and Ngaati Wairere. We worked closely with our mana whenua advisory group to develop a cultural design that would embed manaakitanga (extending hospitality, care and respect) into every element of the new entrance.

“The Gardens is situated on and near numerous paa sites, and the use of tall timber elements encircling both the fern court and the Gallagher Visitor Centre building resemble the walls of a fortified paa along the awa. The large vertical posts, inspired by traditional Maori gardening tools (maara kai), form a palisade around the courtyard, protecting the precious gardens within.

“Visitors will also see within the fern court, a whaariki (woven mat) is embedded into the concrete surface. This distinctive Tainui pattern, Te Hera o Tainui, is believed to have been used for the Tainui waka sail. In this context, it symbolises welcoming people and nations from ‘ngaa hau e whaa’ (the four winds) to this region; no matter where you’re visiting from, you are welcome here,” says Ryan.



Robin Mack speaking at Australia Next

Meeting Newz publisher Terry Holt caught up with Robin Mack, EGM, commercial and business events, Tourism Australia, at Australia Next (previously called Dreamtime), held in Cairns recently.

In an effort to help supercharge the recovery of the business events (BE) sector, it’s the first time Australia’s premier incentive

event has been held on consecutive years.

According to the latest business events data from Tourism Research Australia, spend by international BE delegates exceeded pre-Covid levels, totalling \$4.569 billion in the year ended March 2024. New Zealand topped the charts with 157,000 visitors crossing the ditch to attend business events – our spend was

Hamilton Airport goes international again

Jetstar has announced the return of flights between Hamilton and Australia. Three return flights per week between Hamilton and the Gold Coast and four return flights per week between Hamilton and Sydney. The first flights will take off in June 2025, in time for the New Zealand school holidays.

The trans-Tasman commercial flights will be the first out of Hamilton in 13 years. The final Virgin Australia flight flew from Hamilton to Brisbane on 27 October 2012, ending 18 years of trans-Tasman flights.

Waikato Regional Airport Ltd (WRAL) chief executive, Mark Morgan says the celebration comes after more than a year of “solid grind” by his team negotiating with the airline and border agencies.

“It’s been hard, complex work, in a very sensitive commercial environment and we are thrilled to have pulled this off. The benefits for the entire region – not just passengers – are huge. Analysis indicates the flights will boost the regional economy by about \$45 million per year. That’s fantastic for everyone; this is not just about the airport, it’s a great day for the region.”

\$436 million, third after the US and China.

Australia’s record levels of infrastructure and development in recent years gives New Zealand event planners new opportunities across the Tasman.

“New and expanded convention centres and hotels, city precincts, and research and knowledge centres place Australia at the forefront of business events delivery worldwide,” says Mack.

“We’ve seen approximately 236 hotels open across the country since 2020, both independent boutiques and major international chains like Marriott Adelaide and W Sydney, and more to come with openings from 1 Hotels in Melbourne and Waldorf Astoria in Sydney.”

Keep a look out for further inspiration from the Australia Next event in Meeting Newz magazine, newsletter and website over the coming months.

Anglea Leung

has been appointed as the new business development manager for Business Events Wellington for the New Zealand market. Leung, a familiar face in Wellington's business events and hospitality sector, brings a wealth of experience to her new role.

**Jessica Carlson**

Is the new sales manager, Australia at the New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC). Carlson has come from Accor where for the last five years she has been director of meetings and events – New Zealand, Fiji and French Polynesia.

**Evline Kumar**

has joined Sofitel Wellington as the conference and events sales executive. Kumar recently moved to Wellington with her husband and family from Sofitel Fiji Resort & Spa where she was the weddings and events executive.

**Julie Voultepsis**

has joined Club Med as MICE manager for the Pacific market. Set to spearhead Club Med's meetings and events sector, Voultepsis steps into the role after almost 25 years with the Club Med brand.

**Martina Toman**

has joined the Mercury Baypark events team in Tauranga as an event sales associate. Toman, originally from Australia, has travelled extensively and brings her sales, event, and hospitality experience to Baypark including spending time in the front office team at Maximilian Luxury Boutique Hotel in Prague.

**Erin Narayan**

has is now event sales executive at Mercury Baypark Tauranga. Narayan has been a key part of the events team at Mercury Baypark Tauranga for more than eight years for business events. With a Bachelor of Communication, Public Relations and Event Management her knowledge and experience includes time at Ellerslie Event Centre as an account manager and an event internship with Netball New Zealand.



Are you GAME OR GLAM?

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Online course prepares staff to safely manage intoxicated customers

St John Training



Encountering intoxicated customers is a common challenge for event staff. To address this, Hato Hone St John has launched an online course, *Management of an Intoxicated Person*, designed to equip employees and first aiders with the skills to handle such situations with care and confidence.

The online course is particularly beneficial for those working in events, hospitality, security, and university environments. Developed in collaboration with NZ Drug Foundation, Whakarongorau Aotearoa New Zealand Telehealth Services, and the New Zealand Police Adult Sexual Harm Team, the course offers practical, scenario-based training.

What participants will learn

The course consists of seven modules, each around 40 minutes long, allowing learners to progress at their own pace. Participants will learn to:

- Identify the signs, symptoms, and stages of intoxication.
- Identify the three classes of drugs and their effects.
- Identify when/how intoxication can make people vulnerable and identify intervention tools to prevent further harm.
- Identify common first aid skills to manage intoxicated individuals.
- Describe the use of DRSABCD (Danger, Response, Airway, Breathing, CPR, Defibrillation) to assess and manage an unresponsive person.
- Identify the key principles of CPR and defibrillation.
- Identify when to seek further help or support.

A step beyond standard first aid

Unlike traditional first aid courses, this training delves into the specifics of dealing with intoxicated individuals, from mild impairment to life-threatening emergencies.

Learners explore the effects of stimulants, depressants, and hallucinogens, working through scenarios that reinforce practical application of skills.

Simon Barnett, head of public training and medical products at Hato Hone St John, emphasises the importance of this training: “While many people can identify someone who is intoxicated, few know how to respond effectively. This course equips individuals with the knowledge to intervene safely, potentially preventing serious harm.”

Why it's critical

Despite the rise of harm reduction services like KnowYourStuffNZ at events, staff must be prepared to act when needed. Immediate, informed action by a trained team member can be lifesaving.

The course is particularly beneficial for security personnel, university hostel managers, and caretakers responsible for individuals affected by alcohol. By equipping

them with critical knowledge and practical skills, the course reduces risks and ensures a safer environment for all.

Workplace benefits

Ensuring all employees complete this online course supports compliance with the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. It enhances the ability to manage intoxicated individuals effectively, minimises alcohol-related harm, and helps maintain safe and responsible workplaces.

The online course is a crucial resource for anyone in roles involving frequent contact with intoxicated individuals. It improves confidence in handling such situations, ensuring staff can respond effectively when it matters most.

Management of an Intoxicated Person course costs \$159 and can be booked through the Hato Hone St John website buy.stjohn.org.nz or by calling 0800 FIRST AID (0800 347 782).



Could you safely manage intoxicated patrons?

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Mount Taranaki
Photo: Marvin Rozendal

BEIA conference in Taranaki for first time

Registrations are open for the Business Events Industry Aotearoa BEIA conference to be held in Taranaki for the first time from 25 to 27 November 2024.

This year's conference and annual general meeting will take place at The Devon Hotel in New Plymouth and will include a day and a half of education sessions, panel discussions and workshops, plus a relaxed social programme.

BEIA chief executive, Lisa Hopkins says the conference draws inspiration from the Business Events National Strategic Direction 2025 – Pīata Mai – which sets out steps for

measuring and growing the sector's positive cultural, social, environmental and economic impact over the next decade.

"The beautiful Taranaki region, with its beaches and the magnificent maunga (mountain), will provide exactly the energy and inspiration we need to put our vision for the future into practice.

"We will be covering the hard subjects, diving deep into pressing issues, and telling the stories of our industry. Everyone will be making the most of this time to connect with colleagues and friends in the industry, and meet new people," she says.

Groundbreaking business events forum for AKL

Tāmaki Makaurau cultural and economic agency Tātaki Auckland Unlimited (TAU) plans to supercharge growth in Auckland's business events sector on 4-5 November 2024.

Unleashing the Potential of Business Events is a two-day forum bringing together domestic and international business events experts and sharing new research to help the industry contribute more to Auckland's economic success.

Business events in 2024 are estimated to have an \$89 million benefit to the region, which with its innovation network, leading research institutions and world-class universities, is well-placed to host key industry conferences.

