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HOW TO ADAPT TO A FAST-CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

— VOLUME 1 | **2021 VOLUME 2** | VOLUME 3 | VOLUME 4 —

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THE BIG
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The Future is Communal

Over the last few months, associations have realized that events, or at least physical events for that matter, the ones that were for many their main revenue generators, are not the panacea anymore. Nonprofits organizations, professional societies, trade associations have been forced to reevaluate the way they connect to their members, the way they bring value to them, the way they stay relevant.

In fact, when you think about it, the idea of thousands of individuals from every corner of the globe gathering for a number of days in one distinct location is a modern concept. And that concept needs a bit of a rethink, especially in these ever-changing times when only travelling that is indispensable will be considered.

It's time to bet on year-round engagement where the exchange of knowledge, expertise, and craftsmanship can easily flow, unobstructed, free from the constraints and the sugar rush of a once-a-year event. And this can only be done through communities – a phenomenon that gave rise to some of the greatest inventions and advances in the ancient world that would become the foundations of our modern world.

In this regard, if you stop thinking in terms of events and start thinking in terms of communities, and digital

communities specifically, you will enter a whole new world, a world that is a catalyst for change. And that does not mean we should attach any less significance to events, not the least bit, in fact.

We just need to move to brand-new business models, where engagement is steadily maintained and encouraged throughout the year. And then you add key events to that, like the proverbial cherry on top.

We know there's nothing new here. In fact, community-building has been quite the buzzword lately. But the fact is that communities begin with individuals who find ways to take positive action to change not just their own situation, but also that of those around them. In that regard, they have to be considered as catalysts for a better future, as the whole industry, not just us, is saying it.

That's why we so sincerely believe in our #Roadmap2030 initiative, a community platform for associations only. Critical to #Roadmap2030's mission is to build their capacity, influence and power to help them be the best version of themselves they can be, through peer-to-peer network and carefully curated content. Our approach is collaborative, with an emphasis on education, listening, sharing information and resources, and facilitating learning. This is key for a sustainable future.



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Building Back Better Series

Health for All



In this third installment of Boardroom’s ‘Building Back Better’ series, **Lane Nieset** continues to explore why associations may be the key to advancing the ambitious goals of a better world – especially when it comes to health for all.

As the pandemic and COVID-19 vaccine have proved, location plays a large role in access to universal healthcare. The economic systems in place have shown their cracks as inequalities have become alarmingly apparent, leading to widespread crisis in countries that lack the medical means and resources to deliver affordable and high-quality care. As societies are rebuilding post-COVID, it's time for associations to embrace the role they play in setting up minimum standards for health care cross the world, promoting and supporting the right to "health for all" and a clean and safe environment to live in.

PROGRESSING PUBLIC HEALTH

The European Public Health Association's (EUPHA) definition of public health is *"the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health and well-being through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private, communities and individuals, and includes the broader area of public health, health services research, health service delivery and health systems design."*

Half of the world's population, roughly 3.5 billion people, don't receive or have access to necessary public health services. And, according to an article from the World Economic Forum, 800 million people spend 10% of their household budgets on health expenses. This, in turn, results in extreme poverty for 100 million of the very same people. As a way to drive the *"wellbeing economics for the COVID-19 recovery,"* the Wellbeing Economy Alliance established 10 principles for "building back better." One of the priorities: universal basic needs, which means health care coverage available for the global population free of charge at a point of access. But in a point mentioned by the World Economic Forum, *"The global view is of a fragmented and unequal healthcare system where, all too often, the gaps in society are widening. For years, universal health coverage has been discussed, but little progress has been accomplished."*

In order to develop and execute a successful public health strategy, key principles like equity, access to essential health care, timeliness, results, accountability, placement of strong local leadership and strategic coordination of the effort need to be considered. EUPHA, for example, is voicing the importance of human rights and social justice when it comes to public health issues, stressing that law and policy can be the key tools in terms of improving and establishing public health policy, practice and research.

In a World Economic Forum article, Royal Philips CEO Frans van Houten notes that digital healthcare tools and services can also help to improve serves in emerging countries, but the issue lies in infrastructure limitations. As a way to address global access and quality constraints, as well as meet the Sustainable Development Goals, Van Houten sites the importance of digital technology, inclusive innovation and progressive partnerships,

as well as innovating business models to embrace a multi-stakeholder approach. *"With global levels of disease on the rise, to tackle the current cycle of inconsistent access, rising costs and falling health outcomes, we first need a new approach to traditional volume-based reimbursements in healthcare, which can act as a constraint in the effective use of health data and the adoption of eHealth solutions,"* he writes.

A WHOLE NEW WORLD

Through knowledge and solution-sharing, associations have an important voice in the global responsibility of safe and cost-effective healthcare and the creation of a regulated healthcare policy. While half the world's population lacks access to essential health services, nearly one-fifth of spending in the OECD and \$1 in the U.S. can be saved annually by eliminating ineffective spending on global health. This is the goal of the World Economic Forum's Global Coalition for Value in Healthcare, which launched in March with a community of four healthcare innovation hubs in the Netherlands, Portugal, Wales and Denmark. The goal is to identify and develop cost-effective and patient-centered healthcare models by bringing together governments, leading companies, academia and experts to *"co-design and pilot innovative new approaches to person-centered healthcare."*

Another example of a multi-stakeholder approach is Philips' creation of 10 Community Life Centers in Sub-Saharan Africa, which bring together national and local government, communities, and service provider to develop the community-owned healthcare clinics. Not only do the clinics deliver healthcare thanks to digital technologies, they also serve as economic and social development drivers for these remote and low-income communities, since they feature solar power units, clean water, LED lighting and solutions for waste management.

GREEN FUTURE

Healthcare policies can help serve as a plan of action to guide specific outcomes or help organizations with decision-making and future-planning. They also help employees understand the organization's own desires and what their own roles and responsibilities look like within the group. The greening of medical associations, for example, reducing carbon footprint from supply chain and daily operations, relies on staff engagement in order to be successful. The concept of "green health" is one that is becoming widely discussed as the healthcare sector not only applies to the wellbeing of the population, it also refers to the environmental impact generated by healthcare, 80% of which is general waste and the other 20% of which is hazardous and may be infectious, toxic or radioactive. This affects the environment and world's ecosystem, since it contributes to the loss of global habitat and biodiversity.

The Korea Society of Green Hospitals, for instance, is a great result from the solution-sharing and education driven by the World Medical Association (WMA). The organization focuses on low-carbon growth in medical practice to reduce the ecological footprint of hospitals in Korea.

A recent publication in the Italian Association of Chemical Engineering explained how healthcare organizations have three major impacts on society: economical, environmental and social. According to the text on "Sustainability at the Healthcare Organizations," *terms like sustainability, transparent management, respect for the environment, and social responsibility are concepts that each day gain more importance in the business scenario, which is becoming not anymore just about financial aspects. Sustainability*

and these three dimensions must be defined in the organization's policy and its strategic planning."

Associations are key to helping connect and define the guidelines and actions for these policies to establish the standards for health care across the globe that places importance on two main aspects: respecting the population and respecting the environment.

This article is graciously sponsored by Madrid Convention Bureau, whose values align with the Building Back Better concept.



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ASSOCIATIONS SET THE FUTURE IN MOTION

International associations of associations, such as the European Society of Association Executives (ESAE), the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), the African Society of Association Executives (AfSAE), AC Forum and the Union of International Associations (UIA), work to advance and promote the association management profession: they have grown in membership as the need for radical changes to the better increases and an alignment of objectives is crucial. Members - associations in this case - need a homogenous solid basis, a platform to consult with in order to acquire the best knowledge for future steps, a clear understanding of their role in the recovery process. How can all these pieces and differences fall into place so that everyone achieves their set goals?

Most of these organizations agree that educating associations and their executives is key for a better future. Ioannis Pallas, Association Manager at European Society of Association Executives (ESAE), shares his insights: *"The health crisis accelerated changes that were already at play in our sector. The professionalization of our services, the inclusiveness of our structures and the sustainability towards which our actions need to aim for, had already been identified as priorities even before Covid. Nevertheless, most Associations moved slowly towards achieving these goals. Today, we have no choice but to accelerate, in order not to become obsolete. ESAE is centrally positioned as an Association of Associations to help its members become the ambassadors of this change. We do not merely educate the Association professionals of today; we also build the foundations for the Executives of tomorrow. And raising the profile of our Association Management profession in the process is a fundamental way to do so."*

Educating executives on how to do business best in the future requires the adoption of more progressive tools, as the inability to travel has taught us. Associations are adapting their strategies according to their members' needs, as Amy Hissrich, CAE at

the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), informs us: *"ASAE is in the midst of a strategic planning process, initiated before the pandemic actually, and we are envisioning becoming a digital-first organization. That doesn't mean we're going to stop doing in-person conferences, but it will mean taking more of an omni-channel approach to the way our members connect and learn within ASAE, where some in-person offerings will be reimagined for virtual formats that can be stream-able and on-demand. Our lines of communication are going to be critical to the success of our goals."*

However, offering educational platforms with random topics will not bring the desired results. A more targeted approach after attentively listening to associations' needs will certainly go a long way. *"As the community of association executives in our region, our overall role is to help mitigate the impact that the pandemic has had on our associations. The impact brought about by lack of revenue sources such as non-dues, membership dues, conferences, expos, and events; other issues related to member engagements, staffing and work policies affecting performances of staff and volunteers. When we are able to understand these issues from our members, then we are able to offer a plan,"* explains Jeffers Miruka, President of the African Society of Association Executives (AfSAE).

Once knowledge of what is vital for a sustainable future has settled in, associations will - and many have already started doing so - look within their management, structures and strategies for change. *"Largely influenced by the changing association landscape, the theme of the next AC Forum Annual Meeting is 'Building a sustainable future'. This is a hot topic among our members, and there has been much discussion about planning for the future and 'future-proofing' associations. Indeed, AC Forum ran a recent webinar on planning for 2021 and beyond, where C-level staff of our member associations gathered to discuss and review changes in their business planning going forward,"* says Finola Quinn, Secretariat Manager at Associations and Conference (AC) Forum.

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What Matters is the Experience of Staff & Members

For ESAE, **Mohamed Mezghani**, Secretary General, International Association of Public Transport (UITP), makes the case for a member-intimate organization, the only way for associations in general to stay relevant.

