

EVENT NAME:	Australian Institute of Company Directors Conference- Directorship: 12
DATE:	9th - 11th May 2012
TOTAL ATTENDANCE:	400
EVENT ORGANISER:	Jannene Stephens-Roberts, Manager, National Programs Australian Institute of Company Directors (Company Directors)

BACKGROUND:

The Australian Institute of Company Directors (Company Directors) is a professional organisation representing directors in Australia. With over 32,000 members, Company Directors provide information, education and a range of connections and insights for its members to assist them in promoting excellence in governance and to make a positive impact for the economy and society. It is a national organisation with 7 state divisions.

EVENT OBJECTIVE:

Each year Jannene Stephens-Robert's, Manager National Programs, main challenge is the selection of a suitable destination and the development of an inspirational program to impress the delegates. For her, the two are intertwined and her research into the latest important topics affecting organisations must integrate with the destination's appeal. "When we select a destination we consider the total experience," she advised. "We must consider the cultural, political and business appeal and how it can contribute to the program development".

Finding the right destination for 2012 would not be an easy task as it followed the very unique experience of Beijing, China in 2011, where all expectations involving a total cultural experience for delegates was successfully achieved.

Adding to the main challenge of a suitable destination, Company Directors have specific event format criteria such as class room style seating therefore requiring quite a large venue, and preferably a 5 star conference hotel to ensure service quality and a central gathering place for all involved.

As with many conferences, delegates can get distracted and take time away from the event, so for Jannene and her experience team another goal was to reduce the number of delegates "straying", particularly on the last day or in the afternoon and to capture their attention for longer.

EVENT FORMAT:

Directorship: 12 is the Company Directors annual conference where members explore topics critical to their roles as directors and hear from leaders of corporate Australia on a multitude of topics. The conference, held over three days includes a number of plenary sessions in classroom style as well as 7 special interest forums. It also includes a number of informal sessions including the welcome reception, and a formal and informal dinner. Partner and pre and post destination tours are also included. The annual conference destination alternates between Australia and overseas each year.

VIEW FROM THE TOP OPEN MINDS:

Together with her team, Janenne's responsibilities of event management go beyond the organisational to full program development. The responsibility of producing an inspiring event involves in depth research into what is happening economically and politically and what will be most important to Company Directors members. Research into Australia's Northern Territory showed some remarkable statistics on the growth of the local economy such as the \$220 Billion in resource development in the next 10 years. There was however some initial scepticism on Darwin as the host destination due to its remoteness. Jannene also sensed a "disconnect" from the rest of Australia and

knowledge of the “Top End”.

Jannene was determined however that the new, major resource projects planned and the natural links to Australia's mining boom, as well as its strategic proximity to Asia would provide a great foundation for topics for the program development. She discovered that the Territory is undergoing an unprecedented level of expansion as a major international gas hub and key trade gateway to Asia. Major investments in gas, oil and defence are driving job growth and construction industry demands. The dots started to connect for the conference team with a range of relevant topics becoming apparent, as well as the natural segue from the organisation's experience in China the previous year to Darwin's location on Asia's doorstep.

The introduction of new technology to the conference enhanced delegate's experience and extended their interaction; from communication and summaries to encouraging delegates to participate, vote and comment on a daily basis. This year a daily online video was introduced to replace the printed daily newsletter creating budget savings, and delegates were delighted to be interviewed and share their thoughts on proceedings. The conference application was also an exciting new tool that allowed delegates to interact and have conference information in the “palm of their hands” via their mobile or other devices. The new technology created fun and interactivity for everyone.

THE DARWIN CONVENTION CENTRE EXPERIENCE:

Finding a suitable venue and accommodation was on the list of ‘must haves’ for Company Directors as their format and style required 5 star standards. So following through on the words of Janenne's trusty stage manager that “no reconnaissance” is ever wasted, she and her team visited the NT to inspect and hold meetings with a range of suppliers in Darwin. They were very impressed with the Darwin Convention Centre, a truly 5 star venue, and although they traditionally have used hotels, they decided it would become their hub, along with its beautiful waterfront setting for delegates to enjoy. The Centre provided the space they needed for plenary sessions in classroom style for 400 and the main gala dinner.

From her initial meeting to the event deployment, Jannene felt she was in professional hands with the management and staff at The Darwin Convention Centre. “They had a full understanding of what we were trying to achieve, and they understood the level of service required,” advised Jannene. “The quality of food was outstanding too. The Centre did a brilliant job and the ambience and location on the harbour captivated everyone.”

THE DARWIN EXPERIENCE:

Delegates were truly immersed in the location, a goal of the conference. This was achieved through the program intertwining local extraordinary economic growth with Australia's spectacular mining boom, and sessions on how Australia can ensure ongoing progress. Tales from the corporate battlefield, technological innovation, indigenous engagement and organisational strategic development were only a few of the sessions that attracted record attendance.

Janenne's reconnaissance also helped discover a range of unique venues to host the 7 Special Forums and with the excellent service found with local transportation companies, transfers from venues and accommodation became a social experience in itself. Australia's ‘top end’ provided a more casual setting that allowed delegates to relax in unusual environments that stimulated important and strategic topic discussions. The unique venues chosen included a wide variety such as a harbour cruise, the Art Gallery and Museum, Charles Darwin University, Crocodylus Park, Robertson Barracks, Stokes Hill Wharf and local restaurants. With Janenne's guiding hand each venue provided a professional experience for Company Directors delegates. The choice of venues linking program topics kept delegates truly immersed and engaged and so delivering on the challenge of reducing delegate distractions.

MEET DARWIN



CONVENTION CASE STUDY – DARWIN, AUSTRALIA'S NORTHERN TERRITORY

Jannene was delighted that they achieved record attendance at all the sessions right until the closing.

The social events and tours gave delegates a great view of the NT and an experience that many will remember for years to come. Cocktails with stunning sunsets, dangerous wildlife, including the ultimate "Cage of Death" amidst the welcoming reception, historic tours and unique sporting activities were all in the mix to entertain, educate and for delegate and partners enjoyment.

QUOTES:

"They had a full understanding of what we were trying to achieve, and they understood the level of service required"

**Jannene Stephens-Roberts,
Manager, National Programs**

"The quality of food was outstanding too. The Centre did a brilliant job and the ambience and location on the harbour captivated everyone."

**Jannene Stephens-Roberts,
Manager, National Programs**

For further information or comment, please contact:

Ms Carrie Altamura, Business Development Manager

Darwin Convention Centre, PO Box 735, Darwin NT 0801

T: + 61 8 9823 9000 | **E:** caltamura@darwinconvention.com.au | www.darwinconvention.com.au

Darwin Convention Centre is a project of Darwin Cove Convention Centre Pty Ltd and the Northern Territory Government and is proudly operated by international venue management specialist, AEG Ogden. www.aegogden.com

