

CVE/CVP: A Proven Leader in Venue Management

# Certification CORNER



## Expanding Horizons with the CVE: A Global Perspective

### » TIM LONG, CVE

When I first set out on the path to earn my Certified Venue Executive (CVE) credential through the International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM), I knew it was considered the pinnacle of venue management certifications. But, as an industry professional based in Sydney, Australia, I found myself wondering how widely recognized it would be outside the United States. Fortunately, as soon as I completed the rigorous process, the opportunities and validation I received from my local, regional, and international markets answered that question.

In my role as a management consultant specializing in entertainment, sports, arts and venue management, my projects increasingly extend beyond the borders of Australia. I focus on infrastructure and strategy development, as well as the economic, cultural and social impact of venues. I quickly realized the CVE's value in providing a shared, globally recognized standard of excellence. Those three letters after my name often serve as a calling card when I meet new colleagues, prospective clients or partners around the world. They signal that I've not only invested in my own professional growth but have also met the high bar set by IAVM since the mid-1970s.

#### Insights from International CVEs

To illustrate the global resonance of the CVE designation, I reached out to two highly respected colleagues in the Asia-Pacific region. Peter Bauchop, CVE (2018) and Nick Sautner, CVE (2020) provided candid reflections on how this credential has shaped their careers—and why professionals in and outside the United States should consider embarking on the CVE journey.

#### Personal Motivations & the CVE Spark

##### Peter's Pursuit of Broader Horizons

Peter Bauchop completed his CVE in 2018. A resident of Western Australia, he was motivated by a desire to avoid narrow thinking. "I felt the CVE was broadly recognized as the highest venue-specific accreditation available," he explains. He notes that it comes from IAVM, a body with a global reputation. He also recognized the importance of looking beyond WA—and even beyond the country—to see how different regions solve venue-related challenges. Peter's international perspective expanded even further after witnessing innovations in Las Vegas and Asia.

##### Nick's Pandemic-Driven Opportunity

Nick Sautner's CVE journey is a testament to timing. When he completed the credential in 2020, New Zealand was grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic. Major events were paused, providing an unexpected window of opportunity for him to tackle the in-depth study and assessments required. He had been eyeing the CVE for years, but the demands of live events had always stood in the way. Once the world slowed down, Nick seized the chance to fill the knowledge gaps he knew existed in his rapidly evolving role at Eden Park.

#### Enhancing Credibility & Marketability

##### Peter's Hiring Insight

Beyond personal growth, the CVE has influenced Peter's approach to recruiting talent. "I look for those who hold an AVM or CVE as a desirable criterion," he says. While letters after a name aren't everything, he emphasizes the correlation between high-caliber professionals and those who pursue advanced accreditations. Peter feels "humbled" to be part of the Asia-Pacific Venue Management Association (VMA) cohort of CVEs—an influential group that's shaping best practices across the region.



Nick Sautner, CVE



Paul Bauchop, CVE

One of Peter's crowning achievements is chairing the Australia and New Zealand Venue Agencies Group. Initially founded to manage the pandemic's impacts, the group continues to address shared concerns such as research, innovation, and policy. "I feel the CVE helps provide the credibility to undertake such a role," he notes, underscoring the way credentials can bolster leadership opportunities.

### Nick's Transformative Projects at Eden Park

Nick credits his CVE with increasing his confidence to guide Eden Park through a period of unprecedented transformation. "We've hosted concerts for the first time in 118 years," he remarks, pointing to a landmark moment when a traditionally sports-focused stadium embraced major entertainment events. Eden Park has also been central to three Women's World Cups, including the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, the biggest event ever held in New Zealand. Having a CVE tells stakeholders and potential partners that Nick is serious about professional development and capable of handling the complexities that come with large-scale events.

### International Perception & Unique Challenges

#### Peter's Broadening Network

For Peter, the CVE has opened new channels of international communication, particularly through his service on the IAVM Certification Board. Interacting with U.S.-based professionals has expanded his toolkit for tackling issues that transcend geography, such as crowd management, security protocols and technological innovation. Peter recently connected with peers in Europe, the U.S. and Asia and he believes the CVE acts as a "conversation starter," creating immediate credibility and mutual respect.

#### Nick's Australasian Leadership

Nick highlights that there are relatively few CVEs in Australasia, making this accreditation especially notable. "It shows my dedication to ongoing education and places me among a global network of venue professionals," he explains. Whether addressing local challenges or collaborating with international peers, the CVE reassures others that Nick speaks the language of global best practices. Many challenges, like health and safety compliance or digital marketing strategies, cross national borders and the CVE ensures professionals like Nick can handle them with universal expertise.

### Career Acceleration & New Opportunities

#### Peter's Inbound Interest

While Peter hasn't actively sought roles outside Western Australia, he has fielded numerous inquiries and offers, sometimes from international firms. He attributes this uptick in interest, at least partially, to his CVE. The accreditation signals that he has a recognized, comprehensive skill set, prompting organizations from across the globe to consider him for consulting or leadership positions.

#### Nick's Strategic Progression at Eden Park

Nick hasn't changed positions since earning his CVE; however, he's quick to note how the knowledge gained has bolstered his leadership. Guiding Eden Park through an era of heightened global attention, spurred by major sporting events and stadium innovations, has required a sharp strategic focus. The CVE gave Nick the confidence and backing of an internationally recognized credential, a boost that resonated with stakeholders, staff and external partners alike.