The coronavirus crisis has questioned the way associations serve their members. The impossibility to hold large in-person conferences and exhibitions during the last year and most probably for several more months has forced us to develop new services and engage differently with members.

Despite the absence of events and in-person meetings, members have never been as engaged and active as they have been during this crisis. Committee meetings attracted many more people, more diverse profiles (more women, more young people) and from more countries, when organized remotely. With active advocacy, strong media engagement, numerous webinars and e-training sessions, a rich production of knowledge papers and study reports, diverse research projects, on-demand initiatives and a close follow up and coverage of COVID-related issues, UITP has offered its members and stakeholders a diverse and dense portfolio of services. We have succeeded to be up to the expectations of members and demonstrate the relevance of the association and the importance of belonging to a community, today more than ever.

In times of crisis, it's essential to go back to the basics, the foundations of the organization. And the foundations of an association like UITP are the people: the staff, who work in the association and those we serve, the members, both of whom are engaged by the mission of UITP. Everything else is nothing but means to an end goal: events, studies, committees, trainings, webinars, projects, newsletters, etc. are engagement tools. If you ask members why they join an association or what they want from it, they will never tell you that it is to attend an event or

contribute to a project or read a document. Same for most staff, it is less about the salary or the job title. For both, employees and members, it's their experience of the association which is key.

*"Employee wellbeing is about understanding your employees from a holistic perspective which can only be achieved within organizations that are employee-centric... When people are in a state of wellbeing at work, they're able to develop their potential, be productive and creative, build positive relationships with others, better cope with stress, and make meaningful contributions."*¹ In other words, if we ensure the wellbeing of our staff, we will make our members happier with our services.

Wellbeing covers three domains: physical, mental and social. Those three aspects are impacted by the crisis. In UITP, we are developing actions to make sure they have positive impacts on staff engagement, because our employees believe in the higher purpose of the organization and feel belonging to it; on their motivation, because they feel recognized, trusted, empowered and having an impact on the organization; and on personal development, because they perceive they are taken care of at a personal level and see opportunities for professional growth. Measuring performance in terms of staff wellbeing is not about quantifying the input (ex: number of training hours, level of salaries, social benefits, etc.) but rather measuring the output by analyzing the impact on employees in terms of engagement, motivation and personal development. In UITP, we are engaged in measuring those elements via periodic surveys completed by the employees.

1. <https://blog.smarp.com/employee-wellbeing-definition-importance-best-practice>



The approach towards members aims to answer their expectations by offering a personalized experience. The main lesson drawn from the crisis is that we need to be available, proactive and caring. This is what made UITP appreciated and praised by the members and other stakeholders. In other words, it's important to start from what people want and then develop the right service and the right experience for them. This implies a very good knowledge of their expectations, not only at the company level but also at individual level. The aim is to better know those people, their expectations (from the association), their aspirations (what they dream of), their ambition (how they want to grow), their plans (their company's projects). This needs to have the right approach, the right behaviours to get to know them better. And it needs to be part of the association culture. The association team has to be proactive and go towards members. It needs time, resources and the right expertise.

This intelligence/knowledge should be structured and shared in an organized way. It may imply revisiting the way the team is organized, acquiring new tools and defining new working processes. This is the way for being a customer-intimate association. *"Customer intimacy means segmenting and targeting markets precisely and then tailoring offerings to exactly match the demands of those niches. Companies that excel in customer intimacy engender tremendous customer loyalty... Companies pursuing a*

*strategy of customer intimacy continually tailor and shape products and services to fit an increasingly fine definition of the customer."*² We strongly believe in that. That's the way to attract more members and to retain them.

The crisis was a sharp reminder that members and employees are the foundations of the association. UITP is not an event organizer or a publishing house but a membership association that happens to organize events and publish reports. During the crisis, our WHY did not falter, despite not being able to deliver many of our habitual services. We found alternative ways to achieve our aims by focusing on members and caring about them while caring about the wellbeing of our staff. We are revisiting the member experience, ensuring that each interaction, the whole journey, is designed in a way to be positive and consistent. And this is only possible if we also provide UITP staff with a good experience. *"In order to win the market place we must win the workplace"* said Christiane Just, Director of Lean Transformation of Transdev, a leading member of UITP.

For more information about ESAE, with which Boardoom has an exclusive partnership, visit www.esae.eu



2. 'Fundamentals of Global Strategy' by Cornelis A. de Kluyver, University of Oregon, 2012

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Competitor Cooperation, Sustainability & Antitrust: Time for a Reset

Trade associations are well placed to support sustainability initiatives, but competition law can act as a brake, especially in concentrated industries. The need for transformational change to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 is expected to require collective action by industry to achieve greater sustainability. In this article, **David Gabathuler**, Senior Legal Consultant with Brussels-based Kadrant, discusses how competition law is being recalibrated to ensure that industry can receive the necessary guidance to engage in collective action, in particular to help tackle climate change.

THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

With its 'European Green Deal' and proposed Climate Law, the European Union is at the forefront of initiatives to tackle climate change and decarbonize industry. Its ambitious target of net-zero greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions by 2050 (and a 55% reduction by 2030 compared to 1990 levels) has profound implications for the EU economy and will require transformational change across many industrial sectors, especially for energy intensive industries such as chemicals, steel, glass and paper which make up more than half of the energy consumption of all EU industry and around a quarter of GHGs. Similar challenges will arise across the world as more countries and blocs commit to decarbonize their economies.

Industries will need to develop new breakthrough technologies and processes if they are to reach net-zero by 2050.

McKinsey have estimated that reaching net-zero would require investing an estimated €28 trillion in clean technologies and techniques over the next 30 years. Broken down, this represents around 4 percent of current EU GDP annually. However, a large part of this investment can come from redirecting investments that would otherwise have funded carbon-intensive technologies.¹

COLLECTIVE INDUSTRY ACTION ON SUSTAINABILITY

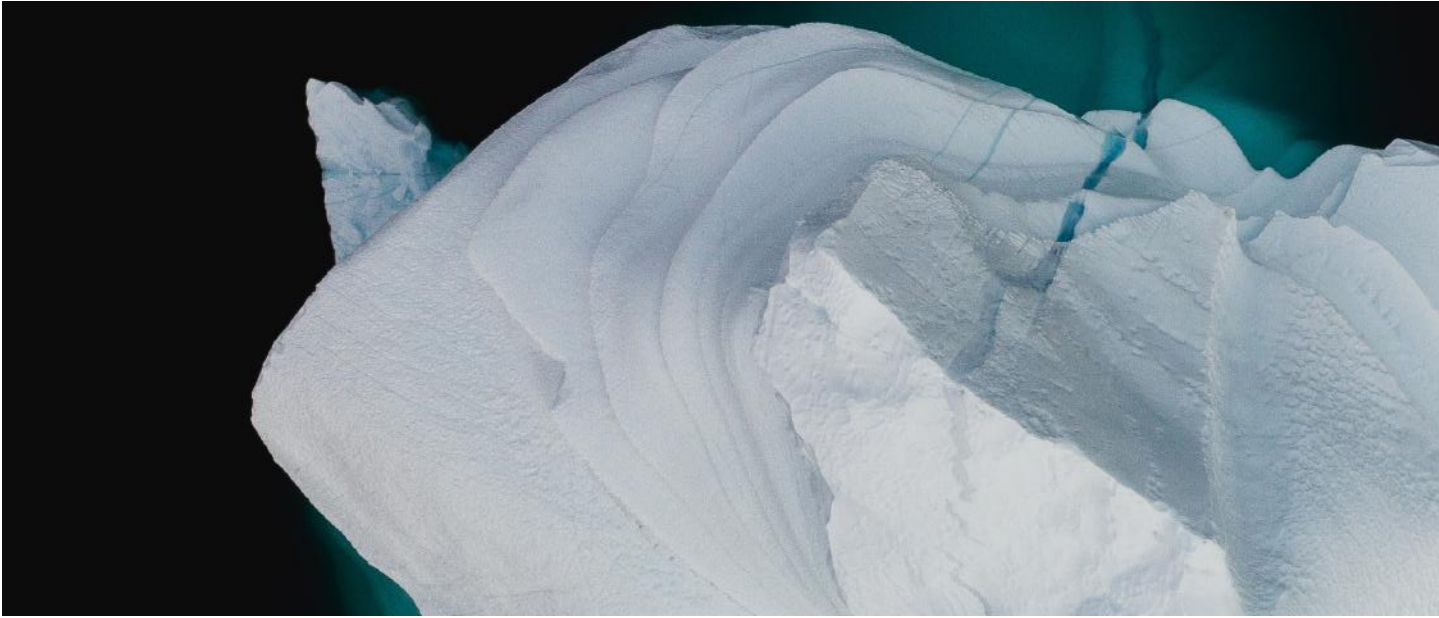
It is expected that rapid transformational change will require industry to move collectively towards more sustainable business models (individual action is not always likely to be sufficient or effective), for example by

- 1 working together to develop new cleaner technologies,
- 2 sharing test results and other sensitive data to allow

environmentally-friendly alternatives to be introduced more quickly.

- 3 collaborating to reduce waste, improve recycling and lower the carbon footprint of the supply chain or
- 4 setting new products standards that commit to higher environmental goals.

Many of these initiatives are already taking place and trade associations are often closely involved in activities that will lead industry down a more "sustainable" path: one according to the European Commission that meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. But associations (and their legal advisors) are often reluctant to sign off on cooperation between members that is closely connected with the commercial sphere without clear evidence that the competition rules will not be infringed.



COMPETITION RULES CAST THEIR NET WIDELY

This is hardly surprising. The EU competition rules (and equivalent rules in many other countries) are very far-reaching and sanctions can be severe. The prohibition on anti-competitive arrangements (Article 101 TFEU and equivalent national rules) casts its net widely and requires strong evidence of economic benefit to allow potentially harmful agreements to meet the conditions for exemptability. Deciding that cooperation between competitors is not caught by Article 101 in the first place can be challenging, but it is a particularly complex exercise when it involves balancing the pro- and anti-competitive effects of an agreement.

Moreover, competition authorities are generally suspicious of cooperation between competitors, especially in concentrated industries, and have taken action in the past against cooperation arrangements that appear at first sight to bring long-term benefit to the environment.

