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ROYAL HALL OF INDUSTRIES SYDNEY

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Jayson Westbury / Chief Executive, AFTA

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What do I know of footy of any kind?



WHAT I do know is that I had to get up at sparrows (4.30 am) yesterday morning from my nice warm bed in The Darling, The Star's glam 5-star hotel, to join in the fun of the FIFA World Cup semi-final between the Netherlands and Argentina.

Viewed on the world's biggest TV screen and from the comfort of a private suite in The Star's Events Centre, we were joined by the sports team from SBS, including commentator and ex-Socceroo Jason Culina.

It was interesting to see the Events Centre in a totally different light from my previous experience at the AACTA Awards, when it was set for a lunch, and now, with tiered seating for the fans.

The venue has the ability to convert to various configurations with 720 retractable theatre seats that can be quickly and readily stored to obtain a 1077 sqm flat floor space.

It can take up to 960 banquet and 1,300 in conference/business mode.

If you fancy a Luxury Getaway, right now until 31 Jul, The Darling has a special on rooms that includes a luxurious la prairie travel duo valued at \$89 and a 100% pure cotton bathrobe designed exclusively for the Spa at The Darling.

Just quote the promo code LUXURY14 when booking online only. Jill



Pictured: Annmarie Mansour, Zadro & The Star's Diane Glasson

Pearl for Perth and Darwin



PERTH and Western Australia will see conference delegates spend almost \$108m in the 2013-14 financial year, while Darwin is set to see more than 9,000 delegates from July to November.

Ceo Paul Beeson said the figure represented 193 events, a record for the Perth Convention Bureau and up from 184 conferences in the 2012-13 year, which saw a calculated direct delegate expenditure of \$104m.

The Bureau said this was calculated using factors such as length of stay and delegate dollar value.

Chairman Ian Laurance said the figures indicated the Bureau continued to punch above its weight in the business events industry despite new infrastructure and increasing competition across Australia and around the SE Asian region.

The Bureau said conferencing was the highest yielding tourism sector with an international delegate spending five times more than a leisure tourist.

Beeson said the value of conferencing and business events was increasingly appreciated by governments and in WA.

MEANWHILE the Darwin Convention Centre (**pictured**) has said it is expecting one of its busiest conference seasons in six years, with business events contributing an estimated \$33m in economic activity to the city and the NT, which gm Janet Hamilton said was based on a delegate survey undertaken every two years with Tourism NT, and on delegate spend.

She said the Centre believed

the increased interest was due to the fact that Darwin was now an established business events destination, which was experiencing growth in the oil and gas industry and focus on new strategies to develop the NT as the gateway to Asia.

"We are also the closest Convention Centre to South East Asia and we are seeing a trend with national associations selecting Darwin as a convention destination to attract Asian delegates to their conventions."

Getting up to speed on ICE

INCENTIVE, Conference & Event Society Asia Pacific (ICE) held its Sydney launch on Tuesday evening at Water at Pier One Sydney Harbour.

Presented by inaugural president Nigel Gaunt (**pictured** with Pier One gm Kim Mahaffy), the event was sponsored by Marriott, one of ICE's foundation patrons.

Not fond of the MICE acronym, Gaunt quipped in his opening address, "Not so long ago people thought I was in the pest control business but now I have to assure them that I'm not in the drug business!"

Gaunt said there was no peak incentive travel, conference, meetings and corporate events industry body for the whole of Asia Pacific, despite its value in 2013 exceeding US\$100b in economic value, with 80% of this business coming from the region.

The point of difference between ICE and other industry bodies was that membership was focused on

Three pages today

BEN has two pages of editorial plus a full page from (**click**):

- The Travel Industry Exhibition

Osmond new TTF ceo

THE Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) has a new ceo in Margy Osmond.

Osmond will start on 01 Oct, taking over from Ken Morrison, who announced on Twitter that he would leave the organisation to start as ceo of the Property Council in July.

Trent Zimmerman would serve as acting ceo in the interim, TTF said.

TTF chairman Bruce Baird said Osmond had previously been ceo of the Australian National Retailers Association and a board member of Tourism NSW and NSW Major Events.

the corporate sector, he said.

"Our corporate members are enjoying the fact that ICE is a forum for them to meet and network, which until now has not been readily available to them."



Additionally, he said ICE would roll out an education program later this year, in agreement with MEA and spearheaded by a conference from 12 to 14 Nov at The Stones, Legian Bali.

With more than 200 members, 53% of which are corporate customers and some 500 expected by the end of September, Gaunt said the industry had already recognised that ICE was "something of a game changer."



business events news

11th July 2014



SO GREAT is Queensland's pride and passion for State of Origin that birth certificates have been created to identify Maroons fans for life!

And despite the fact that Queensland won't be taking out the series this year, a competition to vote for their favourite specially designed State of Origin birth certificate saw more than 10,000 votes cast by Maroons fans.