Organised by the Auckland Convention Bureau (ACB), a division of TAU, Unleashing the Potential of Business Events will be held at Auckland's Aotea Centre.



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Tourism Fiji NZ Roadshow

Sixteen Fijian industry partners visited four cities across New Zealand on its annual roadshow in August. The roadshow visited Dunedin, Christchurch, Tauranga and Auckland and over 250 delegates attended.



Jess Ogg, Mai Berryman, Amelia Lowe, CTM Meetings & Events



Darshita Naidu, Outrigger Resort (centre); with Sonam Verma and Krystal Krishna, both Helloworld



Tupou Dreunimisimisi, Sonya Lawson, Tom Svensen, both Tourism Fiji; Brittany Homan, Fiji Airways; Patriona Vasu

RotoruaNZ Australia Roadshow

Industry partners met with over 150 buyers across four Australian cities in September. The theme of the roadshow was – Pounamu - Shades of Green – which celebrated the beauty and significance of greenstone in Māori culture. The roadshow visited Melbourne, Sydney, Gold Coast and Brisbane. You can read more about it and see more photos on page 22.



Sarah McCluskey, CICM; Jon Yeo, Brightstar; Joelene Elliott, Rotorua Events & Venues



Mara Manglicmot, Royal Australasian College of Surgeons; Vanessa Wallace, RotoruaNZ



Justin Voigt, The College Of Intensive Care Medicine; John (JR) Robertson, The Production Agency



Deb Wootton, Higher Perspective Conferences & Events; Sally Gatenby, AIEC IDP Education

Let's get TEChnical

From the deep south to the far north – this year's Tourism Export Council (TEC) conference was held in Invercargill at Ascot Park Hotel, next year it is heading to Bay of Islands / Waitangi.



Winner of TEC's good sorts award for 2024 Cecil Potatau of Ngai Tahu Tourism / All Blacks Experience with Lynda Keene, TEC chief executive and MC Mike McRoberts



Debbie Zampien, Fiordland Discovery; Mark Rose, The Rees Hotel Queenstown; Julia Savill, Grand Pacific Tours



Luke McLeod, Tapoi Travel; Kate Winikerei, Air Milford

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Lunch is a Chef's Choice buffet, served outside your conference room or in Wellingtons Restaurant based on event size and availability. Specific restaurant requests may incur an additional charge.

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WHANGANUI MAKES IT MARK

By Shannon Williams

Thanks to its vibrant blend of art and culture, combined with its rich history and scenic surroundings, Whanganui is making its mark as a premier business events destination.

Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery, available for business events

Nestled alongside the Whanganui River, this charming city offers a unique atmosphere that inspires creativity and collaboration. With its thriving arts scene, featuring everything from contemporary galleries to traditional Māori crafts, business events professionals can immerse themselves in a rich local culture in a range of venues they would be hard pressed to find anywhere else in the country.

Dana Burnett, venues and events manager at Whanganui District Council, says Whanganui's heritage vibe is a major drawcard for the city.

"Our venues are in the heart of the CBD, close to a range of cafes and tourists shops. Our arts and creativity, and our heritage buildings, provide a real point of interest. Work is being done to make our heritage buildings a real showcase," she says.

Drews Ave has grown into a thriving communal hub for the central city. The beautifully restored shop fronts elevate Whanganui's appeal, and perfectly complements the city's identity as a place that treasures its heritage architecture and culture.

Whanganui has a well-deserved reputation as a centre for the arts, with a range of museums and galleries on offer. The historic Sarjeant Gallery is home to one of the best collections of fine art in New Zealand, while the Whanganui

Regional Museum has an extensive collection of Lindauer portraits and taonga Māori.

The Whanganui River was one of New Zealand's first tourist attractions, with riverboat adventures drawing overseas visitors as far back as the 1880s. Two authentic riverboats still cruise Te Awa Tupua (the Whanganui River), Paddle Steamer Waimarie and Motor Vessel Wairua.

THE WAIT IS OVER

After a 10-year hiatus, Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery is back.

An important drawcard for the city, the gallery, located at Pukenui Queen's Park in the centre of Whanganui, has undergone a \$70 million redevelopment, and officially opens its doors on 9 November.

One of New Zealand's oldest purpose-built galleries, it first opened in 1919 and houses a nationally significant collection.

The redevelopment project is a partnership between Whanganui District Council, Whanganui Iwi, Central Government, and supporters and benefactors, including large and small private donors and trusts, with support from the Sarjeant Gallery Trust.

The new gallery now spans more than 4,500sqm and comprises the 105-year-old heritage-listed Sarjeant Gallery, with

its distinctive 13-metre-high dome and Oamaru stone exterior, which has been earthquake-strengthened and meticulously restored, and the new state-of-the-art extension Te Pātaka o Tā Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa. The gallery's expansion includes a west-facing atrium, serving as a new entrance, and a carved totara waka walk bridge, which links the original heritage gallery to the new wing.

The gallery now features ten exhibition spaces, a family room, a reading room and library, a classroom, retail space, a café, and publicly accessible event and meeting rooms. A new modern wing encompasses two dedicated event spaces, which can host around 120 people, including 40 people boardroom style. There is also a 12-person meeting room.

The first exhibition back is Nō Konei | From Here, running until May 2025, showcasing over 200 artworks from European and New Zealand art history.

"The opening programme celebrates the gallery's rich history and bright future. Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery is back, strengthened, optimistic; reflecting on our past and looking to our future," says Andrew Clifford, Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery director.

"It marks an important moment in our story and highlights the significance of

our region to the wider creative sector in Aotearoa New Zealand and abroad.”

VENUES LIKE NO OTHER

Whanganui offers versatile facilities for events of all sizes. Getting around the compact city centre is easy and enjoyable, with the Whanganui River and the city's historic buildings creating a wonderful backdrop. The city's venues can cater events for up to 1,200 people. It hosted the Labour Party Conference in 2019.

Royal Whanganui Opera House

Whanganui's historic opera house is a popular venue for performances, graduations, productions, seminars, weddings and meetings. The theatre seats 830 patrons and is the venue of choice for many local, national and international events.

The 115-year-old Opera House is equipped with audio visual equipment and a technical lead and team to assist with set-up and technical advice.

Whanganui War Memorial Centre

The Whanganui War Memorial Centre, which opened in 1960, is among the top 1,000 architectural “modernistic” buildings in the world and the top 50 in the Southern



Hemisphere. The premium venue houses three flexible spaces and a large modern kitchen, making it suitable for hosting a range of events. The centre is bookable as separate spaces or as a whole.

The Main Hall is versatile and an excellent venue for meetings, conferences, sports tournaments, socials, balls, exhibitions, displays and public entertainment as well as many other activities. It is the largest of the single available areas. The hall can seat up to 1,300 conference style, hold 1,598 for a

concert or 600 in a formal dinner setting.

The Concert Chamber features fixed auditorium tiered seating for 311 with an open stage.

The Pioneer Room is the smaller of rooms at the centre and offers views overlooking Pukenui Queen's Park grounds. The space offers seating for up to 200 conference style or 120 for a formal dinner setting. It is also ideal to set up as a boardroom or classroom.

The centre also has two foyers. The



Whanganui provides a refreshing and meaningful location for your next business event.

A rich history, a thriving creative community and an easy pace come together in Whanganui, offering conference-goers all they need to connect, collaborate and innovate. The influence of natural surroundings, from the river to the mountain views, adds to the city's charm and ensures your next conference will be an event to remember.

VENUE	BANQUET	BOARDROOM	COCKTAIL	THEATRE
Whanganui War Memorial Centre				
• Main Hall	500	200	500	1300
• Pioneer Room	120	80	120	100
Royal Whanganui Opera House	120	–	120	800
Cooks Garden Events Centre	80	50	80	100

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WHANGANUI
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera a Rohe o Whanganui



Royal Whanganui Opera House

Whanganui Chronicle
(NZ's oldest newspaper)
Heritage Building

downstairs foyer, featuring lots of natural light and stained glass windows, is an ideal space for registrations, meet and greets, and pre-event drinks. The upstairs foyer is often utilised in partnership with the Main Hall or Pioneer Room, ideal for buffet meal serving, pre-event registration, and meet and greets.

Cooks Gardens Events Centre

Cooks Gardens is renowned for its sporting and athletics events. The premier venue offers a unique track-side venue for conferences, meetings, product launches, and weddings. The venue is also equipped with a fully operational kitchen and bar.

The Peter Snell Lounge offers views of the stadium and wider city, featuring an inbuilt sound system, projector and large screen. Accommodating 120 theatre-style, 80 in banquet and up to 200 for a cocktail reception, the lounge can be combined with the Cooks Room to accommodate up to 230 guests.