The Dutch Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM) took action in 2015 against an arrangement between supermarkets,

poultry farmers, and broiler meat processors regarding the sale of chicken meat produced under enhanced animal welfare-friendly conditions (the so-called ‘Chicken of Tomorrow’). One particular element of the proposed arrangements was for Dutch supermarkets to remove “regular” chicken meat from the shelves. The ACM believed such cooperation was contrary to the competition rules as there was insufficient benefit to consumers due to higher prices and fewer options.

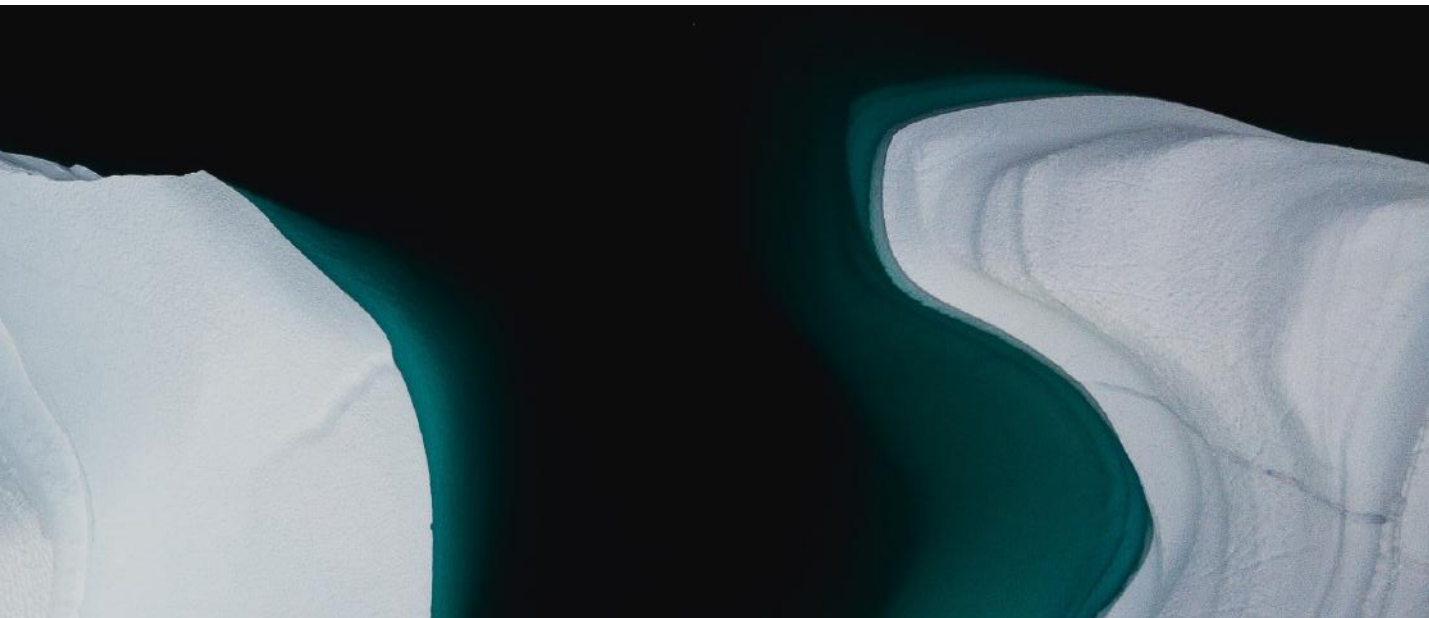
RESETTING THE COMPETITION RULES

Competition authorities are realising that whilst competition law may not be the optimal instrument to address climate change (environmental laws, green investment measures, tax rules and even state aid are better mechanisms), it should not act as a break on cooperation that will enhance sustainability. There has, therefore, been a number of initiatives to start resetting the status quo.

The European Commission carried out a consultation on “Competition policy and the Green Deal” in autumn 2020 as a precursor to conference on the same topic

in February this year. Many European trade associations were closely involved in the debate and highlighted the difficulty of engaging in collective sustainability initiatives due to antitrust concerns. For example cefic (representing the European chemical industry) highlighted, amongst other things, an urgent need for EU and national competition authorities to adopt clear and detailed sustainability-specific guidelines, including examples to assist business to self-assess legitimate industry cooperation.² Cepi (representing the European paper industry) called for an exemption to be introduced for cooperation that is necessary for the relevant industry to achieve the goals in the European Green Deal where less stringent measures could not achieve the goals as effectively.³

The European Commission is currently in the process of revising its antitrust guidelines that address cooperation between competitors and it is expected that the new guidelines will specifically address sustainability agreements and take a more flexible approach.⁴ However, as EU Commissioner for competition, Margrethe



Vestager stated *“what we can’t do - not even in the name of sustainability - is to turn a blind eye to agreements that hurt competition and consumers”*.⁵

Other competition authorities have also taken steps to move the debate forward and provide industry with greater predictability. The Dutch ACM conducted a public consultation in July last year on draft guidelines on sustainability agreements.⁶ The draft explained in what situations competitors are able to work together in order to help combat the climate crisis, and to realise other sustainability objectives. The Greek competition agency issued a staff discussion paper and proposed, amongst other things, a radical solution - a *sandbox*⁷ - allowing industry to experiment with new business formats that aim to quickly achieve sustainability goals, and which involve cooperation between competing undertakings or even more permanent changes in market structure.⁸ Other authorities such as the UK Competition and Markets Authority has also published high-level guidance.⁹

There is also a need to provide practical guidance to industry based on real life

examples and the European Commission and other competition authorities are looking for test cases to be able to set out in concrete terms how their new thinking will apply to sustainability initiatives. Although understandably, there is a reluctance to be the first case (or one of the first cases) to go before an authority, especially if there is any doubt as to the compatibility of the cooperation with the competition rules.

RECALIBRATION OF COMPETITION WILL ALLOW MORE SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

A resetting of competition authorities’ approach to collaborative arrangements between competitors and especially sustainability initiatives combined with clear and practical guidance and readily applicable safe-harbours should provide industry (and their advisers) with the legal certainty to engage in wider forms of cooperation to tackle climate change without competition law acting as a brake. The antitrust rules will continue to be highly relevant, especially as they are ideally placed to keep markets open and

competitive and ensure that consumers benefit. However, a new approach will allow antitrust compliance to be better calibrated to the competition risk.

1. McKinsey: How the EU could achieve net-zero emissions at net-zero cost, 3 December 2020.
2. Cefic response to the European Commission call for contributions Competition Policy supporting the Green Deal, 25 November 2020.
3. Cefic, Contribution to European Commission regarding the European Green Deal, 19 November 2020.
4. The European Commission carried out a consultation as part of its review of the competition rules applicable to horizontal agreements between 6 November 2019 and 12 February 2020.
5. Speech Margrethe Vestager ‘Competition and sustainability’, GCLC Conference on Sustainability and Competition Policy, Brussels, 24 October 2019.
6. Dutch Authority for Consumers and Markets, Draft guidelines ‘Sustainability Agreements’, 9 July 2020.
7. A sandbox is defined as ‘a safe space where both regulated and unregulated firms can experiment with innovative products, services, business models and delivery mechanisms without immediately incurring all the normal regulatory consequences of engaging in such activity’: Financial Conduct Authority, ‘Regulatory Sandbox’, (2015) Research Paper.
8. Hellenic Competition Commission Staff Discussion Paper on sustainability issues and competition law, 17 September 2020.
9. UK Competition and Markets Initiatives ‘Environmental sustainability agreements and competition law’, 27 January 2021.



Many successes that
associations remain
been delivered because
approaches to leadership
ways of working

that have ensured
relevant have
cause of agile
ership and agile

FEATURE

How to Adapt to a Fast-Changing Environment

Agility. This word has been overused over the last few months. Yes, of course, associations, if they are run and managed properly, should be agile and nimble, especially at times of crisis like these. But what does this mean exactly? Where does the term come from? Is agile the only way to go? And how exactly can we make the case for agile associations which can create alignment through constant communications, strategy, vision and purpose? This what this Special Feature explores.

Agility or Sociality?

International Advisor to the Global Association Hubs **Martin Sirk** makes the case for associations as communities in which trust, authentic engagement practices, mission-driven advocacy, and sustainable values have pride of place.

First there came Time and Motion studies, then Total Quality Management and Kaizen from Japan, followed by Enterprise Resource Planning, Business Process Reengineering, 360-Degree Reviews, global consultants' favourite Six Sigma, and narcissistic bosses' favourite Management by Wandering Around. Today, software rules the intellectual and economic airwaves, so it was perhaps inevitable that the language, concepts and techniques from the IT project development world would attain general management-speak dominance.

Because to be clear: when consultants and academics refer to "*agility*" as a business concept, they aren't talking about dictionary definitions of common usage, such as "*the power of moving quickly and easily; nimbleness*" or "*the ability to think and draw conclusions quickly; intellectual acuity*." If this was the case, it's easy to unanimously conclude that being agile is a fantastic idea for any organization, simply by considering some of agility's antonyms: "*sluggishness*", "*clumsiness*", "*rigidity*". No association or company wants to be synonymous with any of those labels! In fact, calling for associations to adopt this kind of agility is a trivial, non-contestable position.

Let's look more closely at what is meant by agility as derived from its software development origins: it actually refers to self-organizing and cross-functional teams and their users (or clients), who together determine complex project breakdowns and priorities using "*scrums*" (please never call these "meetings"), and deliver each component of the project via "*sprints*", short-duration

time-periods designed to ensure a set of clearly-specified tasks are completed as efficiently as possible. These agile processes should be designed to be non-hierarchical, incorporate super-fast feedback mechanisms to overcome blockages, be delivered in small blocks so as to enable budgets to avoid spiralling inflation (yet somehow no-one I know has ever come across a software project that costs less than twice the original estimate!), and involve large whiteboards and hundreds of coloured Post-It notes that migrate almost magically from a "*to-do*" column to the "*completed*" side of the ledger.

Asking associations to adopt this more precisely-engineered type of agility is symptomatic of a general trend towards worshipping at the altar of corporate efficiency. "*Customer-focus*" (the member as consumer), "*new market penetration*" (grow, grow, grow), "*profitability*" (not worth doing if there's no decent return), and other corporate metrics of success and decision-taking have increasingly found their way into the vocabularies and mindsets of association boards and executives.

