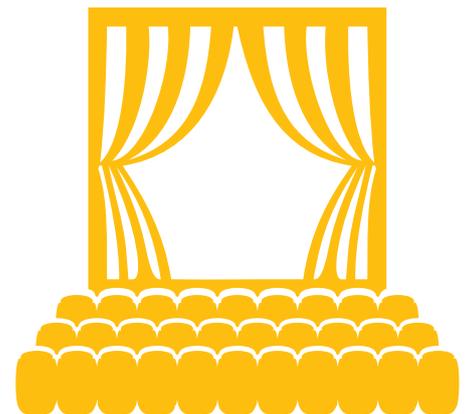




THE GREAT OUTDOORS – Getting Your Event Out There, Safely



There's no setting for an event that can compete with nature itself. If you're organising any kind of gathering that could take advantage of the season and a beautiful natural setting, or spill from the confines of a building into manicured grounds, then you should embrace the opportunity. Outdoor events may be casual or formal, held in grounds, parks, gardens or even remote, unspoilt locations. While getting out amongst it can add some logistical and physical challenges, experienced outdoor event companies have the equipment, strategies and processes in place to ensure that your guests are comfortable, entertained and delighted.



Putting on an event outdoors involves several considerations that either don't apply or are simply not an issue inside a venue. Temporary structures such as outdoor stages and rigging for mounting lighting and audio equipment must be assembled and tested by qualified personnel. Most public parks and gardens require special protection of lawn and other surfaces from what can be the harsh effects of wheeling in heavy equipment. Any structure that can conceivably become a sail area in a high wind must be rated to a certain wind speed, and the environment monitored accordingly. As noise restrictions in any outdoor space adjoining a residential area must be strictly adhered to, sound systems must be designed to optimise coverage for your guests while protecting any neighbours from nuisance.



Getting it Right

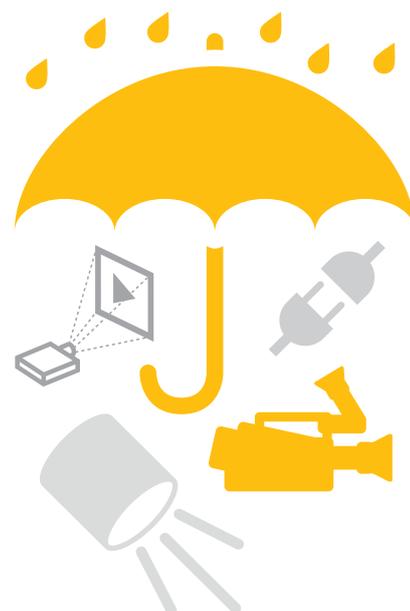
Technical directors experienced in outdoor production understand these needs implicitly and work with event managers to ensure that the correctly qualified crew, right protective equipment and workable timeframes are in place to ensure your event goes without a hitch. Trained staff constantly monitor events in progress outdoors, keeping tabs on the guests, weather and equipment to ensure that any environmental problems are dealt with as they arise. While going about these vital duties, your event staff should blend unobtrusively into the style and theming of the event. In one memorable case, Staging Connections staff dressed as clowns to monitor equipment spread along the route of the Adelaide Christmas Pageant!

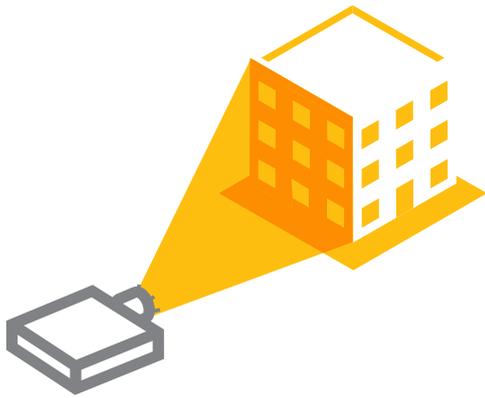
Given that your outdoor event is the safest of hands, your next step is to determine just what kind of theming, services, lighting and audio your guests will need. Staging Connections event planners work hand-in-hand with you, drawing on their experience of outdoor events to make sure that everything that needs to be provided is accounted for. Technical experts determine the need for specialised equipment, such as a portable power generation, battery backups and wind and weatherproofed audio visual equipment. Provision of AV for an outdoor event can be as simple as providing a small PA and lighting system fitted with rain-proof slip covers, or as involved as running several kilometres of cabling to power loudspeakers along the route of a road race.

Water, Wind and Weatherproof

Staging an event in the Great Outdoors doesn't mean you have to forego any of the high-impact vision, lighting and sound that we take for granted indoors. Manufacturers of AV equipment have an internationally recognised standard for weather and waterproofing of electrical equipment, known as an IP Rating. IP stands for 'International Protection', and an IP rating on a piece of AV equipment, such as a loudspeaker will feature the letters 'IP' followed by two digits, e.g. IP65. The numbers refer to two tables of standards regarding the level of protection afforded against solids (first digit) and liquids (second digit). In the example of IP65, which is one of the most common ratings for AV equipment suitable for outdoor use, '6' is the highest level rated for solids, meaning 'No ingress of dust; complete protection against contact'. The '5' indicates that 'Water projected by a nozzle (6.3mm) against enclosure from any direction shall have no harmful effects.' The liquids rating goes all the way to 8, which indicates the equipment is certified to be permanently immersed in water up to one metre deep.

