



Come on Aussie!

AUSTRALIA

has some pretty special conference hotels, both in style and amenities; still, we clearly didn't make the Gayot (pronounced Guy-OH) Top 10 Conference Hotels Worldwide.

These include the Centara Grand and Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld with a capacity for up to 5,000, which even features a putting green.

Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi has a Las Vegas-worthy 1,100-seat auditorium and an outdoor concert area for 20,000 guests;



Gleneagles Scotland (pictured) blends a quintessential Scottish country estate experience with exceptional conference facilities; The Fairmont San Francisco has the fact that among its 55,000 sq ft of function space, Tony Bennett first sang 'I Left My Heart in San Francisco'; The Four Seasons Hong Kong has its East-meets-West designer meeting rooms, striking ballrooms and 45th floor Peak Suite.

The New York Palace, described as being regal without being fussy, has 24,000 sq ft of event space.

The Sheraton Ankara Hotel and Convention Centre, Turkey, has its 14,000 sq ft exhibition hall and 20 function spaces.

The Ritz Carlton Los Angeles houses a restaurant helmed by Wolfgang Puck; The Aspen Meadows Resort Colorado attracts heads of state, diplomats and business leaders from around the world and The Grove, Hertfordshire UK, once the home of the Earls of Clarendon, today serves as a prime destination for unique business events.

Come on Aussie, come on! Jill

Biz ev visitors down overall

BUSINESS events visitors in Australia are down overall to 19.2m in the year to September, from 20.4m in 2013.

The latest figures from Tourism Research Australia's International and National Visitor Surveys show a two year drop in business events visitors, with 2012 posting 19.9m visitors overall; however this was up from 18.9m in 2011.

Conference and convention visitor numbers were down from 5.1m to 4.3m, while trade fair and exhibition visitors were down to 1.3m from 1.9m in the year to September 2013.

Domestic overnight business events visitors were down from 9.8m to 9.5m and domestic day trip visitors were down slightly from 9.8m to 8.9m visitors.

However international business events visitors were up for the year to 842,000 from 820,000 (**BEN** 03 Dec) and overall trip nights were up to 45.4m from 44.8m, a growth that has

continued since 2011.

Overall spend was down slightly from \$12.8m to \$12.7m, which was higher than 2012's spend.

Domestic day trip spend for this year was down to \$1.1m.

Overall in Australia, domestic visitor overnight spend was up 4% to \$53.7b and overnight trips were up 5% to 79.7m.

To read more, **CLICK HERE**.

New Tourism Fiji ceo appointed

TOURISM Fiji regional director New Zealand Wayne Deed has been appointed acting ceo.

Effective as of 26 Dec, the organisation said marketing manager Michelle Sinnott had been appointed acting director of global marketing, effective on the same date.

Germany's predictions



THE German Convention Bureau (GCB) has released a set of predictions for the German meetings and conferences industry in 2015, much of which can be universally applied.

The Bureau said there would be more mindshare of the design, architecture, flow, format and technology features of meeting spaces and how they influence delegate experiences.

Destination marketing organisations would continue to strike up strategic alliances to collaborate, share best practices and drive innovation, it said.

CLICK HERE to read more.

Four pages today

BEN has three pages of news plus a full page from (**click**):

- AIME

AV conference tender

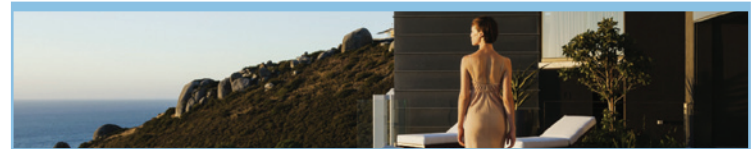
THE Australian Aged Care Quality Agency is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from audio visual suppliers to provide AV services at seven industry conferences.

The conferences are to be held next year starting in Darwin on 30 Apr at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel through to Brisbane on 11 Nov, with location not specified.

The estimated value of the tender ranged from \$80,000 to \$200,000, the Agency said.

EOIs were sought from AV providers to be available for each of the seven conferences, it said.