I would argue that rather than agility, or indeed any future management theory concept from the corporate world, associations need to adopt and embrace "*sociality*", defined as "*the state or quality of being social*".

In other words, associations need to double-down on the attributes and advantages that they naturally possess as communities of common interest, no matter whether

that interest is intellectual, social, business, or societal.

In our processes, decision-making, and business cultures, the social nature of association enterprises should play the most dominant, front-of-mind role. We should be talking about concepts such as circles of trust, authentic engagement practices, mission-driven advocacy, and values-led prioritization. Association events should be celebrations of community and petri-dishes for bottom-up experimentation, rather than transactional educational marketplaces. Partnerships with event- and HQ-hosting cities, with sponsors and service providers should be built on shared values and mutual recognition of the societal value that associations and their events have the unique power to create.

And here's the thing: adopting a business philosophy with sociality at its heart will make associations more responsive to their members' genuine, long-term interests (including those driven by hugely important member-to-member relationships), it will generate more member-driven projects and innovations, it will allow the association to divest itself of irrelevant or mission-distracting activities. In fact, for an outside observer, any such association will appear to be most amazingly agile!

Martin Sirk is International Advisor to **Global Association Hubs** (a partnership between Brussels, Dubai, Singapore & Washington DC), a partner to both Boardroom Media and to #Roadmap2030, the new platform for year-round discussion of the big issues that will shape the future world of associations.

The Voice of AC Forum

Creating Safe Spaces to Support Agility

In this column, **Tracy Bury**, President, AC Forum, and Deputy CEO, World Physiotherapy argues that agility is critical to avoid injury when changing direction – just look at sports. So, in what ways does this apply to associations?

Have you ever googled agility and seen what images appear? Take a look and you will find images mostly of sports people... or dogs! Then take a look at some of the titles for the subject matter associated with these images and you will find things such as, disruption and the pace of change, agility as the currency of success, why entrepreneurs need agility, and success comes from adaptability. So, if sporting images are heavily associated with agility in business why is that, and what can we take from that to the association sector? Or maybe Google is clever and knows I'm a physiotherapist and picks images that fit my profile!

Many of those sporting images focused on drills associated with obstacles (so do the ones with dogs!), and with activities often associated with change of direction conditioning for injury prevention. In the sporting arena activities that require fast changes of direction are often seen as risky and the way to mitigate risk is to develop agility through practice, reflex conditioning and adaptability.

Over the last 13 months, many of the successes that have ensured associations remain relevant and connected to their members, have been delivered because of agile approaches to leadership and agile ways of working. So were those organizations already rehearsed in agile working to be flexible and adaptable to foresee and manage risk? Whilst there might be a qualified yes for some – where that mindset and approach already was part of the culture of the organization, few would own up to foreseeing the major obstacle of a global pandemic and being rehearsed to avoid the potential injury that could result.

THE NEEDS OF MEMBERS

Reflecting on AC Forum, as an association of associations, and our response to what happened, we quickly focused on the needs of our members and the requirement to stay relevant and deliver value – to be there for them when they needed us. We had already set out on a path of transformation as an association. We'd been working to advance our governance and business sustainability. We'd reviewed our bylaws and the requirements of membership, with members approving in January 2020 a move that opened up membership to international organizations headquartered outside of Europe. We had a new permanent secretariat just starting. We had engaged members and a strong sense of community already in place. Critically, for a small association with limited resources, we had a Board fully committed to evolving the way we worked and our activities to do what we did best – staying true to our values and purpose, connecting our members for peer-to-peer support, shared learning and co-creation of solutions. We played to our strengths – individual associations and their teams could learn and adapt faster and with greater agility by learning together.

How did we learn together to support agility? We created safe spaces to share success stories, advice and guidance, but perhaps, more importantly, those safe spaces allowed for honest reflections on what didn't go so well. If I knew then, what I know now, I would have... was a valuable way to frame experiences and share learning. Not only to avoid wheels being reinvented, but to move those wheels in new directions faster and with greater effectiveness and



impact. We could all advance and be more agile if we didn't work in our own association silo.

In essence, we already had the right culture and organizational intent to evolve and with that provided the platform and environment to bring our membership together as an agile team. Whilst as an association it is important to make every member feel valued in their own right, and to respect and embrace the diversity in your membership, as AC Forum we see every one of our members as partners. By associations for associations defines who we are - we are better together.

ADAPTATIVE RESPONSES

Independent teams, our member associations, had the freedom to collaborate with ease across our membership in creative ways that were flexible, innovative and able to respond at speed - something that has been essential over the course of the last 13 months. This has allowed our organizations to be agile in responding to the changing needs of their associations and members, supported through our strongly connected community with meaningful and trusted relationships and shared data and insights.

Within associations good governance is important for trust and accountability, but often governance structures, such as multiple layers of committees, don't necessarily make for fast decision making. What we have seen over the last year has been a desire to ensure that some flexibility and a review of approaches supported effective and timely decision making, including a review of appetites for risk. This was best achieved when management teams and trustees/board members worked with fresh approaches to agile leadership.

Thinking back to the sports arena, whether a team-based sport or a solo activity, the ability to deliver personal bests and avoid injury is often associated with agility. That agility is closely associated with adaptive responses to respond to rapid changes of direction. The same applies to associations. What we have had over the last 13 months is a rapid transformation period with many successes coming from the opportunities created, supported by greater agility in the way we get things done - let's hold on to that and we'll stay at the top of our game!

For Associations wanting to learn more about AC Forum and membership, please visit www.acforum.net

Adjusting to the New Normal

For IAPCO, **Ajay Bhojwani**, Managing Director, MCI Middle East, argues that only organizations that are able to adapt to the new world's order and fast-changing environments will survive.



Since the lockdowns were introduced a year back, irrespective of the city or country in which one lived, much has changed and evolved. New formats of work - from home, flexible hours, and much more - are now the reality and organizations are adapting them to not just deal with the pandemic but also for the long term. It is crucial for associations to be adaptable and have an agile strategy to survive the economic downturn in order to go back to their original growth plans. This has become extremely important as we grapple with the new reality where there are far more "unknown-unknowns" than "known-knowns".

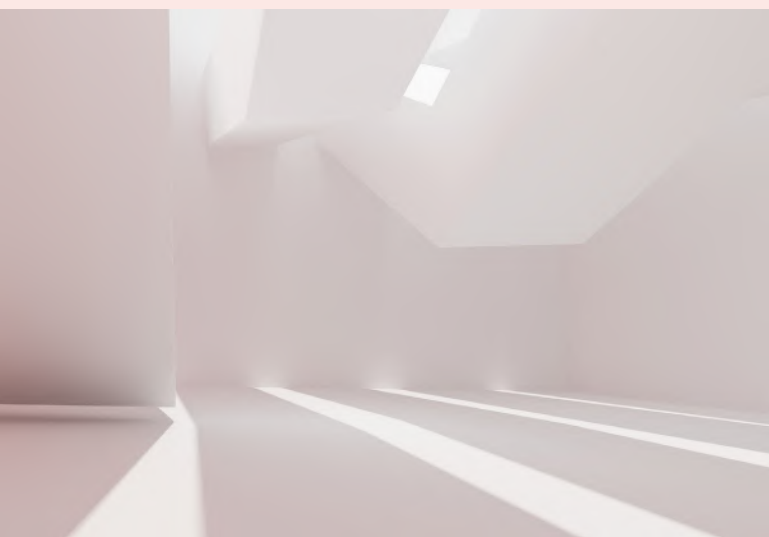
As with many other organizations across all industries, what worked in the past, for a lot of associations, may not work in the future. Those who can successfully adapt to each new "normal" will dominate, while those that fail to do so will disappear.

Here are some stories from the Middle East as to how some associations have dealt with the situation and are still thriving and serving their members.

THE EMIRATES DIABETES SOCIETY (EDS)

In the past, the Emirates Diabetes Society (EDS), a national medical association in the UAE, had driven all its revenues through its annual congress, an event which normally attracts over 4,000+ attendees primarily from the region. As the pandemic hit, the EDS board quickly realized the need to keep their members engaged and connected, and to serve their mission of bringing the best science to this part of the world. By June 2020, three months into the pandemic, they had already launched a series of digital learning programmes, held on a bi-monthly basis, bringing the best speakers and delivering the best content from around the world. This didn't only increase their reach from the usual 4,000 attending the congress but extended to over 8,500 delegates.

The programmes were so well received that the board took a further bold strategic step to move the bi-monthly digital learnings to monthly for 2021. This came in addition to their annual



congress which they decided to organize as a fully virtual event in March this year. The congress brought together over 6,000 participants, on top of which their monthly programmes are building on a 15% to 20% increased attendance every month.

For 2022 the current vision is to hold the physical congress, and to continue the digital learning programmes to strengthen their offering. The Society is closely keeping its ties with the industry and the other stakeholders to make this possible, in addition to which it is also now moving to a whole new set of research and education support programmes for their members.

THE ARAB ASSOCIATION OF UROLOGY (AAU)

A second and slightly different approach comes from the Arab Association of Urology (AAU), a regional association which operates like a federation in the region with national societies as their members. In the face of the pandemic, they too decided to build on digital learning programmes to drive more revenue for

themselves and to serve their extended community of urologists in the region.

They took, however, a different route to that of the Emirates Diabetes Society. They spent four months building a learning platform which was eventually launched in August 2020, through which all the digital learning is offered. Members create an account and then have access to all content live and on-demand.

For their annual congress, they again took a bold step and decided to hold a hybrid meeting in November 2020 in conjunction with the national society of UAE - the Emirates Urology Society. From a combined expected attendance of 800-1000 participants, they ended up with over 1,500 attendees. It didn't only drive more revenue, it also strengthened their partnership with the national society and helped them to extend their offering.

Today, they have established the Arab School of Urology and all the digital learnings and the platform are run under that banner. Their programmes are monthly based and have already reached over 10,000+ participants in the past eight months. This resulted from a much more long-term thinking with an approach to build revenue as well as providing a whole new offering and brand that will develop a life of its own even after the pandemic is behind us.