The Cooks Room provides an ideal atmosphere for smaller meetings, dinners and cocktail evenings, with room for 40 guests theatre-style, 20 in banquet and up to 30 for a cocktail reception.

The Corporate Boxes suit smaller meetings, presentations or as breakout rooms for up to 15 guests.

Whanganui Function Centre

The Whanganui Function Centre is based at the racecourse on Purnell St and offers a large facility with a number of different sized rooms for a diverse range of functions from conferences, meetings, birthday celebrations, funerals and weddings to larger community events.

The Kingsgate

The Kingsgate is a 58-room hotel with a number of venue options, from a conference room that can accommodate 180 people to a private boardroom. The hotel also offers

in-house catering and has a bar that can be hired for cocktail receptions.

Anndion Lodge and Function Centre

Anndion Lodge enjoys a quiet, picturesque location and conference facilities offer views of the river and a private outdoor courtyard, making it a relaxing setting for conferences, meetings, training sessions, team building and staff retreats. The Anndion is just five minutes from the city centre and has 21 accommodation rooms.

BUSY CALENDAR

The coming year will see Whanganui host some pretty major events, including the New Zealand Masters Games, Taste Whanganui and the Whanganui Heritage Festival.

Heritage Festival

Whanganui District Council, in conjunction with the Whanganui Regional Heritage Trust, is gearing up to commemorate a significant milestone in Whanganui's history – 100 years since Whanganui was declared a city.

Mayor Andrew Tripe says the 2024 Whanganui Heritage Festival celebrates Whanganui's history, place and community, connecting to its wider place in the world as a UNESCO City of Design.

"Whanganui still retains many of the characteristics of a small city with its extraordinary architecture, rich arts scene and strong sporting and natural heritage," he says.

Running from Saturday 19 October to Monday 28 October, the 10-day festival will offer an array of community-led events in conjunction with the Whanganui Regional Heritage Trust.

New Zealand Masters Games

Athletes will compete in over 50 sports across nine days of competition during the New Zealand Masters Games next year. Held throughout January and February 2025, the event is centred at the Games Village in The War Memorial Centre, and comprises more than 55 different sports and 2,400 individual events as well as nightly entertainment. The Games attracts competitors from all over New Zealand as well as from more than 20 countries internationally.

Taste Whanganui

The Taste Whanganui festival, held 14 December, features epicurean food and beverages showcasing local cuisine and craft beer alongside boutique distilleries and vineyards from around New Zealand, with live music and tastings, demonstrations and workshops right in the heart of Whanganui.

Waimarie Paddle Steamer,
Whanganui River



Conferences accelerate the development of innovative solutions to complex challenges, stimulating collaboration that helps drive change for local and global communities.

DRIVING CHANGE

The Environmental Defence Society's (EDS) annual conference 'The Future is Now: Biodiversity, Climate and Us' was held in Ōtautahi Christchurch in June 2024. With 430 delegates in-person and another 60 online, it was the biggest yet, reflecting serious and widespread interest in the New Zealand Government's evolving environmental policies.

The conference focused on the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss, what is at stake for the nation, and where the solutions lie.

Delegates from around Aotearoa took a deep dive into issues of climate, oceans, resource management, freshwater, conservation, energy and biodiversity.

POOLING COLLECTIVE WISDOM

The EDS 2024 conference drew diverse participants together to galvanise progress towards solving Aotearoa New Zealand's biggest environmental problems.

International and national experts and politicians ran informative and interactive workshops on emerging issues. Presenters came from many sectors and perspectives and engaged in often frank and sometimes challenging dialogue.

KEY OUTCOMES

"A key theme that emerged was that we shouldn't silo our climate and biodiversity responses: we need to address them together and transition our energy systems without causing environmental harm. To smooth that pathway there is an increasing need for everyone on all sides of the debate to engage more deeply, to foster durable solutions."

EDS CEO, GARY TAYLOR

A communique was issued after the conference: "Government policies failing our environment". It included recordings of interviews with the Government Minister Hon Shane Jones (Minister for Oceans and Fisheries, Regional Development and Resources, and Associate Minister for Energy) and the Labour Opposition spokesperson for the Environment, Hon Rachel Brooking.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment, Simon Upton presented a keynote speech. Entitled "Environment and economics: A marriage of (in)convenience?", his speech outlined "five truths that involve some hard thinking about the sort of economy we want to have and the trade-offs that cannot be wished away."

SPREADING THE WORD

The conference garnered significant interest from mainstream media and the wider public through engagement with social media channels. Newsroom, Newshub, RNZ, Farmers Weekly, the Otago Daily Times, and the NZ Herald all included coverage of the conference. EDS posted session updates on its LinkedIn and social media outlets which received widespread attention.

HOW TO GAIN POSITIVE MEDIA COVERAGE:

- Identify angles of interest to mainstream and industry media
- Invite key reporters to attend the event
- Research and write good content
- Target the message to suit the audience
- Choose articulate spokespeople and brief them well
- Engage a professional photographer (and videographer) to capture hero images
- Work with your regional convention bureau to get the story out across their platforms
- Consider developing a case study
- Repurpose content for multiple social media channels

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BUSINESS EVENTS

Experience Rake Healing, where corporate groups blend mindfulness with creativity. A recent familar showcased sand art exploration and captured team unity via drone photography. Groups can also personalise their experience with a bespoke company logo creation.

BUSINESS BY THE BEACH

The Bay of Plenty region is an increasingly popular business events location as PCOs and delegates seek locations for small to medium-sized conferences that also offer enriching, “good for the soul” experiences.



Angela Werder, sector manager cruise and business events at Tourism Bay of Plenty says an emphasis on the theme Business by the Beach is resonating well with the marketplace. “Our conferences offer the perfect blend of professional networking and seaside relaxation,” she says.

Building on this are new conference experiences such as Rake Healing, where delegates can enjoy a few hours on the beach, practice mindfulness, learn beach art techniques, and even have their company logo drawn in the sand, with a drone capturing a team photo.

Werder points out that with the Tauranga city centre development progressing, the region now boasts a range of off-site group dinner venues with one-of-a-kind characteristics.

The Clarence Hotel is a charming boutique option in the city centre, offering 12 accommodation rooms, a private Bistro, and a glass marquee lounge area. It is perfect for senior-level staff.

All this makes Bay of Plenty ideal for conference groups seeking customised venues and many options for team bonding experiences, Werder adds.

“Delegates can unwind and take a break by coming down to our stunning coastal location.”



The Cargo Shed

Choices aplenty

Large conference groups can be accommodated by Mercury Baypark, which offers expansive space and multiple onsite activities like pickleball. Classic Flyers is also an excellent choice for conferencing with an aviation twist.

Other choices for a business event programme include Trinity Wharf Hotel, Tauranga City Council Venues (The Historic Village, The Cargo Shed, Baycourt Community & Arts Theatre), St Amand,

Clarence Hotel, and Waimarino Riverside.

The Historic Village has a restored schoolhouse, barracks and old-fashioned movie theatre.

Accommodation options include Trinity Wharf Hotel for a waterfront stay, the recently renovated Armitage Hotel, two new Quest hotels in Tauranga city centre and Mount Maunganui.

For organisers looking to start a function with something special, the Bay Explorer cruise departs directly from Trinity Wharf

BUSINESS BY THE BEACH

Discover more at bayofplentynz.com/conference

📍 Bay Explorer
Mount Maunganui



Tourism Bay of Plenty can create customised itineraries like a sunset helicopter ride and a traditional hāngi dinner with Muirs Tours.

pier. This offers a great pre-dinner drinks option for in-house guests.

For meetings with a beachfront view, PCOs should consider Mount Maunganui and Pāpāmoa Surf Clubs or Tasman Holiday Parks Pāpāmoa Beach, featuring conference rooms and beachfront villas.

Fife Lane is ranked the 69th best steakhouse in the world. With private dining options, the restaurant is next level when it comes to corporate dining.

More development

Werder points out that the region is enjoying continued growth and development – \$3 billion is being invested in the Tauranga redevelopment alone.

Relatively new St Amands and The Cargo

Shed continue to be popular, while the Tauranga Club and Waimarino Riverside have just opened. The latter is described as a riverside venue with a twist.

Venues set to open in 2025 include the redeveloped Tauranga Art Gallery and The Historic Village's balcony room, with more locations to be announced – including a conference venue.

Ready for a famil in 2025

The business events team is now taking registrations of interest for their 2025 famil season.

The variety and breadth of experiences available were illustrated recently when Tourism Bay of Plenty hosted eight PCOs for a pre-MEETINGS famil trip.