CLICK HERE to access the tender documents.



THE MICE MARKET GOES SOCIAL

The impact of social media on consumer travel is undeniable, but what potential is there for the MICE market? According to Corbin Ball Associates, a lot. Of the 1,500 event organisers they surveyed in 2013, 75% said that social media was very important for their events.

Social media has the power to transform how events and venues are managed and marketed. Siobhan Komander, Managing Director of Xphyr Brand Experiences, says that they are increasingly engaging with social media to "showcase venues, highlight great suppliers, and share ideas and content of interest to a wider audience. Event producers are constantly researching concepts from a variety of sources and we like to share some of these ideas on social media so others can gain inspiration." On the other side of the equation, buyers are embracing the opportunities presented by social media, using it to engage with delegates and increase attendance at events.

There is also great potential for social media during MICE events. Xphyr uses multiple social media channels during client events, creating hashtags and apps, providing information about experiences and speakers, promoting competitions or rewards, and encouraging attendee engagement. Ms Komander believes that "using social media with events helps increase brand awareness and build relationships". Get involved during Luxperience 2015 with the **#soluxperience** hashtag.

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business events news

10th December 2014



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ITO Code includes demerit system

MINISTER for Trade and Investment Andrew Robb has announced the release of a revised Code of Business Standards and Ethics for Inbound Tour Operators to ensure Australia captures the Chinese tourist market with its Approved Destination Status.

The Code had been simplified and included a demerit points system to encourage compliance, as well as being extended to cover tour guides, the Minister's office said.

The revised document would help Australia remain an attractive destination for the group-tour market from China, Robb said.

Austrade had updated the Code in response to changing market conditions including arrivals and tour operator growth, the Minister's office said.

CLICK HERE to view the revised Code.

Sandstone function centre

THE Sandstone Precinct development could feature a function centre.

In a staged development application, Government Property NSW is seeking approval for a concept proposal to use the Precinct for tourist and visitor accommodation, retail premises and a function centre.

The organisation sought Expressions of Interest (EOIs) in late 2013 from developers, investors and hotel operators, saying its preference was for a luxury boutique hotel or hotels, with an agreement for lease to be entered into by mid-2015.

EOIs closed on 04 December.

The function centre was proposed for inclusion to support the opportunity, if available, to hold events and conferences, the application said.

The Precinct consists of the Lands Building, with a total site area of 3,320 sqm, and the Education Building, with a total



site area of 2,762 sqm.

The project is on public exhibition until 02 Feb.

CLICK HERE to access the application.

Adelaide in a Day

SHOWCASING Adelaide in the lead up to India's opening game of the ICC Cricket World Cup, the South Australian Tourism Commission has released a second YouTube film in a series of three targeting the Indian market, showing the city through the eyes of cricketer Ajay Jadeja.

CLICK HERE to view the second video.

Celebrate 2015

CONSIDERING that some venues in Sydney hosting New Year functions are charging in excess of \$900 for canapés, champagne and entertainment, admittedly in some pretty specky locations, the Dockside Group's event at Sydney's largest floating venue Dockside Pavilion is a positive steal.

The floating event centre, which overlooks the sparkling shores of Darling Harbour, is offering a gourmet four course meal including beverages for \$240 per adult and \$145 per child.

For this you also get to enjoy spectacular views of the 9pm and midnight fireworks, a DJ and a dance floor.

The venue had capacity for up to 1,440 guests seated and 2,000 guests standing, Dockside Group said.

Celebrations commence from 7:30 pm and continue to 1 am.

To find out more, email enquiries@dgrestaurants.com.au.

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business events news

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Mansour joins IHG

FORMER Zadro account director Annmarie Mansour has joined the InterContinental Hotels Group as its new field marketing manager, Australasia.

JW Marriott Phuket offer

JW MARRIOTT Phuket Resort and Spa is offering a conference and meeting special, including two of five add-ons for group bookings of 60 to 80 room nights, and four add-ons for group bookings of 81 to 130 room nights.