With the traditional Chevron design proving to be the crowd favourite, attorney general and Minister for Justice Jarrod Bleijie said, "We wanted to hear from Queenslanders near and far to see which certificate best represented the Origin spirit and I'm pleased to say they've picked a timeless design that fits the bill perfectly."

Bleijie said a portion of proceeds from the sale of certificates would assist the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages in providing life event registration and certification services to remote and Indigenous Queenslanders.

Only in Queensland, it seems!



Rydges rejuvenates

BOTH the Esplanade and Tradewinds Rydges Hotels and Resorts in Cairns are to undergo refurbishment programs.

The improvements are a continuation of the opening of Rydges Esplanade's new event and meeting place, Fire and Ice Terrace, with an 18 month room refurbishment starting in October on seven of its 12 floors.

According to area director of sales and marketing for Rydges Hotels and Resorts in Cairns, Natalie Dean, the rejuvenated rooms will come on line by November.

Changes at Rydges Tradewinds will address the service of food and beverage and see the introduction of a new venue in Drift on the Esplanade.

Dean said that while the finished product will be very different to what is currently on offer, she anticipated minimal disruption to guests with all services remaining available between 14 and 29 Aug.

Sheraton opens in Zhuhai

A NEW 548 room hotel, the Sheraton Zhuhai, is set to open in November next door to the Zhuhai International Convention & Exhibition Center, the newest and biggest conference centre in Zhuhai with more than 30,000 sqm of waterfront exhibition space.

The 19 storey Sheraton has more than 2,070 sqm of flexible meeting space.

Nothing like a Dame!

DESTINATION New South Wales ceo Sandra Chipchase officially launched the SeaLink Travel Group's *Annabelle Rankin* by breaking a champagne bottle across her bow yesterday.

The third catamaran to be added to its Captain Cook Cruises fleet, the \$2.6m, 24 metre Rocket catamaran will join her sister vessels *Elizabeth Cook* and *Mary Reibey* on Sydney harbour.

The vessel is named after one of Australia's pioneer stateswomen, Dame Annabelle Rankin.

It is contracted to Harbour City Ferries (Sydney Ferries) until June 2017 and will be providing ferry charter services.

Vinpearl's island hotel

A NEW five star resort is to open on Phu Quoc Island, Vinpearl's fourth in Vietnam.

Covering more than 300 hectares on the island's Long Beach, the Vinpearl Resort Phu Quoc is a 45 minute flight from Ho Chi Minh City.

When it opens on 01 Nov it will have 750 rooms and business and meetings facilities, which business development manager Ha Minh Thu said would make the resort a "solid sell" for everyone, including the meetings and incentives market, a key focus for Vinpearl, which launched targeted packages earlier this year.



CONFESSIONS OF A COMPULSIVE CONFERENCE-GOER

Andrew Klein, director of SPIKE Presentations, presents his front line observations on conferences in a regular feature in *BEN*.

MY THEME DREAM

ALTHOUGH I attend lots of conferences, I did not attend one seemingly held about twenty years ago, where I think it was decided that moving forward, conferences were only permitted to use a set number of clichéd theme names.

My research tells me that the conference was convened by the Association (of) Repetitive Sounding Themes (they never use their acronym for obvious reasons).

I'm referring to those tired motivational style conference themes. The one listed on the conference website that then find their way onto the cover of the conference program, are projected in giant letters at the start of each presentation and printed on the conference t-shirt. I'll bet you too have a "Winning Together '08" polo or a "Share the Vision" t-shirt currently in your pyjama drawer.

Since the many "Innovate '98" conferences, sadly there hasn't been much innovation in conference themes. The same ones just get trotted out year after year.

We've had "Lead" or "Leading the Way" or for the fusion-themers, "Leadership; Share the Vision".

In an Olympic Year, you'll find a host of 'Higher, Faster, Stronger' themes. Then there's the 'ate' series - "Innovate, Integrate, Motivate" or similar sounding 'ate' words.

There's the popular 'Make' series - "Make it Happen", "Make it Matter" or "Make a Difference".

And of course, the myriad of 'Future' inspired themes - "Shaping the Future", "Future Visions," "Back to the Future" or "Meeting Tomorrow Today". And as we approach a new decade, I've noticed "20/20 Vision" has become uber-popular.

While I understand the benefit of having a theme and linking key messages together, let's try to come up with something more creative, something no other conference has used or better still, a truly honest conference theme.

"Get the Remainder of your CPD Points 2014", "Ditch the Partner & Kids for a Few Days 2015", "Gold Coast is Lovely This Time of Year".

How about the "Help Us Use the Remainder of the L&D Budget Convention 2015"?

So, to all the PCOs and event organisers out there, currently dreaming up your theme for the 2015 conference, there's a challenge for you!

Onwards (and Upwards).

For more information about Andrew and what he can do for you at your next conference email andrew@lunch.com.au or visit his website at www.andrewklein.com.au.



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