Participants enjoyed two sunny days in the Bay, exploring venues and indulging in plenty of dining. Highlights included a sunset helicopter ride and a traditional hāngi dinner with Muirs Tours. “Our guests left very satisfied,” says Werder. “It further showcased how we create customised itineraries to explore locations and experiences tailored to a group’s specific needs, ensuring a fun time throughout.”

Contact angela.werder@bayofplenty.co.nz to arrange your visit.



Visitors can expect a seafood feast with Muirs Tours



St Amand in the Tauranga city centre is a popular new venue

Tauranga / BOP at a glance:

- Tauranga is only three hours' drive from Auckland and is connected by direct daily flights from Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland.
- The region has an increasing number of locations and venues available for business event organisers including many affordable options.
- A large array of experiences are easily accessible and bookable, including many “Orchard to Plate” and artisan experiences, such as gin making, truffle hunting and avocado tours.

AMPLIFY YOUR AGENDA

Your conference.

Your gala dinner.

Your meeting.

Your expo.

Your event at Mercury Baypark.

Bring your next event to Mercury Baypark and let us help carry the load. We're the largest venue in Tauranga. We're also the most versatile. We have everything covered, from in-house catering to audio visual services, plenty of free parking, and a wide range of spaces.



HorticultureNZ Conference plenary with 700 delegates in the Lion Foundation Centre at Mercury Baypark. Photo: Storifilms

BRING YOUR BUSINESS BACK TO THE BAY

There's been a whirlwind of different activities at Mercury Baypark in recent months, and the team is set to see the year out with a range of business events – from exhibitions and awards evenings to AGMs and end-of-year celebrations.

“We’re aware of the financial headwinds our clients are facing as 2024 draws to a close. The team at Mercury Baypark is here to help,” says Michelle Stevens, head of events at the venue.

“We can reimagine and adapt your event ideas to suit the changing economic environment, while still enabling

successful outcomes that meet an organisation’s business objectives. We are fortunate to have the most versatile venue in Tauranga, with a wide range of spaces differing in size and layout – all in one location, with plenty of parking.”

Mercury Baypark has hosted a lot of conferences in the Lion Foundation Centre

this year, with the main plenary hosted in the same space as an exhibition gallery. This encourages easy networking and is a smart use of this large space.

Another popular option lately has been using Mercury Baypark’s four interconnecting Arena Suites that can either standalone or be separated into

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CONFERENCES & EVENTS

singles or doubles, making use of the adjacent circulation areas for networking. One of these areas has a sunset outlook towards Mauao, which is a treat for visitors to the city.

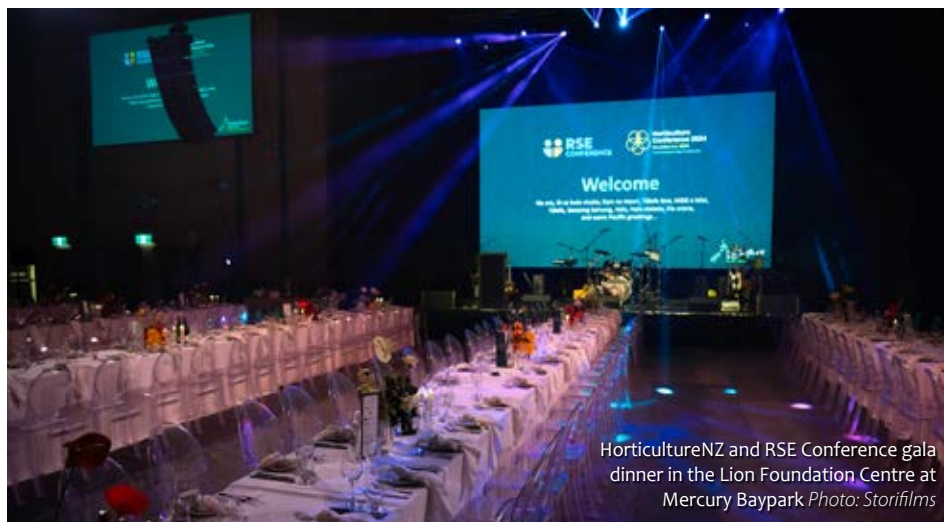
Access to Mercury Baypark has never been better, with the completion of the Baypark to Bayfair flyover and State Highway 2 interchange. Ample free parking onsite and the improved motorway access is a benefit for delegates travelling by vehicle.

“The Mercury Baypark team is about making it easy. We’re here to share the load with our business event bookers, leaving them to focus on what’s most important, while we take care of the rest. We can look after catering and audio-visual needs and can facilitate recreational breaks and team building sessions with a difference.

“All these services are in-house and based at Baypark. We can even provide a private workspace and help with the conference registration desk,” says Stevens.

“Bay Audio Visual, Bay Catering, and BayActive are all part of the Mercury Baypark family and work collaboratively with our event planning team to deliver one cohesive event experience.

“Our Bay Audio Visual design coordinator and production manager



HorticultureNZ and RSE Conference gala dinner in the Lion Foundation Centre at Mercury Baypark Photo: Storifilms

are part of the planning process and get involved from the beginning to create and design the technical aspects of each event. Recent investments in LED and projection equipment are presenting new opportunities and are being well utilised by businesses.”

Mindful of balance, business events at Mercury Baypark also include options for recreational interludes – a chance to play pickleball at lunchtime, for example. There are options for mini breaks with fitness and wellbeing experts, leading delegates through

gentle stretch exercises or activities to keep their minds active with puzzle challenges.

Mercury Baypark offers exclusive rates for delegates to have a pre- or post-meeting soak at the Mount Hot Pools, surrounded by native bush at the base of Mauao.

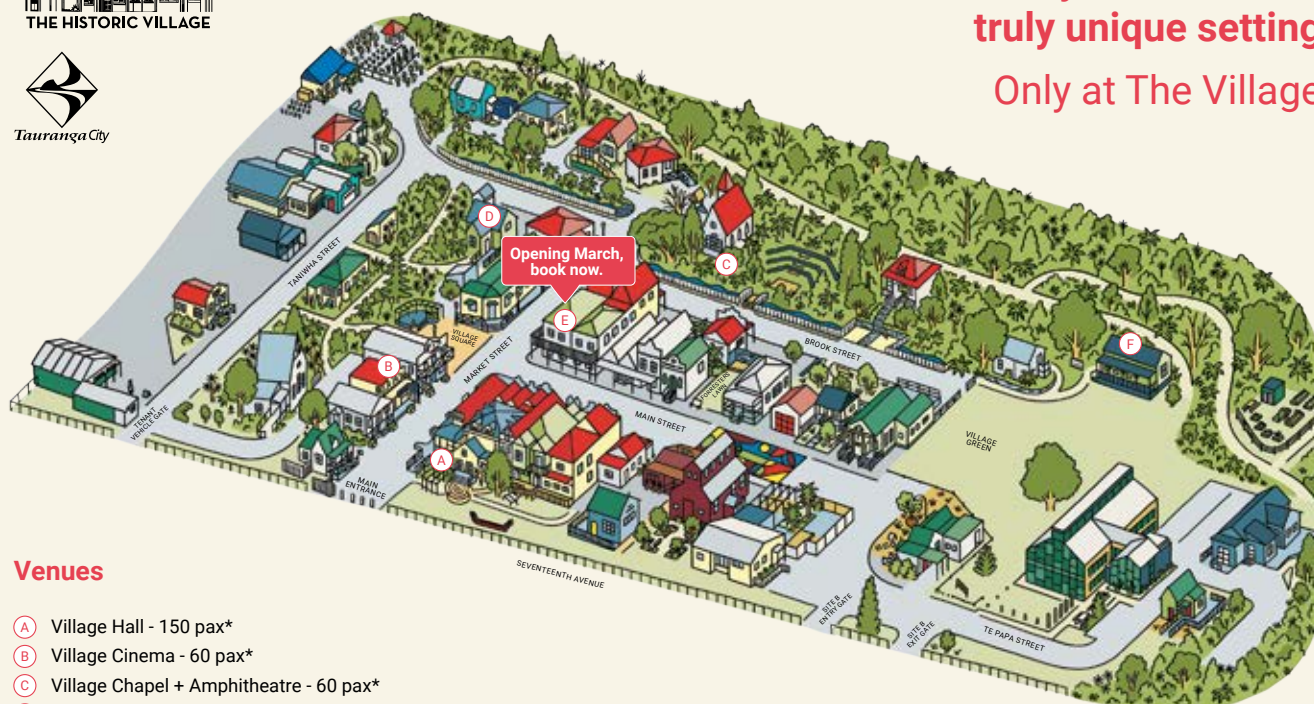
“We’re only 15 minutes away from the airport, within a three-hour drive from Auckland, and just five hours from Palmerston North. We can also connect you with our friends at Tourism Bay of Plenty to help showcase the wider region and secure accommodation,” adds Stevens.