These include free WiFi, a free one hour cocktail reception and no venue rental charge for secretary or breakout rooms.

CLICK HERE for more.

Luxperience pop up

LUXURY travel exhibition Luxperience will host an evening pop up event in New York City on 13 Apr, giving 20 exhibitors the chance to present and network with USA luxury travel advisors and media.

This is the second pop up in NYC, with this year's event held in London.

Auckland's biggest event season

AUCKLAND is set to host its biggest ever events season, Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development has said.

The season kicked off with the arrival of six waka at Waitemata Harbour this week.

CLICK HERE for more.

Tas parks and tourism

THE Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service have signed the Parks 21 strategic action plan.

This would see tourism and visitor activities jointly developed by the parks management organisation and the tourism industry, Minister for the Environment, Parks and Heritage Matthew Groom said.

The government's call for Expressions of Interest for tourist developments in national parks had seen 37 proposals including accommodation and associated tourism related architecture, the Minister said.

AST management appoints new gm

AST Management Pty Ltd has a new general manager in Russell Bennett, who started in the role from 04 Dec.

Bennett had more than 35 years of management experience, specialising in AV, operational sales and marketing management, the company said.



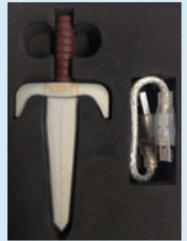
NEW Zealand's group tours industry must be gearing up for an influx of travellers as the last Hobbit movie hits the cinemas.

Indeed, Viator is offering a number of tours including behind the scenes of the movies' sets.

BEN's own taste of the Hobbit-y magic came via a gift from an Air NZ function, in the form of a Hobbit sword USB.

It caused much shameful squealing from the nerdier member of the **BEN** team, and we particularly enjoyed the accompanying lead, should the guard prove too large to slot into some computers (ours).

The airline was celebrating the success of its Hobbit-themed safety video, the best part of which are the YouTube comments, including someone bemoaning the fact that women only want tall men (or elves).



Getting to Know: Salzburg

by: Louise Wallace

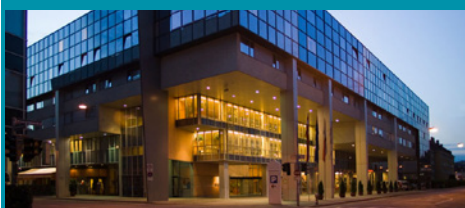
FRANCE has got the Eiffel Tower and Switzerland has its ski fields, but Austria is a lesser known gem that's receiving high acclaim for its diversity for incentives and events.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – born in Salzburg back in 1756 - had a large part to play in putting this city on the map, but it's the 1960s Sound of Music film which draws thousands of visitors each year. **BEN** experienced this one first hand on a recent famil, boarding the Sound of Music bus with dozens of avid fans. Starting off at the Mirabel Gardens where the song 'Do-Re-Mi' was set, over five hours attendees traced sites where the movie was filmed, including the Leopoldskron Palace, Hellbrunn palace and Mondsee. While the enthusiastic onboard singing was underappreciated by some, the tour also traversed Salzburg's picturesque countryside, making it a sure bet for any incentive or day trip.

Salzburg's offering doesn't stop on the tour bus, with an abundance of other options on offer. Guided tours of the historic Hohensalzburg Castle operate daily, there are daily city tours, regular local theatre performances during the summer and, of course, the Sound of Music Tour operates every day of the year. All the major sites are also within 15 minutes walking distance from the heart of the city, making planning a breeze.

But Salzburg doesn't only cater for incentive groups, with a solid offering for meetings and events.

The Salzburg Exhibition Centre boasts 10 halls spanning 70,000 sqm, while the Salzburg Congress offers 15,000 sqm of floor space, and most high-end hotels feature versatile meeting spaces for more than 100 delegates. Complemented by several five-star properties and plenty of moderates for more conservative budgets - such as the Best Western and Ramada - and Salzburg covers all bases for incentives, meetings and events.



Business Events News is Australia's newest online publication dedicated to the vibrant meetings, incentives, conferences and events sector.

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