

8000 diners plunge into underwater spectacle

It was a total immersion experience for Amway China incentive visitors to Sydney, thanks to a series of themed dinners at The Dome at Sydney Olympic Park.

With the 8149 visitors coming in waves, there were four dinners over the course of two weeks, and event producer Blake Harris, managing director of Sydney's Triumph Leisure Solutions (TLS), decided to take the guests on an undersea journey. TLS pitched the idea in Shanghai only six months out.

"The seamless integration of large-scale imagery, special effects and live performance made the event truly special," says Harris. "The enormous projection canvas became the vehicle for us to transport the audience on a journey beneath the sea, showcasing a part of Australia not all our international visitors experience."

Harris says that Jason Coleman and his team at the Ministry of Dance supported TLS's creative vision through the entertainment program.

A full-sensory experience, the beach and

underwater theme was expressed in the welcome with guests being greeted by roving performers including lifeguards and colourful characters portraying the historic side of Sydney beach culture.

Then there were the 750 live fish incorporated into each table design, plus large-scale high-definition imagery surrounding the guests, projected on to a 180deg. seamless surface more than 130m. wide and 9m. high – the largest ever "immersion" experience for a corporate event in Australia.

Guests would have felt as though they were on the ocean floor throughout the evening, surrounded by schools of reef fish and even the spectacle of a mother whale and its calf swimming to meet centre-screen.

Innovative laser and special effects supported a cast of 300 performers, including acrobats suspended over the audience, fire dancers, an eight-year-old piano prodigy and a Chinese pop star.

TLS engaged Alpha Events to deliver the table designs, from a custom-built, LED-lit long

table seating 120 VIP guests to the fish-bowl centrepieces.

To ensure the fish were healthy and active throughout the 21 days, a live-fish expert was engaged, dubbed the "fish wrangler" by the team.

More than 14,000 starfish and 1500 shells were incorporated into the theme, and these could be taken as mementos by the VIP guests.

Amway China chose a four-course meal showcasing seafood, all served to the guests within an hour. Each guest received a specially designed program and menu prepared by TLS and translated into Mandarin as few of the guests spoke English.

Involved in the event were more than 100 production crew members and 10 semi-trailers of gear, making it one of the largest corporate events in Sydney. It's success has led to future collaborations being discussed by TLS and Amway China.

• TLS, www.tlsolutions.com.au



Visit worth \$42m. for NSW

Amway China's 2011 Leadership Seminar brought the company's top sales distributors to New South Wales for five days and included a tour of Sydney and a day trip to the Hunter Valley.

Each delegate donated \$20 to take part in a charity walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge, which raised about \$170,000 for Freedom Wheels, a joint undertaking between Amway Australia and Technical Aid to the Disabled that gives children with disabilities the chance to ride customised bikes.

It is the largest incentive group to visit Sydney this year and is estimated to have injected \$42.4

million into the New South Wales economy.

It was the second time Amway China has picked Sydney as its incentive destination. Business Events Sydney won the right to host the incentive in collaboration with Tourism Australia and the Sydney business events industry.

Hunter Valley Events managed the program in its territory, with four wineries (Calais, Hope, Lindemans and Wyndham Estates) hosting the visitors. Also involved were such food suppliers, indigenous performers and artists, and entertainers.



Blake Harris (left) and Jason Coleman.



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