

Wellington conference planning timeline

2 years from event

- [Contact Business Events Wellington](#) for support including destination, venue, and supplier advice
- Set objectives. Consider sustainability and legacy goals.
- Confirm conference committee and schedule regular planning meeting
- Set preliminary budget
- Conduct destination and key conference venue site visits
- Select conference venue and confirm dates
- Arrange insurance cover and open event bank account
- Consider whether the conference will have an online or hybrid component
- Select Professional Conference Organiser, if required
- Engage with mana whenua (indigenous people (Māori) with territorial rights in the local area) and consider how they can be involved with the conference

18 months from event

- Create programme overview
- Obtain comparative quotes for providers such as AV, catering, and exhibition services
- Establish key dates for registration and abstracts, and confirm submission process
- Define promotional strategy and identify communication channels and timeline
- Create conference branding and prepare initial conference website
- Announce conference
- Create exhibition floor plan and exhibition and sponsor prospectus
- Launch exhibitor and sponsor promotion
- Consider social functions and select venues
- Obtain hotel rates and room blocks

15 months from event

- Set registration fees
- Develop website registration platform
- Prepare and launch social media campaign. Promote event via committee networks
- Research other relevant events that committee members can attend to promote the conference
- Invite keynote speakers
- Create Diversity Statement. Check website design is accessible and registration form captures pronouns and accessibility requirements

12 months from event

- Open registrations
- Launch call for abstracts
- Book keynote speakers' flights and accommodation
- Identify facilitators, dignitaries, and other key personnel
- Arrange and promote group activities or pre and post-event tours

6 months from event

- Judge abstracts and issue author acceptance notifications
- Build conference programme
- Confirm social function theming, décor, entertainment, and staging requirements
- Release exhibition and sponsorship manuals
- Engage with Immigration New Zealand and share travel advisory notice with delegates from non-visa waiver countries
- Select photographer

4 months from event

- Close early bird and presenter registration
- Refine programme and allocate to rooms. Assign session facilitators
- Order speaker and VIP gifts

3 months from event

- Confirm digital signage
- Review accommodation block bookings at 90, 60, and 30 days
- Prepare health and safety plan and risk assessment
- Build and launch conference app

2 months from event

- Determine onsite staff / volunteer needs
- Compile exhibitor directory
- Consider format of opening and closing ceremonies

1 month from event

- Send EDMs to delegates with conference guide, city and venue info, and tour/workshop info
- Update website and app with final programme
- Finalise conference menu, social function menus, and rooms layouts
- Send final travel and transfers itinerary to keynote speakers
- Prepare post-conference survey for attendees and exhibitors
- Create conference on-the-day run sheet
- Distribute welcome pack to exhibitors
- Follow up any outstanding attendee or sponsor invoices

2 weeks from event

- Email press release to local media
- Confirm final number of attendees with venue and catering providers
- Hold volunteer briefing, if applicable

1 week from event

- Ship materials to meeting venue and confirm arrival at venue
- Send registration QR code to all attendees, if applicable
- Review and finalise detailed budget. Confirm contingency plans, if applicable
- Hold venue, committee and staff briefings
- Complete venue pack in the day before the event. Set up organiser's office, registration area, signage, meeting room materials, and pack satchels, if providing

Day of event

- Check digital signage, AV set up, and speakers' water throughout the day
- Hold team check-in at the beginning of every day
- Review any updates or changes with onsite venue and catering managers

Post-event

- Finalise budget report, including actual costs and revenues
- Complete payment for venue, speakers, and other services
- Invoice hotels for any commission
- Send post-conference surveys to attendees and exhibitors
- Hold a debrief with the conference committee
- Share the success and highlights with all attendees and suppliers
- Prepare post-conference report detailing outcomes, financials, and feedback

Need support?

Contact Business Events Wellington's Convention Services Advisor for dedicated, local advice and resources.

Stacey Pilcher

Convention Services Advisor

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