A reflection by the Event Studies Special Interest Group (SIG)

15 September 2025

The CAUTHE Event Studies SIG has grown into a dynamic community of scholars and practitioners who share a passion for advancing events research and education. Since its inception, the group has served as a vital platform for collaboration, providing opportunities for academics and industry professionals to exchange ideas, generate knowledge, and shape the direction of the field.

The journey began in 2011, when Judith Mair and Michelle Whitford set up the SIG, when the inaugural meeting was held at that year's CAUTHE Conference. This gathering laid the groundwork for what would become a series of influential initiatives. By 2012, members had published a special issue in the *International Journal of Event and Festival Management* focused on research methods and trends. The momentum carried into 2013, when that very issue, edited by Judith Mair and Michelle Whitford, became the journal's most downloaded volume of the year — a clear sign of the SIG's impact.

Collaboration was a consistent theme in the early years. In 2014, the group partnered with ANZALS and SMAANZ to host a joint workshop exploring shared opportunities, such as co-authoring books and producing special issues. Leadership also evolved during this period; in 2015, Leonie Lockstone-Binney and Martin Robertson stepped in as convenors, ushering in a new phase of growth. The following year, a symposium at the CAUTHE Conference drew a large audience, with government expert Fran Kerlin sparking lively debate and knowledge sharing.

By 2017, the SIG had turned its focus to critical perspectives in event studies. A panel on "Critical Event Studies in the UK and Australia" highlighted this shift, and the group launched a call for papers that culminated in the 2019 special issue on Critical Event Studies published in *Event Management*. This milestone was celebrated at the CAUTHE Conference, where contributors such as Martin Robertson and Faith Ong shared insights on the future of the field.

The group remained forward-looking in recent years. Effie Steriopoulos joined as co-chair in 2021 and shortly after Faith Ong played an instrumental role in co-leading the SIG to the next level. Merging industry and academic expertise the SIG co-leaders gathered for lively sessions dedicated to generating unique event ideas and building new collaborations. The co-chairs facilitated critical sessions with lead event academics such as Jane Ali-Knight, Kirsten Holmes, Judith Mair, Leonie Lockstone-Binney, Alison Morrison, Clifford Lewis and Aaron Tham. In 2025, the SIG once again demonstrated its commitment to addressing contemporary challenges. At the CAUTHE Conference in Brisbane, the group hosted a roundtable discussion on *Shaping the Green and Gold Legacy for Brisbane 2032*.

The Event Studies SIG is one of continuous growth, collaboration, and innovation. From its early efforts to establish foundational research in event studies, to its current engagement with issues of sustainability, legacy, and inclusivity, the SIG has consistently advanced both scholarship and practice. The SIG continues its commitment to industry-relevant research that benefits communities and societies at large. The CAUTHE Event studies SIG vision is expressed below:

> *"To inspire and connect academics and practitioners in shaping knowledge relating to inclusive, sustainable, and transformative events that enrich communities, influence policy, and leave lasting legacies for society."*

Events SIG Co-Chair bios



Dr Effie Steriopoulos is Senior Lecturer in Event Management at William Angliss Institute, Melbourne. Her PhD explored how transformative experiences drive consumer behaviour and brand loyalty through a phenomenological, qualitative approach. Her research focuses on experiential and emotional marketing, consumer transformation, tourism, events, and iconic brands. Recognised with the 2022 Award for Excellence in Scholarship Practice and the 2024 CAUTHE Fellows Award, Effie actively bridges academia and industry through seminars and workshops. She is Regional Editor of *Event Management* (Australia/New Zealand), CAUTHE Chapter Director, co-chair of the Event SIG, and serves on editorial boards of leading marketing and tourism journals.



Dr Eliza Kitchen is Senior Lecturer in the College of Business, Government & Law at Flinders University. Her PhD examined how public events foster young people's place attachment to Adelaide. Her research explores the social and psychological impacts of events, business events, and authentic learning in Tourism, Hospitality, and Events. With international teaching experience at Leeds Beckett University and industry collaborations with Meeting Professionals International, she bridges academia and practice. An Advance HE Fellow, she received the 2024 *Event Management Journal* Gold Cutting Edge Research Award. Eliza is passionate about authentic learning, graduate employability, and serves as CAUTHE Chapter Director and Event SIG co-chair.



Dr Truc H. Le is a Lecturer in Tourism and Marketing at Griffith University and Acting Lead of the Visitor Economy Data Analytics and Indicators Cluster at GIFT. Her PhD and consultancy work with *EarthCheck* Australia shaped her expertise in risk, resilience, and sustainable tourism. Her research spans authenticity, cruise and food tourism, user-generated content analytics, and machine learning, with publications in top-tier journals. Recognised with multiple awards, including the 2022 CAUTHE Early Career Researcher Fellows Award and 2023–24 PVC Research Excellence Awards, she actively secures international research funding. Truc serves as Associate Editor of *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, Review Editor for *Frontiers of Sustainable Tourism*, and on the *Event Management* editorial board.