THE HISTORIC VILLAGE



Tauranga City



Venues

- (A) Village Hall - 150 pax*
- (B) Village Cinema - 60 pax*
- (C) Village Chapel + Amphitheatre - 60 pax*
- (D) Schoolhouse - 25 pax*
- (E) Balcony Room - 150 pax* (opening March, book now)
- (F) Durham Barracks - 25 pax*

*Based on theatre style room set up.

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Trinity Wharf in Tauranga

MEETING ON THE WATERFRONT ~ GET IN EARLY

Conference and event organisers are being urged to book early in order to secure their preferred dates at Trinity Wharf.

This comes as the hotel's rooms and sales coordinator Lizzie Seekup says next year is shaping up to be exceptionally busy – particularly in May.

“With many dates already at full capacity, we’ve had to turn down some short-lead bookings, so securing a spot ahead of time is essential.”

Event manager Soraya Hebert adds that Trinity Wharf is already seeing a surge in bookings for Christmas functions.

“This is fantastic to see because it means businesses are continuing to prioritise celebrating their teams, even after a challenging financial year.

“Additionally, large-scale events and conferences continue to return to Trinity Wharf and the Bay of Plenty, which is always exciting and reflects the strong appeal

of our venue.”

Hebert says Trinity Wharf's waterfront restaurant has never looked better.

“We recently installed neutral-toned carpet to create a sophisticated, blank canvas for events while highlighting the breathtaking views.

“The two-tiered layout of the restaurant has been reimagined, with softer grey tones in the chairs, all enhancing the resort-like ambience we often associate with overseas retreats.

“We've also updated our function menus to emphasise fresh, high-quality, and healthy options, while ensuring we cater to all dietary requirements,” Hebert adds.

“Crafted by our executive chef, Rob Forsman, in collaboration with Kex Catering, our menus are designed to perfectly suit our

guests. On the drinks front, we're excited to partner with local craft brands to offer unique Bay of Plenty beverage selections.”

In terms of accommodation, Trinity Wharf has moved towards more sustainable practices. This includes installing smart lock systems and replacing single-use toiletries with luxury New Zealand made Ashley & Co products in reusable dispensers.



REFURBISHMENTS CONTINUE FOR HOTEL ARMITAGE

The multi-million dollar project is about to enter its final stage of Phase 1 with the completion of a spectacular new lobby.

Tiffany Antoine, hotel manager says the new space will celebrate environment, nature and native vegetation surrounding the hotel with a 3D mural and designer feature light.

“The interior design has been realised

by award winning designer Space Studio, and we are delighted to be working with so many local contractors from the region. Elements of design are from all over the world including stunning floor tiles from Italy and New Zealand timber and fabrics” she says.

The Phase 1 refurbishment is due for completion in summer 2025.



The Village Hall



TAURANGA MAKES MARK IN BE SPACE

Tauranga's expanding role as a business hub in New Zealand, combined with its strategic location, attractive lifestyle and coastal setting, has sparked growing interest from business event organisers.

Angela Heyward, venues business development specialist at Tauranga City Council says every business event in Tauranga, whether it is a conference, seminar, or corporate retreat, provides attendees with an inspiring backdrop for networking and growth.

"Our commitment lies in ensuring each event not only meets but exceeds expectations.

We love to collaborate with organisers to create unforgettable experiences that drive growth and foster meaningful connections."

Heyward points out that The Historic Village is recognised as a one-of-a-kind destination, allowing planners to incorporate wellness, corporate social responsibility, and community engagement into their business events.

Earlier this year, The Historic Village opened Durham Barracks, featuring a boardroom for twenty guests and picturesque views onto the Village Green

Next in line is the Balcony Room, scheduled to open in March 2025. Designed to accommodate up to 200 people in a cocktail style setting, the space opens onto a wrap-around balcony offering stunning views over The Historic Village.

Heyward points out this addition is poised to become a highly sought-after venue due to its versatile and elegant space for events of all kinds. With its rich historic charm and modern amenities, the Balcony Room sets the perfect backdrop for business seminars, dinners, and workshops.

Another option, The Cargo Shed, originally constructed in the 1920s has recently been renovated into an event venue sitting ocean-side overlooking Te Awanui, Tauranga Harbour.

"This iconic venue preserves its original character with the functionality of a modern event space," Heyward says.

"I'm looking forward to again attending the Business Events Expo in November alongside Tourism Bay of Plenty and Mercury Baypark to share with potential clients the opportunities that await them in Tauranga."



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MEET IN THE MIDDLE

By Shannon Williams

Nestled in the heart of New Zealand's North Island, Taupō boasts stunning lake and mountain vistas that provide an inspiring backdrop for conferences, seminars and corporate retreats. The region offers a blend of natural beauty and modern amenities that cater perfectly to the demands of professional gatherings. With a range of venues, accommodation options, and an array of outdoor activities for team-building and relaxation, Taupō combines the best of both worlds — efficient business facilities and an abundance of natural landscapes to explore.

“The beauty with the Taupō region is having versatility at your fingertips,” says Louise Toulmin, business events executive at Destination Great Lake Taupō.

“One minute you can be conferencing and within 10 minutes you can be out cruising on beautiful lake Taupō,” she says.

“Accessibility to venues, accommodation and activities is effortless and easy with something for everyone.”

MEET IN THE MIDDLE

There's never a shortage of things to see and do in the region, as well as high quality venues, accommodation, eateries, and bars.

Taupō is centrally located in the North Island, making it an easy drive from surrounding regions. There are daily flights

from Auckland and Wellington, with access out of the South Island via Rotorua Airport, a one-hour drive from Taupō.

“There are so many incredible ways to discover our region; groups are spoiled for choice when it comes to activities, accommodation and venues, and in one of the most stunning and inspiring regions of Aotearoa New Zealand,” Toulmin says.

Toulmin says the business events sector for the region has been steady over the last 12 months, with conferences being the strongest segment predominantly from the domestic market.

“We are also continually seeing incentive interest from both domestic and international with high-end experiences being included in itineraries,” she says.

“The business events market is looking positive, with strong forward bookings as we approach the end of the year and into the next. While lead times remain relatively short, posing challenges for forecasting, our operators are optimistic as we move into the summer period.”

VENUES

Taupō's conference venues and meeting facilities can cater for up to 600 people. Venues cater for everything from a small group gathering to a large international conference or incentive event. They include intimate and private meeting rooms in world class lodges, banquet and exhibition halls with fully-equipped theatre facilities, and large modern conference rooms located

BE INSPIRED AT THE HEART OF IT ALL

right on the edge of Lake Taupō.

The Great Lake Centre (GLC) is located in Taupō's CBD, and can accommodate from six to 600 delegates with the versatility of having a 358 seat theatre with a 96sqm stage, ideal for plenary sessions and presentations, or cocktails and canapes on the stage. The adjoining Exhibition Hall provides 600sqm of space with its own loading dock making the venue ideal for trade expos, product launches, breakout space from the theatre, team building, dinners and more. The GLC offers onsite technical services and stage management.

Hilton Lake Taupō offers seven A/V-equipped conference and meeting rooms with a total event space of 475sqm. The hotel provides 113 guest rooms, with the property boasting views over the lake and landscaped gardens. The naturally lit venue space makes for an elegant backdrop for events.

Millennium Hotel & Resort Manuels offers a variety of spaces for meetings, training seminars, formal dinners, cocktail parties, wedding receptions or product launches. three furnished meeting rooms cater up to 140 delegates.



Suncourt Hotel & Conference Centre is a family-owned-and-operated accommodation, conference, event and wedding venue. It has six function and conference rooms able to host up to 200 people. The six spaces all feature natural light, air conditioning and free wifi. The hotel also offers conference accommodation with 52 units.

Broadlands Lodge is a hidden gem in the beautiful Broadlands Valley, a 20-minute drive from Taupō or 40 minutes from Rotorua. The purpose-built rustic barn has views of the Broadlands Valley and

surrounding farmland. All-inclusive packages are available for bookings for 20-200 guests.

Wairakei Resort Taupō is located on the northern fringe of Taupō in the world-famous Wairakei Tourist Park. As a purpose-built conference facility with a dedicated conference team, digital AV company and high-speed wifi installed across the site, Wairakei Resort can provide comprehensive full conference, small meeting or tradeshow and event solutions as well as entertain up to 600 guests.