Video, sound and lighting equipment rated for outdoor use will be quite indistinguishable from its indoor equivalents, both visually and in terms of performance. Most often, it is exactly the same product, with added design innovations that close any gaps or holes, cover any electrical contacts and seal in any point where cables connect. It is entirely practical to build enormous LED screens, concert sized PA systems and a full lighting rig that can operate happily in all but the most adverse of weather conditions. The key thing for technical staff to roll out and monitor correctly in this scenario is power distribution. The equipment most susceptible to interference or damage from the environment on an outdoor gig is usually power cabling, power supply racks and power amplifiers for loudspeaker systems. Staff should be trained in the operations of high-voltage equipment that may be affected by rain or water, and they should always ensure safety is the first priority under any conditions.





Magic Lantern

If you're familiar with the magic of 2D and 3D projection mapping, it will come as no surprise that this is just as deployable outside as in. In fact, many people are familiar with the possibilities of this technology because of a famous outdoor event – VIVID Sydney. VIVID sees the facades of famous Sydney buildings, including the Opera House itself, transformed by high-powered projectors beaming digitally controlled and animated images onto their giant canvasses. VIVID runs through the night, in all weather, its expensive projection technology waterproofed by housing in protective structures.

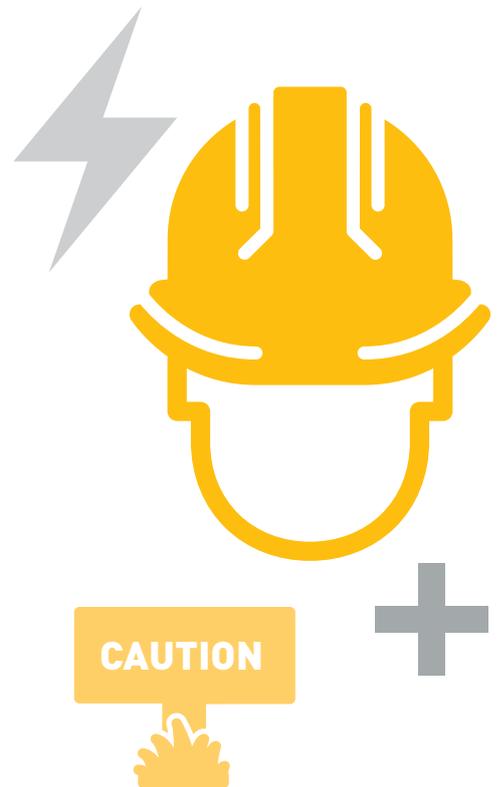
This same technology is available through Staging Connections, who can not only provide the equipment but also design and create custom content for your event. It's a creative tool whose uses are as diverse as the events industry itself. Imagine your guests emerging from a day of conferencing at a luxurious rural retreat, based in a large manor-house style hotel. Set in magnificent manicured grounds, the ballroom opens huge French doors onto a sweeping lawn area, which has been set-up with marquees for a sophisticated garden cocktail party. As the sun sets and your guests enjoy drinks and canapés, the broad neo-classical façade they look back to starts to subtly shift and change with the fading light, as a multimedia display picks out architectural features while reinforcing the subject and theme of the day's activities. This is just a small example of what's possible.

Safety First

Staging Connections' experience in providing services outside the confines of a venue spans every conceivable kind of occasion, from cocktail parties for dozens to large-scale sporting events for hundreds of thousands. In addition to a full inventory of staging, rigging, lighting, audio and vision equipment specially built for weather-proof use, Staging Connections have also implemented a company-wide event safety system called StageSafe, a suite of processes, protocols and tools that has created a culture that keeps the safety of guests and employees foremost in all staff member's minds.

StageSafe is unique in that it is an holistic safety programme created expressly for the events industry. Drawing on years of risk assessments and practical experience, StageSafe brings together all the data and knowledge the company has accumulated and puts it directly in its employee's hands via a smartphone app. Staff can consult working practice documents, easily access information on safety standards and log hazard or incident reports in real-time, reporting data directly to in-house safety experts for analysis and action. All data is analysed to apply continuous improvement to work practices, ensuring the health and safety of customers and staff at all future events.

Staging Connections are justifiably proud of the StageSafe system, and were honoured with the 'Best Individual Contribution to Workplace Health and Safety' gong at the NSW Government 2014 SafeWork Awards in 2014. "StageSafe is not just a system, but a way of doing things, an attitude that the whole Staging Connections team bring to each event they deliver," said Tony Chamberlain, Managing Director at Staging Connections. "Our crews are trained in all aspects of what they do, and understand that safety is paramount in creating a brilliant show." Following the systems' great success, Staging Connections have confirmed their dedication to OH&S by making the StageSafe app available to the rest of the events industry.



Natural Beauty

Staging Connections have the privilege of operating in some of the world's most beautiful natural environments, including the breathtaking sweep of Sydney Harbour, the tropical beauty of Far North Queensland adjoining the Great Barrier Reef, the Red Centre of Alice Springs, the paradise that is Fiji and a myriad of parks and protected areas throughout Australia, New Zealand, China and Singapore. With experience across longitudes, latitudes, climates and all weathers, a Staging Connections team will know and respect their area and the environment, delivering a meaningful and thoughtful event no matter what the scale.

With such a diverse range of environments available for outdoor events, think about what you can achieve for your audience over the warmer months. Enchant with a beautifully lit garden, inspire awe under a canopy of stars, bond families together with a picnic in a park or reward high performers in a tropical paradise. Staging Connections will help you get out there.



Interested in adding extra dimensions to your next event? Contact your Staging Connections representative or call us on **1800 209 099** or email marketing@stagingconnections.com