### Reflections from My Own CVE Journey

I see echoes of Peter's and Nick's stories in my own experience. Like them, I was drawn to the CVE because it promised a holistic, global view of venue management. My consulting work often demands reconciling diverse interests, balancing economic feasibility, community engagement, sustainability, and commercial success. The CVE process forced me to examine case studies from multiple continents and engage with a worldwide network of professionals.

Since earning the CVE, I've collaborated on projects that range from large-scale sports facilities to theaters looking to diversify their programming. Clients almost always note the CVE as a key differentiator. It reassures them that I'm not just another consultant—I'm someone who has put in the time, rigor and research to tackle their challenges from multiple angles.

### Tips for Aspiring CVEs

1. Plan Your Time and Set Realistic Goals: Peter advises prospective candidates to set aside dedicated time in their calendars. This could mean aligning the certification goals with annual

performance development plans. Securing employer support is invaluable. Some organizations offer financial assistance or extra professional development leave.

- Embrace Continuous Learning: Nick recommends viewing the CVE as more than just a line on your resume. The process invites you to fill knowledge gaps, expand your leadership acumen and engage with a global professional community. When approached with the mindset of "What can I learn?" rather than "What do I need to do to pass?", the outcome is far more impactful.
- Leverage the Global Network: A significant benefit of the CVE is the network you join. Whether you meet fellow CVEs at IAVM events or through virtual forums, these connections can shape your perspective on industry best practices. Don't be afraid to reach out to colleagues across the globe. Often, they're dealing with the same operational challenges, from security protocols to digital ticketing innovations.
- Keep the Momentum Going: Earning a CVE is a milestone, but it's not the end of the journey. Staying active in the community, through speaking engagements, mentorship or volunteering, ensures that you continue to reap the benefits of being a recognized thought leader. You'll also have the chance to influence how the industry evolves, bringing fresh ideas to a field that thrives on adaptation.

### Implications for U.S.-Based Members

While much of this conversation has centered on the CVE's relevance outside the U.S., it's crucial to underscore that it's equally beneficial for professionals based in North America. The credential helps U.S. venue managers stand out in a crowded domestic market, especially when major venues vie for top-tier talent.

Moreover, by interacting with CVEs from places like Australia, New Zealand and Asia, U.S.-based members gain fresh insights and adapt-

ability, two qualities that are increasingly necessary in an industry shaped by global entertainment trends, international event touring and evolving health and safety protocols. The CVE community becomes a network that transcends geographic boundaries, fostering a culture of learning and collaboration that benefits everyone.

### Conclusion: A Credential That Crosses Borders

Today's venue management landscape is more globalized than ever. A popular artist might launch a world tour that spans four continents; a sports franchise could host pre-season games in overseas markets. Venue managers need the skills and insights to handle not just local complexities but also the international nuances of crowd dynamics, cultural expectations, sponsorship obligations and technological shifts.

The Certified Venue Executive (CVE) accreditation, with its long history of validating leadership and strategic expertise, stands as a powerful testament to a professional's readiness to excel in this global environment. As Peter and Nick's experiences attest and as I've seen in my own consulting work, the CVE garners respect from stakeholders and peers around the world. It's a rigorous, rewarding journey that ultimately positions you as a leader who can innovate, adapt and drive the industry forward, no matter where you call home.

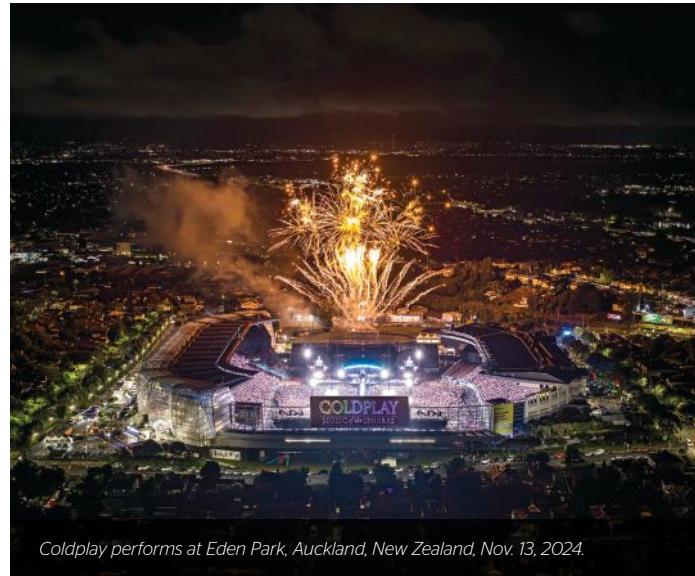
Whether you're based in the United States, Australia or any other part of the globe, the CVE offers a lens through which to view best practices, navigate emerging challenges and connect with a network of dedicated

venue professionals. If you're on the fence, consider this your invitation to pursue the credential. You'll gain not only new letters after your name, but also a transformed perspective on what it means to manage venues at the highest level—one that has the power to shape your career, enrich your community and leave a lasting imprint on the world of public assembly venues.

*Tim Long, CVE, is managing director, Hawkridge Entertainment Services. **VP***



Inside Perth Arena in Western Australia. (Credit: Travis Hayto Outer Bounds Photography)



Coldplay performs at Eden Park, Auckland, New Zealand, Nov. 13, 2024.