EXPERIENCES

Taupō has a range of top-tier offerings for incentive programmes and group activities, from scenic flights and bespoke nature experiences to spa packages and luxury escapes.

Chris Jolly Outdoors

Founded in 1980, Chris Jolly Outdoors is a Taupō institution, with more than 40 years in the industry. The company offers scenic cruises on Lake Taupō, including private charters and for corporate events.

Chris Jolly Outdoors experiences ideal for groups include the Māori Rock Carvings Cruise, a unique experience on Lake Taupō



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Rapids Jet



Helisika corporate charter and transfers

that takes groups to view the Māori rock carvings at Mine Bay, which are only accessible by water. Other on-water options include private boat charters and guided hiking and cruise options.

Rapid Jets

Rapids Jet has launched a new transformative team-building half-day experience, where groups can forge stronger bonds amidst the exhilarating thrills of jet boating.

It includes a 35-minute jet boat experience, the opportunity to learn about the history of the Waikato River and Aratiatia Dam, with light morning or afternoon tea provided

from the kitchen at Te Pā Tū.

The Rapids Jet Boardroom is also available for use before or after the jet boat ride. It features a balcony for indoor/outdoor flow and scenic views of the Rotokawa/Aratiatia area, and a BBQ is available in the summer. The boardroom features a large Smart TV for presentations with HDMI and wireless connectivity, guest wifi, and a modern kitchenette and bathrooms.

Taupō Motorsport Park

One of New Zealand's premier motorsport parks and event centres, Taupo International Motorsport Park and Event Centre is home to some of New Zealand's biggest

motorsport events including the Historic GP. It's also the new home of Supercars Championship in New Zealand.

Located on the Volcanic Plateau, the facility offers a range of meeting rooms to suit a variety of events, all overlooking Pitlane. The suites offer tables and chairs, wifi, projectors and screens, as well as the help of a dedicated events coordinator. There is also free parking.

A range of team building experiences is offered, including an outdoor Go Kart Track and Fun Drive Challenge group packages.

New to the park's offering is the Subaru WRX Experience. Originally created by Highlands and first launched there in 2016, it's now available at Taupō International Motorsport Park. Guests can get behind the wheel of one of four Subaru WRXs and hit the track for a range of thrilling activities, all led by the park's pro-drivers. Whether groups are looking for the full experience or a teaser, this is the perfect choice for those seeking high-performance driving in an exceptional setting.

TOURISM CHALLENGES

The region has seen some challenges. Earlier this year, Destination Great Lake Taupō lost 20% of its annual funding from Taupō District Council in the latest Long Term Plan. In its draft Long Term Plan, Taupō District Council proposed to cut funding to \$1.7 million over the next financial year, having contributed \$2.1 million in the past financial year.

Tourism contributes substantially to Taupō's economy, with an annual impact of between \$730m and \$1 billion.

DGLT released its Statement of Intent 2024-2027, which said while the recovery of New Zealand tourism following the Covid-19 pandemic had been "remarkable" and demand had proven to be "resilient", the sector would now face a new set of challenges.

"Like businesses in many other industries, New Zealand tourism

operators are navigating challenging economic conditions while adapting to new and evolving consumer travel trends and behaviours post-pandemic," the report said.

DGLT said domestic visitors were the "backbone" of the Taupō visitor sector, however, domestic visitation had started to slow and recent figures indicated a "declining visitor spend" due to cost-of-living pressures.

"Although domestic spend is still up 19% on pre-Covid levels, it has now started to decline with spending down 9%, compared to the same period last year," the report said.

Despite this, tourism continued to deliver strong benefits to the Taupō region and remained the number one employment sector locally making up 32% of all filled jobs.

Updates:

- Ohakuri Rise is a new venue opening in summer 2025 with capacity for 240 people banquet style.
- AJ Hackett Bungy Taupō's office revamp has brought a fresh, new look – in line with the AJ Hackett Bungy NZ brand.
- At Suncourt Hotel & Conference Centre, the newly rebranded Lionel's restaurant has undergone a major renovation. Its menu features Mediterranean flavours.
- The refurbishment at Huka Lodge, scheduled to re-open 1 March 2025, is set to be a game changer for the region in the incentive market.



Orakei Korako Geothermal Park & Cave

Helisika

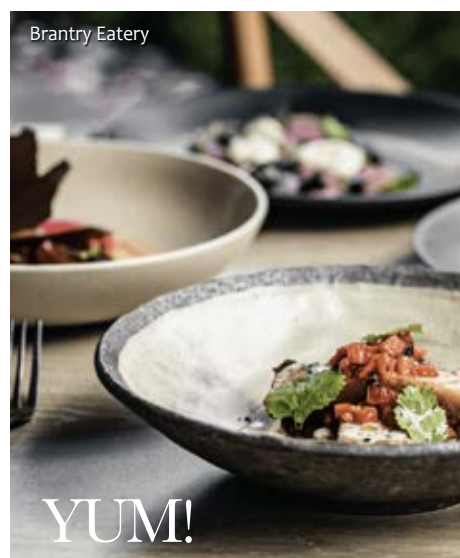
Helisika offers helicopter hunting and fishing charters, specialising in wilderness adventure and luxury remote stays. Two types of wilderness lunches are now on the table – fine dining and interactive cultural cooking. The first trial run of these products is expected in November.

The Fine Dining Experience

Flying East from Taupō to a remote part of

the Kaimanawa Forest park, amidst 80,000 hectares of untouched private land, guests meet their private chef from Wild Roots culinary concepts. Before lunch, guests can enjoy a few drinks or a short walk through the vast open river valley where the dining experience is located, before enjoying a three-course sharing plate meal. The menu is designed to highlight the best of local flora and fauna, showcasing locally sourced

Brantry Eatery



YUM!

Award-winning Brantry Eatery is home to Yum catering and is a must-visit while in Taupō. Well known for sell-out degustations, special celebrations and corporate functions, it has a great reputation for providing off-site catering for local business events. Brantry Eatery is located in Brantry House in downtown Taupō and features contemporary New Zealand art in the house and garden.

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Each dish is designed to bring a piece of the local environment to the plate, creating a memorable dining experience with connections to the natural surroundings. Afterwards, guests can take in a stunning flight back to Taupō.

The Cultural Dining Experience

Guests fly by helicopter into remote cultural lands, between the Kaimanawa and Kaweka Ranges known as Kai Waho. Guests can choose to either enjoy a walk through native beech forest to their lunch location or be dropped off directly by helicopter. Upon arrival, they meet host and chef Tom Laughlan, who has been hosting cultural experiences on his whakapapa (ancestral land) for more than 20 years.

The experience begins with lighting the hangi pit and setting the large stones to heat. Guests enjoy drinks and stories of the local history of the area while the cooking stones heat to temperature. Guests then learn how to use ancestral methods to cook and prepare their own lunch with the guidance of Laughlan and his team. After lunch and some down time, guests are flown by helicopter back to Taupō.

NEW GM FOR DGLT

Patrick Dault joined Destination Great Lake Taupo as its new general manager this September.

He replaced Jane Wilson who retired from the role in late April after many years at the helm.

Dault has worked in the tourism industry for more than 20-years, in North America and New Zealand. For the past four years he has been destination and tourism manager for Development West Coast.

"The undeniable value of business events is of strategic importance for the Taupo region, it enables the tourism sector to diversify our customer base; making the region more resilient to world events and seasonality," Dault says.

"As one of the region's priorities for tourism development, DGLT sees the successful BE sector as a catalyst for future investment in the region, thus Louise Toulmin's ongoing activity in bringing the Taupo industry together but also enabling opportunities for BE events in the community," he says.



Patrick Dault

"Business events is one of the highest grossing segments in tourism, rivalled only by luxury, thus a lucrative but also very essential segment for the Taupo region. Taupo has an undeniable advantage in the luxury and incentive sector due to the tourism operators in the region that cater to these high-yield clientele.

"I am very excited to join the fantastic team at DGLT as we unlock the full potential of the Taupo region in the business events sector."



Located in the heart of NZ's North Island

Taupō's majestic terrains and sparkling waters are only a short drive or flight away from New Zealand's largest cities. Once here, your group can enjoy the stunning lake shore views, or visit some of our cultural hotspots such as Tūrangi or Tokaanu (each under an hour away by car). Or shred, hike some of our best slopes and tracks in Tongariro National Park (less than 90 minutes by car). Enjoy the scenic drives and aerial views the region has to offer...

The journey here is just as impressive as the destination.



