

# Event Design

Addressing the changing needs of conference attendees and the three pillars of event sustainability



**Presented by:**

Paula Rowntree

Head of External Engagement

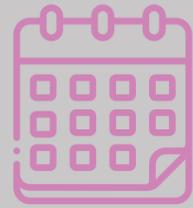
---



# Who are we?

The Australian Psychological Society works to improve the lives of Australians through psychology and stand with our 28,000 members and partners as a bold advocate for applying psychological science and practice, to support and empower our communities.

# Fast facts



19-21 May  
2023



Takina Conference Centre  
Wellington  
NZ



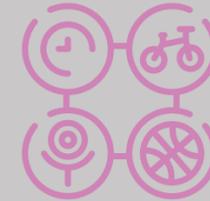
Total: 798  
IP: 602  
DG: 196



83 Presenters



65 sessions



3 immersive  
educational experiences



42% response  
rate



94% satisfaction  
rating



512 room nights



1,236 ice-creams



600 pairs of  
socks



65kg lollies

# The challenges we wanted to address...

01

## Attention deficit

Since the pandemic, individuals have been prioritizing mental well-being. Sitting for long periods of time is no longer desired or positively received by attendees.

02

## Creating meaningful connections

Networking opportunities are not enough, our role is to facilitate opportunities for attendees to come together seamlessly and to be at ease with one another.

03

## The three pillars of event sustainability

How are we leaving lasting and positive impacts in the areas of:

- Environmental sustainability
- Social sustainability
- Financial sustainability

04

## Transformational experiences

The static audience experience is being disrupted. Events where people were traditionally onlookers are morphing into fully immersive experiences.

"Amazing! hands down the best conference I have ever attended."

# How we went about it...

01 Attention deficit	02 Creating meaningful connections	03 Sustainability	04 Transformational experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating places within spaces</li><li>• Silent in-room activities</li><li>• All-day grazing</li><li>• 60 min sessions max.</li><li>• Activity breaks</li><li>• Sensory space</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Immersive education<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Zealandia</li><li>◦ Te Wharewaka</li><li>◦ Te Papa</li></ul></li><li>• Creating places to connect<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Kiosk</li><li>◦ Pantry</li><li>◦ Lolly wall</li></ul></li><li>• The knowledge hub</li><li>• Sensory space</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sensory space</li><li>• Theme green</li><li>• Cater green</li><li>• Reusable or recyclable</li><li>• Support local</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Immersive education<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Zealandia</li><li>◦ Te Wharewaka</li><li>◦ Te Papa</li></ul></li><li>• Cultural immersion into the program content</li><li>• Sensory space</li></ul>

"Honestly THE best conference I've been to anywhere.period. The content, care taken of attendees and engagement has set a new bar for me."

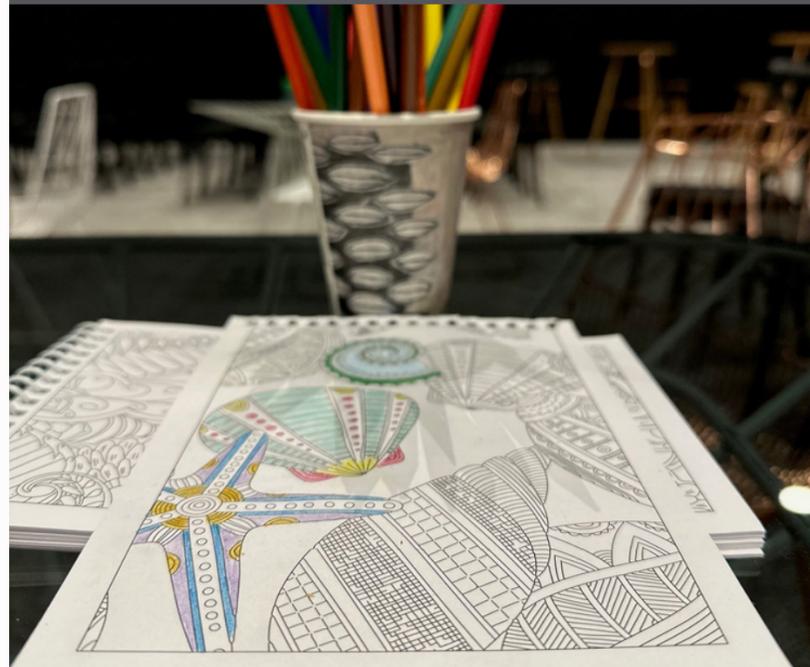
# 01. Attention deficit

*Creating places within spaces*



*The knowledge hub allowed attendees access to natural light and activities while continuing to learn.*