THE WAY FORWARD

Both examples clearly demonstrate that agile and adaptable organizations will always find a way to succeed but that paths can differ based on the history of each organization and their modus operandi. One common feature lies at a leadership level, where individuals are bold enough to launch new programmes, embrace change and communicate it internally and externally. There were of course challenges and hiccups to surmount, but the journey went on quite successfully.

There obviously is not one single strategy or one single solution that will work, but the quicker you understand the needs of your organization, the easier it will be to bring in the necessary tools and talent to move forward towards success and growth.

This article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers, author Ajay Bhojwani, Managing Director, MCI Middle East. IAPCO represents today 139 companies comprised of over 9,900 professional congress organisers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events from 40 countries. / www.iapco.org



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Some things are worth waiting for

THE HEARTBEAT OF THE BUSINESS EVENTS COMMUNITY

The Big Re-Think at Convention Centres

Running convention centres means creating unique experiences, resulting in a feeling of belonging to a community. To do so successfully, a culture of learning and exploration is a must have. And the pandemic has pushed that culture into a new dimension, as write **Geoff Donaghy**, CEO of ICC Sydney, and **Sven Bossu**, CEO of AIPC.

Over the last 12 months, convention centres had to fundamentally change... well, about everything. The Bella Centre in Copenhagen was transformed into a courthouse, the Convention Centre of Dublin into a parliament and the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre into a film studio. And let us not forget about all the centres turned into hospitals/vaccination centers (the list is simply too long). Solid revenue sources vanished overnight, and others needed to be found - urgently - to keep the lights on.

Convention centres had several ways to deal with this situation and given their culture of learning and exploration, most of them embraced the change - without therefore knowing where the change would take them. "To boldly go ..." has been more than ever the adagio of convention centres.

The change indeed touches every element of the convention centre: from sales, to contracting and of course the actual delivery. There is an increasing belief that going forward convention centres will no longer sell square meters and catering packages. Instead, they will offer a multi-channel experience platform, enabling global reach and in-depth data mining. Focus will lie with purpose. What exactly does the organizer want to achieve and what is the best way of doing so - digital, face-to-face or hybrid? What are the metrics to be put in place to demonstrate the ROI? Which technologies are needed to provide the data?

FULL ECOSYSTEM

This of course needs to be embedded in the full ecosystem of which convention centres are only a part. Organized events can have a profound impact which goes beyond the immediate economic impact. Yet once again, it is the notion of purpose which is key to reach the full potential. Regions such as Scotland are already linking local policies - in domains like healthcare, digitalization, etc. - with attracting organized events.

There is still a long way to go before the PowerPoint language is turned into reality, but the speed with which this will be done is likely to be breathtaking. Insights developed over the last year - both on organizer and convention centre level - have unveiled new opportunities in terms of value creation. For example: digital has unlocked doors to audiences previously unserved and at the same time the value of true connectivity via face-to-face meetings has been rediscovered. This will result into new business and pricing models of all the stakeholders involved, possibly resulting in real value-chain thinking.

This also means that convention centres will need to bring their agility to a new level. And we have seen some great examples of how this can be achieved.



THE AUSTRALIAN EXAMPLE

In Australia, ICC Sydney was the only convention center to remain open throughout the entire pandemic period, continuing to deliver events even during full lockdown – albeit in different formats. In a typical year, ICC Sydney welcomes 1.4 million visitors to 700+ events, but as we know, 2020 was no ordinary year.

When the pandemic initially hit with full force in March 2020, restrictions came into place and all in-person events at ICC Sydney were postponed or cancelled for the foreseeable future. In response, their team immediately pivoted to diversify the venue's products and revenue streams.

This included shifting from 100% live events to offering comprehensive virtual event services from purpose-built broadcast studios, which rapidly evolved into Hybrid Event Solutions, an innovative dual-product allowing clients to host attendees at the venue in accordance with strict COVID-Safe measures, whilst also live streaming to remote attendees.

This rapid response saw ICC Sydney deliver more than 200 events in the 12 months since the pandemic hit.

The venue diversified its revenue streams by launching filming and photography production services, attracting clients from blockbuster films to local commercials while increasing the number of smaller, school events.

ICC Sydney's diversification strategy, coupled with a business transformation restructure, meant the venue was able to remain open throughout COVID-19 and many of its team members kept employed. Working closely with stakeholders, the venue was able to secure government support in the form of an exemption, allowing it to operate larger event formats.

Having never closed its doors, the venue is match-fit and ramping up its services and resources to host more and larger in-person conferences, exhibitions and business events as confidence returns within its domestic market.

And this is just one example of the level of transformation, which is taking place at convention centres, leveraging their key asset: qualified, creative and motivated staff. And they are on a mission: building back the world of organized events in a better and sustainable way. We profoundly believe they will succeed.

This article was contributed by AIPC, with which Boardroom has a special partnership. AIPC represents a global network of over 190 leading centres in 64 countries with the active involvement of more than 1000 management-level professionals worldwide.
www.aipc.org



AUSTRALIA INNOVATES USING “CORAL IVF” TO RESTORE CORAL REEFS AROUND THE WORLD



Australian marine biologist Professor Peter Harrison has developed the world's first spawn catcher and larval nursery pool system to deliver millions of coral larvae to where they are most needed on a reef.



In 1981 Professor Harrison was part of a team that discovered the mass spawning event through which corals reproduce.



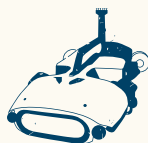
Between four and six nights after a full moon many different types of coral spawn together.



To accelerate reef restoration, once a year parts of the spawn slick are captured and placed in special nursery pools which allow sea water to flow through while retaining the microscopic larvae.



The larvae are monitored for five to seven days within the nursery pools to ensure high levels of fertilisation.



Concentrated larvae are released back onto the reef either by letting them drift over the reef nearby; or targeting their release back onto damaged reef areas using LarvalBot, the world's first underwater robotic vehicle.



Some of the corals created by Professor Harrison's coral restoration efforts have grown to reproductive size in two years - a world record.



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Rebuilding Confidence in Events

With the global business events industry hard hit by COVID-19, Australia's premier convention, exhibition and entertainment venue, International Convention Centre Sydney, has shown how venues can adapt, rebuild client confidence and safely resume delivering world-class events.

The arrival of COVID-19 triggered the most challenging and disruptive year that the global business events industry has ever seen. Overnight, events, operations and venues shut down, impacting jobs, businesses, communities and financial, culture and knowledge economies across the world.

Australia has been in the fortunate position of being an isolated island nation, with international border closures and mandated lockdowns effectively managing breakouts. However, the country's business events industry, including ICC Sydney, was still hard hit, with an initial shutdown of all in-person events, national and state border closures, and ongoing, shifting restrictions severely impacting operations.

So while the green shoots of recovery started to emerge early for ICC Sydney, with vaccination roll outs underway across the globe, recovery of the business events industry has some way to go. Restrictions, locked borders and the continued risk of COVID-19 outbreaks means operations cannot simply revert back to pre-pandemic days.

In order to recover and return as a better and stronger industry, it is imperative that venues and clients show leadership and pave a clear path forward for the safe

resumption of events. This will ensure that in-person gatherings can return and will give clients and delegates the confidence to once again plan and attend events.

Along with venues around the world, ICC Sydney has had to navigate the impact of COVID-19 for the last year. From pivoting to virtual events in the early months, to developing an industry-leading COVID-safe guide, many lessons have been learnt along the way that can benefit the broader industry and event organizers tackling the same challenges.

DELIVERING COVID-SAFE EVENTS

ICC Sydney operates within the ASM Global network of international venues. In response to the pandemic, ICC Sydney was quick to work with ASM Global to develop a comprehensive set of operating guidelines: The ICC Sydney EventSafe Operating Guide. These protocols span 16 areas of event management including environmental hygiene, food service, the customer journey, technology and public awareness.

Furthermore, an internal resource was developed for ICC Sydney's team members - the TeamSafe Guide which outlined increased hygiene protocols as well as enhanced safety measures.

The goal in creating these resources was to consolidate the advice from many respected sources and then to build upon that to create the most comprehensive guidelines for ICC Sydney. The protocols incorporate guidance from a variety of national and international industry bodies, as well as best practice from parent group ASM Global's own VenueShield program: an advanced hygiene program built on the expertise of public health authorities as well as medical and industry leaders. The protocol also abides by Safe Work Australia's Codes of Practice and national COVID-19 Safe Workplace Principles.

Geoff Donaghy, CEO of ICC Sydney, explains: *"We're proud that the EventSafe Operating Guide quickly established an industry benchmark for the safe running of events in a COVID-19 environment. As events are resumed around the world it is critical that we all continue to safeguard against further outbreaks of COVID-19, especially when bringing people together."*

Donaghy continues: *"We are confident that ICC Sydney's EventSafe Operating Guide not only delivers a solution to this challenge by establishing best practice, but also helps reinstall confidence in people to continue hosting and attending events. This is critical for rebooting our industry and the many other business economies that benefit from that success around the world."*

PARTNERING WITH CLIENTS TO SEAMLESSLY DELIVER EVENTS

In response to an initial ban on in-person events, followed by ongoing restrictions, ICC Sydney pivoted to ensure it continued to meet client and delegate needs. From the first lockdown in March 2020, ICC Sydney achieved an industry milestone in virtual events, live streaming more than 160 events online from the studio, including the MEALIVE Awards 2019, the Australian Olympic Committee Wellbeing Week and The Sydney Morning Herald Sustainability Summit.

Continuing to listen to what clients needed, the venue launched hybrid events where the team delivered a dually digital and in person service, and in late 2020, built on this offering with the launch of ICC Sydney Connect. The virtual event platform provides complete end-to-end virtual and hybrid event solutions, allowing clients to broadcast their events from state-of-the-art studios with a customisable interface. ICC Sydney Connect also powers registration, security, program management, sponsorship and marketing opportunities, engagement tools and insights.

With complicated restrictions and legislation to navigate, the ability to reconfigure event formats and have virtual attendees has allowed large-scale events to go ahead, while ensuring that organizers adhere to shifting in-person capacity limits.



CONNECTING LEGAL PRACTITIONERS IN A HYBRID EVENT

One example of adapting operations to safely deliver a world class event in the COVID-19 environment, was NSW Child Protection Legal Conference 2021, hosted at ICC Sydney in February 2020.

