

CLIFTONS CASE STUDY

A year-long program of virtual conferences

Cliftons supports New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to deliver a year of events for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum



In 2021, for the first time ever, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum was delivered in a virtual format. Bringing together officials, ministers and leaders from across the Asia-Pacific region, the event aims to create greater prosperity by promoting growth and accelerating regional economic integration.

Balancing the needs for such important meetings against international travel restrictions due to COVID-19 meant that a secure platform for virtual meetings was essential.



The Situation

As the 2021 host for the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) needed to find a way to deliver the event in the face of COVID-19 travel restrictions. With high-profile participants unable to travel internationally, MFAT worked with Cliftons in Wellington to deliver a series of virtual events across the course of 2021.

The event included a range of meeting formats, including virtual round tables, media briefings, break-out sessions and a symposium. A robust event management system was also used to support registrations and provide delegates with access to meetings and meeting documents.

By planning to host the event virtually, MFAT was able to continue with the conference despite the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing international travel restrictions. With more than 40 APEC groups and committees, the 12-month program involved thousands of participants. With economies from across the Asia-Pacific region, as well as other economies from North America and Europe, at times meetings were held across up to 11 time zones, spanning a 17-hour time difference.

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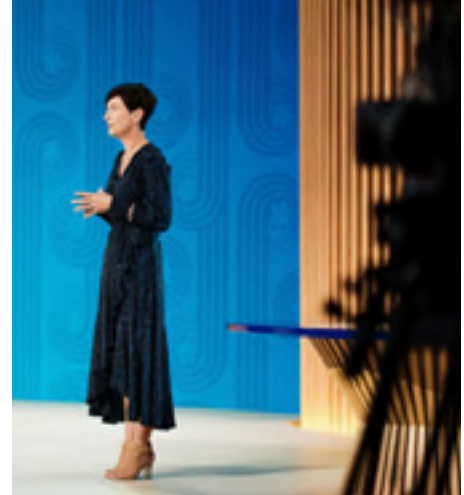
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The Solution

MFAT worked with Cliftons in Wellington to provide a secure and flexible space for the meetings. Over the course of the year, seven of Cliftons Wellington meeting rooms were booked. With such high profile, important discussions, security was a primary consideration. MFAT opted to install its own private internet connection to ensure privacy of the discussions were not compromised. In addition, with leaders including New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern at times attending the venue in person, physical security was also critical.

Cliftons Wellington staff undertook security awareness training to be alert to, and aware of how to identify potential threats, including from mail and courier deliveries, as well as following new security protocols.

The Result

To meet the needs of participants across the various timezones, meetings were held in different blocks according to the economies involved and the discussion topic. Over the course of the year, APEC meetings would be held in a four to eight week block, with meetings

beginning at around 2pm through to (at times) 6am the following day, with meetings lasting two to five hours.

More than 330 meetings were held during the year, taking advantage of cuttingedge hybrid meeting technologies to ensure the effective participation of both internationally located world leaders, as well as in person attendees like local government employees and leaders.

Effective strategies for virtual events from the world stage to internal team meetings.

Our team is standing by to find out more about your event needs and provide you with options for flexible, safe ways to bring people together.

No matter what happens, we can help you to keep your event plans on track.

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