*Silent activities*



*Silent activities such as colouring in, lego & play-doh gave attendees something to do while learning.*

*All-day grazing*



*The pantry & lolly wall meant attendees could duck out of a session and grab a snack whenever it was right for them.*

"I was absolutely impressed by the organisation of the entire conference. Everything was well planned and individuality was considered in many ways."

# 02. Creating meaningful connections

Cultural immersion



*We made a conscious decision to not just acknowledge the traditional custodians but incorporate Maori & NZ culture into as many components of the event as possible.*

Making it easy to connect



*Between the lolly wall, gelato cart, knowledge hub and pantry, attendees had multiple places that allowed conversations to start in a relaxed way rather than being forced.*

Immersive learning



*The immersive learning provided an easy conversation starter for attendees to get to know one another.*

"The immersion events were tremendous. I did them all and one of the comments that kept being repeated by the delegates was how incredible these events were for networking. Far more enjoyable than the traditional networking dinner or drinks (although you did have this too). People commented that it was easy to strike up a conversation while walking along rather than trying to mingle in a more formalised setting especially if on your own, an introvert or not knowing anyone."

# 03. Event sustainability

## Environmental



*All event theming was living greenery that was potted and reusable.*

## Social



*By creating a sensory space & ensuring the venue had appropriate prayer/meditation spaces, we could focus on ensuring every attendee felt included and safe.*

## Financial



*To support the local economy, we invited local suppliers into our trade area to showcase and sell their products.*

*"I really enjoyed the sensory space and quiet seating spaces that you could still engage in content."*

# 04. Transformational experiences

Zealandia



*Attendees delved into anxiety and trauma associated with climate change while being immersed in the world's first fully-fenced urban ecosanctuary.*

Te Wharewaka



*While learning about the cultural impact of colonization and inter-generational trauma, attendees also learnt about the rich culture of the Maori through exploration & interaction.*

Te Papa



*At Te Papa attendees explored PTSD through the impact of Gallipoli on New Zealand and about the trauma of natural disasters immersed in the Blood, Earth, Fire exhibit.*

"This was a brilliant conference! I loved how heavily bicultural it was and just how much I learned through the cultural immersion. There was such a positive and engaging energy throughout the place. Thank you!"

# Learnings

**Immersive education or experiential learning works.**

Of those who participated, 93% rated them as sensational, to be included at every conference.

**Sensory spaces are here to stay**

With more people identifying as neurodiverse, sensory and/or quiet spaces help them feel included.

**Cultural immersion is important but needs a lot of thought.**

In the future, we would engage a cultural mediator who understands events to support us in this journey.

**Activations are a must in all areas**

We will continue to explore with varied seating and activations in meeting spaces.

**We need to do more with legacy & impact**

We're exploring more ways we can leave a lasting legacy and impact on the destinations and cities in which we meet.

**Being fully green is not an easy journey**

But, it is one we must work harder at. Little steps make a difference and over time add up to leaps and bounds.



# Get In Touch

Paula Rowntree  
Head of External Engagement

## Email

p.rowntree@psychology.org.au  
paula@businesseventsnetwork.com.au

## Social Media

 [paula-rowntree-l-des-l-aimebassador-5895a327/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/paula-rowntree-l-des-l-aimebassador-5895a327/)

 [@thebusinesseventsnetwork](https://www.instagram.com/thebusinesseventsnetwork)

 [www.businesseventsnetwork.com.au](http://www.businesseventsnetwork.com.au)

 [@theeventsqueen](https://twitter.com/theeventsqueen)