With ongoing gathering restrictions still in place, ICC Sydney welcomed 220 in-person registrants and over 460 remote attendees to the event, featuring 48 speakers over two days of plenary and breakout sessions. ICC Sydney's hybrid event capabilities allowed local delegates to safely attend, following ICC Sydney's EventSafe Operating Guide, in addition to providing an engaging experience for virtual delegates.

The audio visual experience was seamlessly delivered for the live audience as well as remote viewers. The program featured international speakers who were brought in to present in the plenary via Zoom technology.

The panel sessions included a combination of speakers live on stage and others brought in via Zoom.

Safety features included QR code scan-in at entry, people counting at point of entry, hand sanitiser stations, seating set 1.5m apart to accommodate social distancing regulations in NSW, and clear signage facilitating swift progress from common spaces into their event space.

An EventSafe culinary service was presented for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea with a single sided service decreasing shared touchpoints when handling food and beverages. Acrylic screens and individually packaged food items prevented any unnecessary contact with the food.

Event organiser, Rebecca Wallis, Senior Events Officer at NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice, explains: *"From the outset we knew our event would be in good hands at ICC Sydney. In particular, the audio visual team understood the rigors of planning a hybrid event which requires minute by minute scheduling taking into consideration the needs of our audiences whether they were able to attend in person or access the live stream remotely. The event delivery was incredible and it was so pleasing to see so many people onsite with the event delivered to the usual high ICC Sydney standard. We were especially impressed with ICC Sydney's COVID risk overlay for hygiene measures, safety protocols, service delivery and the safe presentation of food was excellent and in keeping with our COVID Safe Plan and risk assessments."*

To find out more about ICC Sydney,
contact.sales@iccsydney.com

An aerial photograph of a vibrant turquoise lake nestled in a lush green forest. The water is exceptionally clear, revealing a rocky and debris-strewn bottom. The surrounding forest is dense with various shades of green, and the overall scene is bathed in bright, natural light.

A New Sustainable Era in Switzerland

Switzerland is famous for many things, from political neutrality to pristine lakes, mountains, and forests, to high-end watches, to globally exported cheese and chocolate. Lately, the country has also become increasingly known for its stance on sustainable development and preserving the environment. A few years back, it was even named one of the top five countries achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals the fastest. Today, it's taking a few steps further and launching a new sustainable strategy aptly named Swisstainable, which has been developed by Switzerland Tourism, the national tourism board.

Words Remi Deve

Sustainability has been shaping Switzerland for decades. This has been evident in the high environmental awareness of the Swiss people and the early and comprehensive expansion of public transport. An eco-friendly country, Switzerland has also long been playing a leading role in environmentally sound technologies. The federal republic was among the first industrialized nations worldwide, with water power technologies being developed in various parts of the country, helping to set up industrial hubs. Today Switzerland's cleantech cluster is very strong, boasting an outstanding record in a variety of fields - just like Swiss startups are at the forefront of green tech.

STRENGTHENED ATTITUDE

Despite this awe-inspiring performance - the Swiss Federal Council has even committed to a climate-neutral Switzerland by 2050 - there is a need to strengthen this attitude and convey this commitment to conference organizers and delegates alike. Consequently, a new sustainable development strategy has been launched by Switzerland Tourism. Called *Swisustainable*, the comprehensive programme provides a wide scope of certifications, tools and support services that formalize the Swiss route towards a tourism sector that is grounded in social, economic and environmental best practice.

Of course, there are already numerous tourism providers who are committed to sustainable development. However, it is difficult for visitors to determine the sustainability of the different offers available. This is precisely this gap that *Swisustainable* aims to address. Together with tourism industry associations, it's a real movement that has been set in motion, in order for service providers to commit to a more sustainable development of Switzerland as a convention destination.

In this regard, Switzerland Tourism has formalized an agreement with the GDS-Movement to rollout the GDS-Index to measure, improve and communicate annually on the sustainable performance of Swiss destinations across social, environmental, supplier and destination management categories. If Geneva, Zurich, Lausanne and Montreux have been long standing members of the GDS-Index, further destinations such as Lugano, Lucerne, Basel, Interlaken and Saint Gallen-Bodensee, through the Switzerland Tourism initiative, will now also start benchmarking performance improvement actions from 2021 forward.

EXAMPLES APLENTY

Examples of Swiss destinations that are at the forefront of sustainability abound. Zurich, Switzerland's business and financial capital, Lausanne, a city famous for its world-class education and innovations, Lucerne, nestled between a pretty lake and spectacular mountains, and Basel have all been awarded the European Energy Award® Gold. Recognizing an advanced commitment to sustainable energy policy, this outstanding certification means they have

implemented at least 75% of their commitment plan. Likewise, Interlaken and Montreux have been labeled as an 'Energy City' which promotes the use of renewable energy sources, supportable environmental mobility and sustainable resource management.

Meanwhile, Geneva, Switzerland's major hub for green and social finance, is home to numerous international organizations in the field of environmental and sustainable development. It is even the first Swiss canton to implement Agenda 21 locally, a United Nations action plan related to sustainable development. Geneva is also the 5th city in the world for green area per capita and an active member of the Global Destination Sustainability Index. A clear indicator of the quality of life, the lake's clean water is perfect for swimming and the drinking water is pure as well. The city also features the second largest solar power plant in Switzerland.

In Basel, efficient transport connections and an environmentally conscious congress centre have made the destination a must for conference goers. With an ambitious energy strategy, Basel has become a certified "*city on its way to the 2,000-Watt Society*". In this context, Congress Center Basel earned itself a Minergie standard label BS-054 - the Swiss standard for low-energy buildings - as all heating, air conditioning and cooling systems operate needs-based, and most of the waste heat is utilized.

MORE SUSTAINABLE TOGETHER

All these sustainable efforts are not done in isolation. In fact, on its *Swisustainable* journey, Switzerland Tourism can count on the expertise and the network of important international partners, in addition to the GDS Index. In collaboration with the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) for instance, Switzerland Tourism has committed to a two-year multi-project project with the goal to introduce and establish Switzerland as one of the world's most sustainable destinations.

Similarly, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), which establishes and manages global standards for sustainable travel and tourism, known as the GSTC Criteria, has accompanied the Swiss strategy. "*To develop a fruitful sustainability strategy, a multi-stakeholder approach is key. The regular exchange with GSTC has significantly helped us to strengthen our approach and to learn from the best practices,*" believes Samuel Wille, interim Head of Business Development at Switzerland Tourism.

Echoing the comment, Martin Nydegger CEO Switzerland Tourism concludes: "*With Swisustainable, we are taking another big step towards securing the long-term success of Switzerland as a travel destination and making it the world's most sustainable destination.*"

More info on Switzerland as a convention destination:

myriam.winnepenninckx@switzerland.com \ www.MySwitzerland.com/meetings



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Introducing the Renewed Cairns Convention Centre

Business events are starting to come back in tropical north Australia as the Cairns Convention Centre gets ready to re-opens its doors after the Centre refurbishment. The venue will be hosting the Australian Banana Growers Congress followed by the Australian College of Emergency Medicine Winter Symposium – a clear, optimistic sign that things are on the move again.

Cairns Convention Centre closed last April to begin a \$176 million refurbishment and expansion. The refurbishment is now complete and the Centre has been fitted with state-of-the-art technology and a contemporary designed interior. Delegates will be treated to latest audio-visual equipment and a fresh new menu featuring tropical local produce.

EXPANSION UNDERWAY

As the Cairns Convention Centre starts to host events again the Centre's expansion is well underway. Designed to bring more of the region's beautiful tropical environment inside and featuring tropical plants from the region on its new façade, the expansion will include a new 410-seat plenary on a flat floor that can be split into two equal rooms. Next to the new plenary is an exhibition space for up to 30 booths. Also on this level are three new meeting rooms that can each hold over 110 people theatre style.

There is also the Trinity Room, ideal for gala dinners and large cocktail functions for up to 470 people, and the Trinity Terrace with stunning views over the Trinity Inlet. Flexibility is the key



word here, as a variety of space configurations are possible. All in all, the entire Centre will accommodate 2,500 delegates comfortably while the refurbished arena takes up to 5,000.

GET LOCAL

Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef region allows you to bring the natural environment into your event with many opportunities to connect to local programs and legacy opportunities.

Understanding the Great Barrier Reef will create a deeper appreciation for the natural wonder and why it needs protecting. The inspiring staff at Reef Teach and qualified Master Reef Guides are available to educate and enhance delegate's reef experiences with educational, captivating and entertaining sessions. These certified experts are equipped with a wealth of knowledge and infectious passion for reef education that connects them to any audience, most of which accompany the daily tour boats to answer any questions whilst onboard and conduct day-to-day monitoring of the individual reefs.

Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef believes that a lot of small actions make up a big impact, so setup a conference goal and watch as your event makes a difference. Delegates can take simple actions such as "Hold the Straw", "BYOB (Bring your own bottle/bag)" or "Sponsor a COTS (Crown-of-thorns starfish) Diver" to increase the conference impact score which can be tracked directly on your very own Citizen's dashboard.

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The New Default

Will the hybrid model become the new go-to in the business events industry post-pandemic? Successful events in Seoul are proving the potential of digitalization.

Words Lane Nieset

When the pandemic started, many destinations scrambled to integrate technology so that during travel's temporary halt, delegates could still meet virtually. "Hybrid" became a buzz word as on-site and digital merged to offer a two-fold experience, and now the meetings industry is experiencing its own type of Industrial Revolution. The acceleration toward technical innovation is well underway, and destinations like Seoul, who have spent the last year preparing for the digitalization of events, are paving the way in this new market.