BE PART OF THE MOMENTUM – ACCELERATE AT PCOA24

Story Bridge viewed from
Howard Smith Wharves, Brisbane

THEME - Accelerate:

People | Technology | Experience

The Professional Conference Organisers Association (PCOA24) annual event will be held at the recently opened Star Brisbane in early December. The event brings conference and event managers, co-ordinators, producers, and corporate, government, association in-house event managers, event management students, and suppliers to the industry.

The PCOA says that the three-day program, “Accelerate,” designed by meeting managers for meeting managers, will lead participants on a dynamic journey through three core pillars: People, Technology, and Experience. They will gain invaluable insights and actionable knowledge to propel their professional growth and drive the future.

The program is crafted to foster talent

acceleration, emphasising the identification, nurturing, and empowerment of talent within organisations. Delegates will engage with cutting-edge technologies such as AI and learn how to drive growth and enhance competitiveness, and discover successful digital transformation initiatives and strategies for harnessing technology.

PCOA Workshops

There are workshops and presentations across the three days of the event, with topics including Shaping the future of corporate events, bidding for events, how to market events, being comfortable with the uncomfortable, and, for newer event professionals, from rookie to rockstar.

Rookie to rockstar: Surviving the chaos and thriving in style

This session will delve into the power of analysis for event outcomes, the importance of relationship-building, and the fundamentals of budgeting. Delegates will hear how to master time management,

multitasking, and attention to detail while learning the critical role of convention bureaus in event planning. They will gain practical insights into handling calls for abstracts, interpreting event feedback, and managing the needs of a range of delegates; and learn how to leverage membership benefits to elevate a career in the events industry. The workshop will be facilitated by Karen Sainsbury with an expert panel featuring Justin Voigt, The College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia & New Zealand, Katie Tomkins, events director at Iceberg Events and Alarnah Roberts, communications and marketing coordinator at Providence Consulting.

Annual Conference Networking Event

The Brisbane Economic Development Agency (BEDA) will present the PCOA 2024 Annual Conference Networking Event, in partnership with Howard Smith Wharves.

This premier networking event will be held at the newly renovated Rivershed, one of Brisbane’s most sought-after and unique event venues. Guests will embark on a scenic river ferry journey from Queens Wharf along the Maiwar (Brisbane River), arriving at the Rivershed as the sun sets. Under the dazzling lights of the Story Bridge, delegates can unwind, connect with where you, and accelerate their relationship building in an unparalleled setting.

Guests will enjoy live entertainment, indulge in sumptuous local cuisine, sip on premium beverages, and experience Brisbane’s unrivalled hospitality. This is the ultimate night out at PCOA 2024 with a perfect blend of networking and celebration not to be missed.



More exhibitors, more variety
at Business Events Expo 2024

BEE24

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

The BUSINESS EVENTS expo

AUCKLAND CONVENTION VENUES & EVENTS BACKS BEE

A solid calendar of contracted events for the key venues of Aotea Centre, Shed 10 and Viaduct Events Centre is building through to the end of 2025, reports Richard Dodds, manager - convention sales for Auckland Convention Venues & Events (ACVE), and the Business Events Expo is just one of them.

Although BEE is just one day in a year of action, it punches above its weight. "Getting our dedicated conventions team in front of customers in a face-to-face situation is super important for our business to capitalise on these green shoots," says Dodds. "What better way than attendance at the Business

Events Expo in November? It's an excellent opportunity to bring New Zealand's venues and operators together with quality event organisers to do business."

He notes that with 11 Auckland venues in the ACVE portfolio – from stadiums, to convention centre CBD locations, to on the water banquet venues, there is always something new to sell and something new to learn. Improving business sentiment has driven a significant volume of short-lead business for the end of the year across these sites, he says.

ACVE is supporting the Business Events Expo for the second year.



Dinner in the Waiheke Room

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(idesks). Ennis says the solution sets a new standard for audio quality and user experience, delivering clearer, more reliable communication across a range of conference environments.

Another new innovation from the company are Audicom ISO4043 booths, the only certified ISO4043 booths available in New Zealand.

“These meet the highest international standards for interpreter booths, enabling Congress Rental to offer high quality and flexibility. This ensures you can provide your delegates and interpreters with world-class experiences in Aotearoa,” says Ennis.

At the 2024 Business Events Expo, Congress Rentals will be hosting silent showcases, allowing delegates to hear presentations clearly without disturbing nearby networking conversations. The technology supports up to 32 channels of digital audio, providing flexibility and clarity for diverse communication needs.

“The expo’s ability to bring together the events industry creates a vibrant environment for collaboration and innovation – values that are at the core of what we do at Congress Rental,” says Ennis. “We’ll be at booth 104 and upstairs with the Silent Conference Technology.”

Being able to showcase its cutting-edge technology and expand its service offerings over the past year has been transformative for specialist provider of audio-visual solutions, Congress Rental New Zealand.

“In a world where seamless multilingual communication is more critical than ever, we are dedicated to providing the most advanced conferencing and event solutions, customised to meet our clients’ unique needs,” says

managing director, Liam Ennis. “Whether you’re hosting a small meeting or a large-scale international conference, we make it happen effortlessly; our goal is to empower businesses to connect, collaborate, and grow – without any worries about the ‘how’.”

A stand out development for Congress Rentals has been the launch of its new Dicentis Technology for conference microphones and interpretation desks



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BEE 2023 registration

FREE FERRY ACCESS TO BEE

Delegates coming from the Auckland CBD to the Business Events Expo will be able to take advantage of a free ferry service to the venue. It's been established because of the ongoing problems with the Wynyard Crossing Bridge that connects downtown Auckland with the Viaduct Events Centre.

The Red Boats connect Te Wero Island (outside the New Zealand Maritime Museum) and Karanga Plaza (outside the Viaduct Events Centre) every 15 minutes from 7am.



BEE 2023 expo floor

Fifty lucky buyers at BEE will receive a pair of Zeal Optics sunglasses of their choice from a specially curated selection at the expo.

Courtesy of Maui Jim Sunglasses, a new exhibitor this year, the giveaway – with a value of up to \$300 – is an impressive and generous incentive from the American exhibitor, via Australian/NZ sales manager corporate gifts Nick Maynard.

“I’m looking forward to reconnecting with our Kiwi clients at BEE this year, to

highlight all the exciting changes at Maui Jim after our recent acquisition by Kering Eyewear, and to further showcase Zeal Optics, which is also available for corporate gifting,” he says.

To qualify for the quality brand sunglasses, buyers will need to make a number of pre-scheduled appointments with exhibitors. Further details will be released to buyers when they register and are given access to the expo App to start making appointments.



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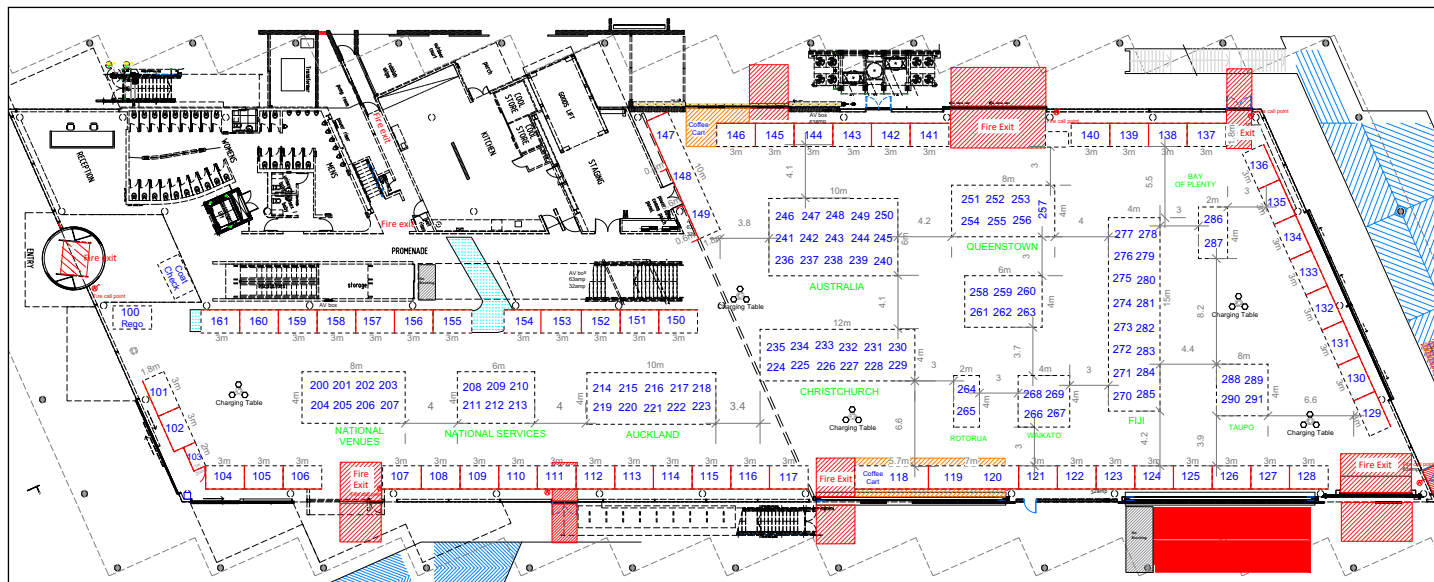


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TIGC celebrates 10 years



Show floor at Gold Coast
Convention & Exhibition Centre
Photos: Experience Gold Coast

This is Gold Coast (TGIC) celebrated its 10th year in July with more than A\$30 million expected in national and international business event leads generated at the event.

