

THROUGH THE
LOOKING GLASS:
Escape Hunt
Experience owner
Rebecca Assice.
Picture: Justin Lloyd



A WAY-OUT EXPERIENCE

EDWARD BOYD

BEING locked in a room for an hour where the only way of escape is to crack clues and solve puzzles is not everyone's cup of tea.

But the "escape room" concept is becoming increasingly popular in Queensland as team-building exercises for corporates or a night out.

Escape-room players are trapped in a themed room for one hour where they need to solve a series of logic-based brain teasers in rapid succession to unlock the door to freedom.

"There can be riddles, brain teasers, tactile puzzles, using a key to move a magnet through a maze ... the majority of it is related to logic and they are all tied to the storyline," said Rebecca Assice, who is the owner of the Australian and New Zealand master franchise of The Escape Hunt Experience.

The Escape Hunt has branches in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast where scenarios such as murder in the barber shop, a bomb at government house or treachery at the race track can be played out.

Ms Assice said the rooms were very popular with corporate clients, who can book out the entire complex for team-building activities with up to 72 people at a time.

"This is team building in disguise," she said.

"We have had everyone from Google, Suncorp, Bank of Queensland, Ernst and Young and QUT ... it is something that appeals to a wide range of people."

The Escape Hunt franchise is in six major Australian cities and is having strong year-on-year revenue growth due to increasing popularity. "June/July 2015 was an excellent month for us, and (in the past year) across the board our revenues are 20 per cent higher," Ms Assice said.

The escape-room concept has grown substantially since it was established in Hungary 10 years ago.

"Five years ago there was probably a handful of escape rooms, and now there are more than 3000 globally."

One corporate client is Airtasker, an online marketplace that allows users to outsource tasks. Its chief technology officer Paul Keen said his software engineering team hugely enjoyed their time in the Escape Hunt last year.