A STEP FORWARD

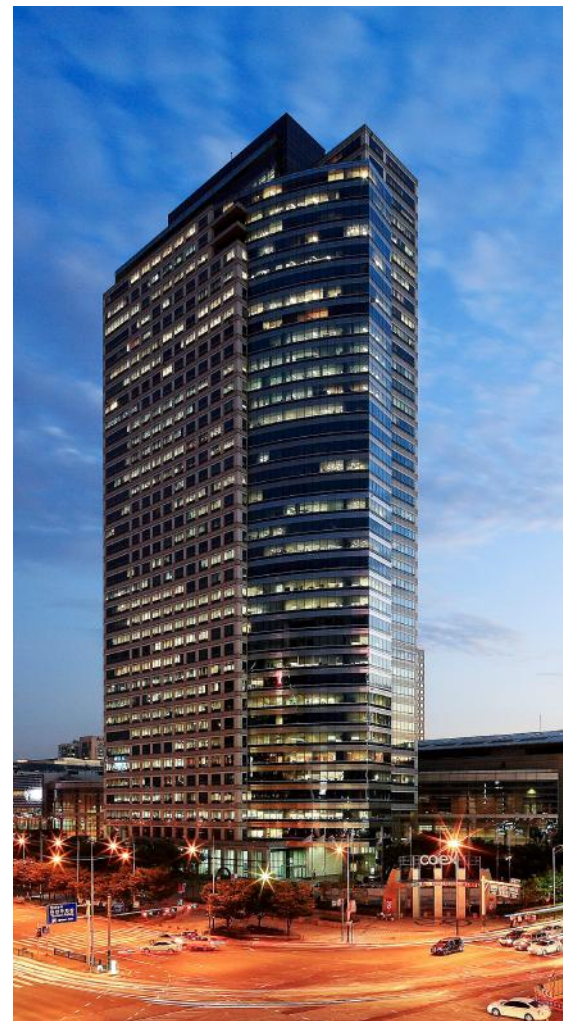
"Initially, most event organizers postponed or cancelled their scheduled events, believing they could bounce back quickly. However, with the pandemic lasting longer than expected, Seoul began to prepare for the 'new normal' by developing support policies to fund online digitalization of MICE events, and set strict guidelines for preventing infectious diseases and responding to crises," explains Steven Kim, Director of Convention Sales Team, at Coex, the largest exhibition and convention promoter in Korea.

Seoul is considering MICE to be a key factor in boosting the industry post-pandemic, and looking to alliances as a way to provide safety measures at future onsite events. The first Asian bureau to join the Hybrid City Alliance, which offers organizers of international events a solution

when planning multiple city hub events, Seoul is building connections across the globe and sharing knowledge garnered from the alliance's collective expertise to offer online and hybrid meeting options, as well as continue advancing the digital solutions it's currently putting in place.

As Yun, Yu-sik, a professor at Kyung Hee University (Department of Convention and Exhibition Management), stated in a recent newsletter, *"The MICE industry needs to bring economic benefits to the local communities by attracting a large number of visitors. If the hybrid model gains ground and the number of inbound business travelers decreases, cities with large convention centers will see their position weaken. In the future, organizers, such as organizations and associations, need to gather ideas on how to evaluate the performance of a MICE event and how to spread those new metrics."*

As part of its futureproofing plan, Seoul Convention Bureau (SCB) launched the 3D virtual platform, "Virtual Seoul," last fall as a way to position the city as a leader in online and hybrid events. Through "Virtual Seoul," associations can host online or hybrid meetings and take advantage of the platform's conference hall, workshop rooms, virtual theatre with 360-degree VR videos, and networking lounge. Through Virtual Seoul, the city recently hosted the 8th Union of International Associations Round Table Asia-Pacific.





In the same fashion, the 19th International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) was hosted by Coex in a hybrid format. The opening ceremony and some plenary presentations were held live, while the six-day digital event featured 100 interactive sessions and 500 speakers and brought together thousands of representatives from civil society, governments, multi-lateral agencies and private sector, along with young activists, musicians, filmmakers and investigative journalists.

As Coex hosts more than 200 exhibitions and 2,500 international meetings and events annually, many of the in-house exhibitions, such as Automation World and Sourcing Fair, are planning on moving forward for the time being as hybrid events. According to Kim, the successful virtual and hybrid events at the city level have persuaded many local organizations to take their conferences and trade shows virtually, or host at a smaller scale at Coex.

“Although physical meetings and offline events are slowly coming back on the agenda, we strongly believe that event organizers will continue with hybrid events. COVID-19 has accelerated digital transformation, and the trend to virtual events is not reversible because of the value of big data analytics,” Kim explains. *“There are many advantages of online events, and it’s only a matter of time before event organizers and exhibitors fully comprehend how to leverage the platform’s tools to maximize ROI. Therefore, a virtual event is more than just an alternative solution to a face-to-face offline event, and should be valued as an extended form of strategic digital marketing to a global audience.”*

In this regard, as a complement to virtual events, SCB has launched a digital teambuilding programme that’s the first of its kind called Virtual Seoul Playground. It offers stimulating teambuilding in a metaverse Seoul. Through the use of avatars, virtual tour experiences, and online games, delegates can learn more about Korean culture while engaging with teammates.

STARTUP SOLUTIONS

Meanwhile, Coex has been transforming its facilities and services to support hybrid and virtual events. Last November, Coex established a partnership with NexTech AR Solutions, a leading provider of virtual and augmented reality (AR) experience technologies and services in Canada. And through COEX LIVE, Coex is working with one of the best streaming companies in Korea to offer in-house webcasting and event streaming services for clients. *“With the pandemic accelerating technology development and Korea actively deploying 5G, what we can expect in Korea is embracing technologies like virtual reality, augmented reality and artificial intelligence,”* says Kim, adding that the partnership with NexTech AR Solutions is a move in that direction as a way to offer organizations a high-end, interactive 3D product experience and VR videos.

Not only is technology being used for events, it’s also the crux of startups like venue finding platform Roovook, which joined the Seoul MICE Alliance (SMA) last year. Divided in 20 categories, including hotels, convention centers and unique venues, SMA offers its members support for their participation in overseas exhibitions, road shows, conferences and meetings. Through members like Roovook, Seoul is stepping on the global event stage as a pioneer of virtual and hybrid event solutions. Roovook for example, opens up venues virtually through the use of VR, in an effort to serve as something like an Expedia for venues. *“Finding the right venue during a pandemic become more difficult due to social distancing and restrictions,”* says Roovook CEO/Founder Kyle Kim. *“We’re continuing to accelerate the MICE industry through IT solutions so that when the pandemic is over, Seoul will emerge as an easy city to host events by booking venues online, with just a few clicks.”*

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World-Changing Wellington

The political, geographical heart of New Zealand is an exceptional place to connect and inspire.



Nestled between the harbour and the hills, Wellington is small by most capital city proportions, but that makes it easy to navigate. It's a pleasant stroll from its stunning waterfront to its laneways of culinary treats, vibrant cultural precinct and its wide range of hotels and conference venues. It's also easy to connect with the thought leaders – from Ministers of Parliament to CEOs – that will add content and inspiration to an event.

Wellington is the heart of New Zealand's government and a hub of innovation and enterprise. The region is home to Victoria University of Wellington, branch campuses for another two universities, and three highly regarded institutes of technology. It hosts seven government research institutions and a fast-growing community of technology and start-up companies.

Examples of its expertise range from its buzzing creative sector, to pioneering scientific research and new technology.

MAKING MAGIC IN WELLINGTON

Wellington's prowess as a creative powerhouse is world renowned, with the Academy Award™ winning Weta Group of companies testament to 'Wellywood's' movie magic capabilities. But beyond that, Wellington's combination of creativity and technology ensures it is home to an exciting new generation of programmers, designers, artists, and storytellers.

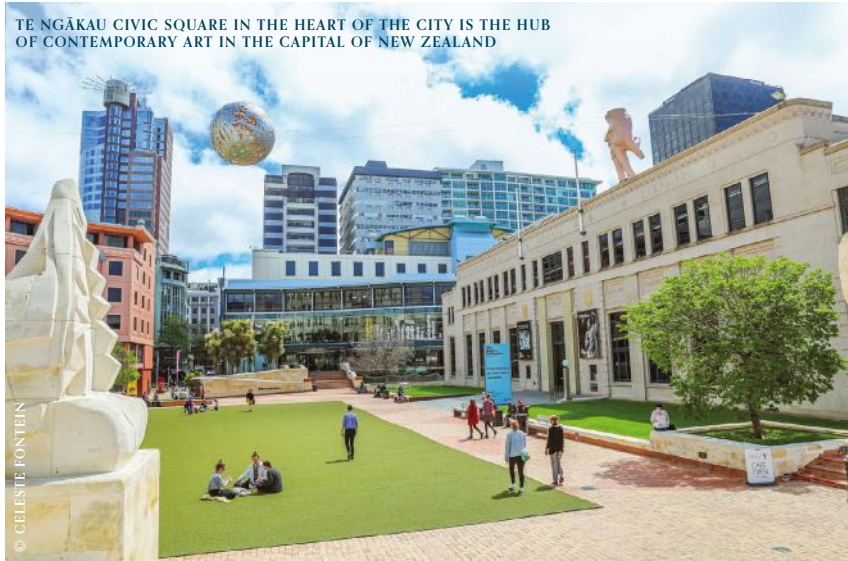
It's the epicentre of a growing gaming industry in New Zealand, with internationally renowned game company PkPok (Into the Dead, Agent Intercept) based here, along with A44, Starcolt and StudioMayday. Wellington also plays a

key part in New Zealand's dynamic digital design and AR/VR ecosystem, with RESN, Beyond VR, Wrestler and Vaka Interactive.

Victoria University's Computational Media Innovation Centre (CMIC) serves as an innovation hub for the sector, specialising in areas such as virtual reality/augmented reality, film/video, rendering, animation, special effects, and gaming technologies.

Its staff have secured several conferences for Wellington including: Pacific Graphics 2020 and 2021 – the 28 and 29th Pacific Conference on Computer Graphics and Applications (held virtually in 2020, with a physical and virtual hybrid event in 2021); and the upcoming ACM Conference on Interactive Surfaces and Spaces in 2022.

Dr TJ Rhee, Director of the CMIC, says: "Wellington really is a hub where creativity



and technology intersect. We're able to draw on the expertise and practical examples of our local academics, industry leaders and innovators to provide an immersive event experience."

WELLINGTON AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF HEALTH

As New Zealand's capital, Wellington is home to the Ministry of Health, the Government's principal advisor on health and disability. This centre of decision-making has driven a COVID-19 response that has seen New Zealand praised around the world.

