



CASE STUDY

ISAAC CONFERENCE

CLIENT:
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR
AUGMENTATIVE AND
ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION

EVENT:
18th Biennial Conference

ATTENDEES:
1,100

DAY/S:
SIX (6)

DATE:
21 - 26 July 2018

BUDGET:
Undisclosed

THE CLIENT - ISAAC

The International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) is a global organisation that works to improve the lives of people with complex communication needs. ISAAC's vision is that Augmentative and Alternative Communication will be recognised, valued and used throughout the world. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) helps millions of people worldwide who cannot rely on natural speech to communicate. The organisation was formed in 1983 and has a presence in 15 countries.

THE EVENT

The International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication's 18th Biennial Conference 2018 was held over six days from 21-26 July 2018 on the Gold Coast – the first time in the conference's 34-year history that it was held in Australia, and with an Asia-Pacific theme. The conference's aim was to bring together speech therapists, occupational therapists, teachers, psychologists, physiotherapists, people who use AAC and their families, support staff, and other clinicians from around the globe involved in the field of AAC. The conference attracted more than 1,100 people from 36 different countries to learn about AAC, discuss latest developments, share experiences and connect with like-minded people. Many of the delegates had complex physical and communication needs.

THE VENUE

In widening their scope of host countries to Australia, ISAAC organisers searched for a destination that had a warm climate in July, had ease of access through air travel for both national and international delegates as well as a range of restaurants, accommodation and entertainment close by for delegates to enjoy. The Gold Coast was the obvious choice but the organisers chose the Gold

Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC) because of the general accessibility within the facility, as well as the team's willingness to adapt and work with the organisers to deliver a successful event.

THE CHALLENGE

Before the conference, 23 key GCCEC team members attended a workshop facilitated by ISAAC to learn about the issues affecting people with communication needs and learn strategies and tips about how to communicate effectively. They also received a toolkit packed with resources to make sure everyone could get their message across. ISAAC organisers liaised with GCCEC chefs to create menus for those delegates requiring modified textured foods. ISAAC co-chair Gayle Porter said the chefs were very open to serving soft, moist food that could be easily blended at a special Blender Bar at the conference.

"The chefs immediately understood that it is important the blended food is tasty and looks good," she said. "They took it on as a challenge and the quality was excellent. The Blender Bar was so well organised." GCCEC team members also worked with ISAAC organisers to modify the Centre to better accommodate delegates including installing hoists, adult change tables and bins in disabled toilets; providing additional parking on the loading dock for vehicles over 2.1m high for those delegates who needed to travel in vehicles with extra height; installed wheelchair ramps inside the Centre and; removed seats, widened aisles and ensured there were no stages in conference areas. At the conclusion of the conference, GCCEC's efforts to be more communication accessible were recognised with a special Certificate of Appreciation from SCOPE, an Australian disability service provider.

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

GCCEC staff were amazingly supportive right from the beginning and went above and beyond. They were always listening and gave us suggestions to make the conference better. Their attention to detail was noticed at every level.