“This amount is a testament to our team, our industry partners and our city's business event offerings,” says Experience Gold Coast director of business events, Brooke Campbell.

TIGC24 featured a full-day tradeshow at Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre with scheduled business appointments showcasing more than 40 industry partners and products as well as a series of networking events and activations.

Professional conference organisers and media representatives from Australia and New Zealand experienced the Gold Coast's best business events offerings over a multi-day programme with hosted buyers given a choice of a three or four-day itinerary.

“We are the home of technology, innovation and health sciences, in a vibrant hub of entrepreneurship, surrounded by one of the most famous leisure destinations in the world – imagine what's possible,” says Campbell.

“The Gold Coast is continuing to invest in business events infrastructure, we are growing a reputation as one of the most accessible and inclusive cities in Australia and

we are working towards greater sustainability within the events industry,” Campbell says.

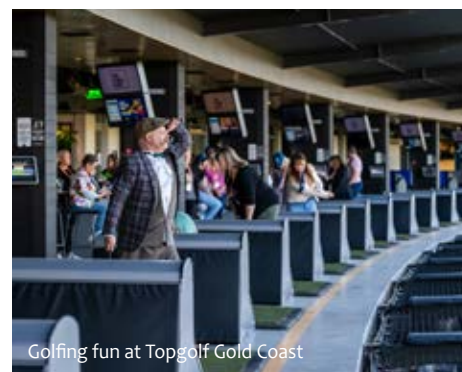
Experience Gold Coast CEO, John Warn says the business events sector is a vital part of the Gold Coast's Monday to Friday visitor economy.

“Over ten years, TIGC has connected hundreds of conference and event organisers and key decision makers with the city's most inspiring venues, extensive range of accommodation and unique once in a lifetime experiences,” Warn says.

Experience Gold Coast executive director of events, Avril Harris says TIGC24 showcased the continual transformation and evolution of the Gold Coast as a business events destination and the growing range of new products, venues and conference facilities.

“The Gold Coast has the natural advantage as the perfect backdrop for any conference, meeting and incentive group, centred between 57 kilometres of stunning coastline, 100,000 hectares of ancient rainforest, and encapsulating more than 51% of green and open space,” Harris says.

At the welcome function guests were treated to food, drinks and entertainment at Kirra Beach House, a new venue on the southern end of the Gold Coast. And the gala evening lived up to its reputation of being a show stopper with a signature event at Miami Marketta.



Golfing fun at Topgolf Gold Coast



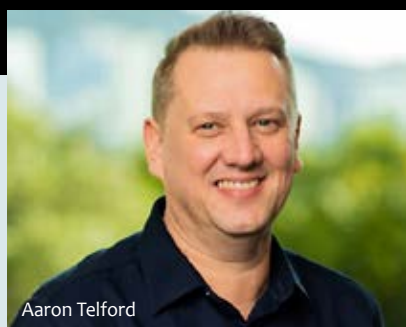
Lunch at YOT Club



Evening showcase at Miami Marketta



Farewell lunch at Currumbin
Wildlife Sanctuary



Aaron Telford

Promotion for Telford at Tākina

Aaron Telford has been promoted to manager of venues sales at Tākina Events, following his role as senior account manager.

With a strong background in hospitality sales and operations, Telford brings valuable experience from working with renowned

hotel groups like Starwood and Accor. His expertise, combined with his time at Tākina Events, equips him to lead the venues sales team in managing a diverse portfolio of spaces, including Tākina, the purpose-built convention and exhibition centre, and Te Papa, New Zealand's national museum.

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By Lisa Hopkins

chief executive
Business Events Industry
Aotearoa (BEIA)



Unity and collaboration across the industry

A little over a year ago, Martin Sirk, an international business events expert and consultant, shared his insights with BEIA members, industry influencers, and business leaders on the state of New Zealand's business events sector. During an interview with Grant Bradley, deputy editor for Business at the New Zealand Herald, Martin expressed his optimism about New Zealand's prospects in the global business events (BE) market, noting that the country was at an exciting point in its journey. He believed that New Zealand had the potential to compete for a share of the highly competitive global BE market, which is valued at \$2.7 trillion.

However, Martin also issued a word of caution. He emphasised that this opportunity had a limited window, perhaps five years, as New Zealand continued to develop and promote new infrastructure, including convention centres, international hotel investments, airport upgrades, and other foundational developments. To ensure the long-term success of New Zealand's business events sector, Martin advised the country could not simply rely on these infrastructure advancements alone, but also place focus on content and storytelling. It must be authentic, not a superficial approach

to merely draw an audience.

These ideas underscore the need for a more comprehensive, 'whole of industry' direction. This approach, when aligned with Piata Mai - the National Business Events Strategic Direction, will ensure a more enduring and successful sector. It's a call for unity and collaboration across the industry.

Funding and promotion

Firstly, we need to consider funding and promotion. It's not enough to attract events that contribute only economically; they should also deliver positive social impacts as a standard. This is not just a goal, but a responsibility we all share. Levers, such as subvention, are a standard approach, and widely used. While subvention funding has its critics, it's essential to recognise that Australia, our largest and closest competitor, is investing heavily in this space. Both countries share the challenge of geographic distance from major markets. Therefore, it is crucial to level the playing field and offer inducements that make New Zealand an attractive option for international business delegates.

Focus on incentives

Secondly, there is a focus on incentive events, which New Zealand needs to embrace more fully by genuinely understanding this sector. Large corporate organisations often host incentive events to reward exceptional performance or encourage behavioural change. These events are typically high-value, with participants expecting unique, bespoke experiences. There is a significant opportunity for growth in this market, and New Zealand is an exceptional incentive destination.

Importance of domestic market

Thirdly, with much talk about international business, we shouldn't forget the importance of the domestic market. Domestic business events account for around 70 per cent of all events held in New Zealand, and this market proved its resilience during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the domestic market needs continued support and engagement, especially as international economic stability remains a concern. A stable domestic economy will impact the market more quickly than the global rebound.

Success in these areas requires a united effort from all stakeholders within the sector. This includes collaboration between the government at national and local levels, Tourism New Zealand, and industry. Each

must work in harmony to create a thriving ecosystem that supports business events in the long term. Each can also contribute to the creation of an event which is exceptional and compelling.

Tourism New Zealand's approach to increasing off-peak and mid-week international visitation aligns perfectly with the typical characteristics of business events. Additionally, the Piata Mai framework provides a structured approach for businesses within industry to incorporate these strategies into their own plans.

BEIA is engaging with the Minister for Tourism, Hon. Matt Doocey, and has shared recent announcements from Australia, demonstrating the significant investments and inducements our closest competitor uses to revitalise its business events sector. However, a different approach is needed for the domestic market – one that is more direct and inclusive. Events like MEETINGS and regional initiatives throughout the year are vital to sustaining engagement and creating opportunities for growth within the local market.

This is a big conversation, and I am looking forward to having it when the industry gathers for conference in Taranaki in November.

Feedback has been particularly strong following the recent opinion piece in The Post, after comments made by Prime Minister Luxon at the Local Government New Zealand conference. It is important to understand that the Prime Minister's remarks were not specifically targeting the business events sector or the recently opened Tākina Convention Centre. This was reiterated in a recent discussion with Minister Doocey.

However, there is still work to be done to educate policymakers about the significant role the business events sector can play in New Zealand's economy and society. Minister Doocey is joining us at the BEIA conference and has agreed to a conversation on various issues. Given this will be the Minister's first interaction with industry in the room, it will be a great opportunity to show the manaakitanga our industry is famous for.

With the right approach, New Zealand can solidify its position as a key player in this lucrative industry. For now, the conversation continues, and I'm looking forward to doing that at conference. I hope you can join us.

Nga mihi nui,
Lisa Hopkins



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