Spiral, a small software company headquartered in the city, also played an important part in the global effort to find the best treatment options for coronavirus patients. Pre-COVID, its Spinnaker software system was being trialled to assess the treatment and response of patients who were admitted to intensive care due to pneumonia caused by other viruses. Following the pandemic outbreak, the team quickly scaled up the system, which uses adaptive randomisation and intelligent data analysis, to include a trial of treatments for COVID-19. By the middle of March 2020, it had become the preferred software system for hospitals in the European Union. The company now works with doctors across 15 countries and more than 260 hospitals around the world.

A people-centric and science-based approach also drives pioneering medical research in the city. This includes the team at the Gillies McIndoe Research Institute,

whose work may lead to a fundamental change in the way numerous diseases, including cancer, fibrotic conditions, and vascular birthmarks, are treated.

Executive Director Dr Swee Tan is internationally recognised as a leader in this field. He and his team discovered the stem cell origin of strawberry birthmarks and the critical role of the renin-angiotensin system in regulating these stem cells. They won the prestigious John Mulliken Prize, the top science prize at the International Society for the Study of Vascular Anomalies (ISSVA) Congress in Montreal in 2010, for this work.

These ground-breaking discoveries, which underscore the new and effective treatment of strawberry birthmarks using low-cost oral medications, have major implications in the treatment of cancer.

Dr Tan was the Convenor of the ISSVA Congress in Wellington in 2004 - the first time the event was held below the equator in the 30-year history of the Society. He was also a member of the Organising Committee of the Australasian Vascular Anomalies Network Conference, which was hosted in Wellington in 2019.

Dr Tan says: *"Hosting these conferences showcased the ground-breaking medical*

research being done here in Wellington. These events help us share knowledge and develop international collaborations, to advance treatment of these challenging conditions for our patients."

AN INSPIRED CHOICE

Hosting an event in Wellington creates opportunities to tap into these leading knowledge networks.

In 2023 the city will welcome a striking new convention and exhibition centre, Takina. Meaning 'to invoke, to connect, to bring forth' in te reo Māori, it will be a place of welcoming, learning, and sharing, and yet another good reason to choose Wellington for your next business event.

Bring your conference to a city and a country that promotes creative ideas, innovation and future thinking. Bring it to Wellington, New Zealand.

To learn more about Business Events Wellington:

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A City on the Move

While COVID-19 put a pause on life as we know it, it didn't completely stall momentum in Adelaide, South Australia – a city that continues to grow from strength to strength as a business events destination. The South Australian capital's recovery phase has included the opening of a raft of new hotels, along with the expansion of the city's world-class innovation precincts, providing association planners additional reasons to visit and opportunities for collaboration.



While the South Australian capital was certainly not immune to the impacts of the global pandemic, its experience – and indeed that of Australia at large – has vastly differed to other places around the world. Comprehensive contact tracing programs and government guidelines have enabled South Australia to effectively curb the spread of COVID-19 to date, and allowed the state to reopen its local economy in the second half of 2020.

“We’ve always enjoyed a reputation as a safe, clean, green destination, and these elements along with Adelaide’s growing reputation as a smart city, with its increased intellectual capital, will continue to define the Adelaide experience post-pandemic.” comments

Simon Burgess, General Manager, Adelaide Convention Centre. *“If I had to find a silver lining in the experience of the past 12 months, Adelaide’s recovery has seen our city emerge in a stronger position in terms of business events infrastructure. The continuing expansion of our hotel landscape is particularly positive news, and the ongoing development of the Adelaide BioMed City and Lot Fourteen innovation precincts have also played a key role in the city’s rebound.”*

BIOMED CITY

Adelaide has long been known as a global medical conference capital, a reputation driven by Adelaide BioMed City, which sits immediately adjacent to

the Adelaide Convention Centre. As part of the precinct’s expansion, ground was recently broken for the Australian Bragg Centre. Earmarked for completion by 2023, the lower levels of this new facility will be occupied by the Australian Bragg Centre for Proton Therapy and Research (the first of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere), while the upper levels will house additional research institutes from the neighbouring South Australian Health & Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI).

“For medical-focused events, the addition of the Australian Bragg Centre to BioMed City is certainly exciting news in that it offers added value to conference programs via unique touring opportunities, as well as

an additional, ready-made pool of potential speakers and delegates,” says Burgess.

Adelaide recently played host to FNM 2020, the 4th Meeting of the Federation of NeuroGastroenterology & Motility. Hosted by the Australasian NeuroGastroenterology & Motility Association Inc (ANGMA), the four-day conference represented the first meeting of the Federation of NeuroGastroenterology & Motility to be held in the Southern Hemisphere.

Nick Spencer, Chair of the event’s Local Organising Committee and Past-President of ANGMA, shares: *“Adelaide’s strengths, innovation and development in the sciences is a major drawcard. The city is a beacon for leading lights in all areas of medical research, which provides some really exciting opportunities for knowledge transfer. One of the main bonuses of running a medical conference in Adelaide is the city’s connectivity to world-leading research hubs and experts who are willing to collaborate. In our case, anchoring this year’s event in Adelaide made complete sense as the city enjoys a reputation as a major international hub for research at the forefront of gut-to-brain communication, and happens to be home to Professor Robin Warren, Nobel Laureate, who appeared as our keynote speaker.”*

LOT FOURTEEN

Sitting at the opposite end of Adelaide’s Innovation Corridor to BioMed City lies the Lot Fourteen innovation neighbourhood, Adelaide’s hi-tech hub for innovation, entrepreneurship, education and research. Like BioMed City, it too is continuing to expand and enjoys strong

connectivity with the Convention Centre (10 minute walk).

The Space industry is a key focal point for Lot Fourteen, headlined by the Australian Space Agency, which opened early last year as a lasting legacy of the 68th International Astronautical Congress. The Agency is complemented by the SmartSat CRC, Australia’s most significant national space industry research collaboration, while opening in May 2021 is the Mission Control Centre and the Australian Space Discovery Centre. While the latter is primarily targeted at educating the next generation, delegates can visit and immerse themselves in hands-on, interactive, space-themed exhibits.

Lot Fourteen also provides a base for much of South Australia’s dedicated hi-tech sector, including expertise in machine learning, artificial intelligence, cyber security, big data and data analytics.

“When it comes to hi-tech, Lot Fourteen is anchored by a series of Australian firsts, including the Australian Cyber Collaboration Centre; the Australian Institute of Machine Learning; and the MIT bigdata Living Lab. In recent months, our city’s world-leading capabilities in AI, data analytics and cyber security have also seen Amazon Web Services and Google Cloud join the mix. Having a variety of national institutions located in Adelaide opens up unique opportunities for collaboration and provides fertile ground for attracting conferences and events,” adds Burgess.

The timeline for Lot Fourteen’s development stretches through 2028, with the next wave of development including the flagship Entrepreneur and Innovation

Centre (2023); an International Centre for Food, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (2024); and the Aboriginal Art and Cultures Centre (2025).

LOOKING FORWARD

As Adelaide continues to navigate the recovery period, there is certainly much to look forward to, starting with the return of national conference events - and eventually international events.

“As a sign of our recovery and the growing momentum for business events here at the Centre, we recently welcomed in excess of 10,000 delegates across five events during a single week. We have a healthy pipeline of events on the books, including 33 major conferences scheduled through until the end of the year,” comments Burgess.

Mike Pickford, Events Director & Co-Founder of ASN Events, one of Australia’s leading conference and association management companies, shares: *“Those coming to Adelaide for the first time will witness a city very much on the move. Anyone who has travelled will recognise the contemporary nature of Adelaide’s landscape, especially when you arrive in the vicinity of the Convention Centre.”*

“As someone who has been coming to Adelaide for a long time, there is evidence that the business events industry has helped drive innovation and played an important role in transforming Adelaide’s reputation,” he concludes.

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WASU

DAHUA

Copenhagen Releases New Sustainability Guide

Once again, Copenhagen creates forward-looking sustainable development solutions for new generations of business events while at the same time backing the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In Copenhagen, the ambition has long been to ensure that most business events hosted in the city also act as drivers of sustainable development. The general perception is that any kind of meetings held in the city has the potential to inspire and influence knowledge exchange, innovation, culture, talent attraction, and sustainable city development.

The fact is, though, that along possibly creating positive impacts, events also leave adverse effects like carbon emission footprints and excessive consumption. Such downsides need to be constantly addressed, and for this reason Copenhagen CVB has created a new holistic and hands on [Copenhagen Sustainability Guide](#). A guide that comes as a natural extension of the destination's [Tourism for Good Strategy 2030](#)¹ and urges organizers to pursue next-generation events with a lasting sustainable and positive impact on society.

NEW BREED OF SUSTAINABLE EVENTS

For years, Copenhagen focused on cutting event footprints or single-use plastic, minimizing food waste and on introducing e.g., plant-based food options. Then came attention to partakers' footprints from e.g., travel, accommodation, and consumption outside the event space itself.

Whereas these areas continue to be highly relevant in the planning process, however, going beyond and forming new events



that boost sustainable development is what is needed now. A more universal approach that engages and inspires participants, exhibitors, and suppliers alike and that drives lasting sustainable impact in communities - before, during and after an event.

Simply put, ideas and perspectives on next-gen sustainable events remain high on the agenda in Copenhagen. In 2020, Copenhagen CVB thus launched a strategic method for making long-term positive impact from congresses, the [Copenhagen Legacy Lab](#), which was well-received in the global meetings industry and an exciting work-in-progress (more on the Lab in the previous issue of Boardroom).

A HANDS-ON SUSTAINABILITY CONTRIBUTION

The Copenhagen Sustainability Guide has been produced by Copenhagen CVB in collaboration with partners and consultants and is, among others, based on interviews with event organizers about

their work, needs, and wishes. It holds conversations with stakeholders shedding light on how events can help set ambitions and sustainable solutions in local (and global) communities.

It is based on six key pillars and offers insights into how to pioneer and/or contribute to the development of new generations of sustainable events, and comprises tips, tricks, and tools to assist and inspire. In addition, some exciting case examples help set the bar for sustainable planning processes.

The new guide targets both experienced event organizers and newcomers, encouraging everyone in the value chain to get started on the sustainability agenda - clients, partners, suppliers, companies, and organizations alike - and leaving no one behind.

More about the new [Copenhagen Sustainability Guide](#) on www.wonderfulcopenhagen.com/convention-bureau/sustainable-events

Contact cvb@woco.dk



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