



## Another opening, another show!

### WELCOME



to 2015 as **BEN** sails into its fourth year of publication, having grown into the must-read and, as many tell us, the only business events newsletter to peruse every week.

We hope you welcomed in the New Year in fine style.

Fortuna Foti and the team at Foti Fireworks, known for their spectacular displays worldwide, pulled even more pyrotechnic tricks out of their barges in their Sydney Harbour display - or was it because I was watching from Blues Point Towers, just a stone's throw from the Harbour Bridge, overwhelmed by the cacophony of noise and endless bursts of colour?

Thank you for your continuing support, your emails and your encouragement - it is much appreciated.

Don't forget, we are always happy to consider competition give aways and, of course, we welcome your advertising and promotions.

Here's to a healthy and prosperous year ahead!

Jill

## IACC directory for meeting planners

**THE** International Association of Conference Centres (IACC) has launched an online global directory of IACC-certified conference venues.

Ceo Mark Cooper said the website aimed to provide an easy to use search tool for meeting planners to review conference centres specialising in meetings.

It came after consultation with the meeting planner community during the design process, IACC said.

The site is available across desktop, mobile and tablet devices, it said.

[CLICK HERE](#) to access the site.

## ACC budget increase

**THE** budget for the expansion of the Adelaide Convention Centre (ACC) has been increased from \$350.32m to \$396.82m.

South Australian Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Stephen Mullighan said the increased budget was a result of the Centre's design and the challenge of construction on a complex site, including building



## NZICC resource consent lodged

**SKYCITY** Entertainment Group has lodged a resource consent application for the New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC).

The application included multiple meeting rooms, a 3,000 seat theatre and an exhibition floor the size of Eden Park's rugby pitch.

Lodging the application was a "significant" milestone for the project, SkyCity ceo Nigel Morrison said.

Design changes required to meet the brief set out in the NZICC Agreement along with "significant recent and expected construction cost inflation" had seen estimates of development cost ramped up to NZ\$470 to \$530m, from more than NZ\$400m in 2013, for which the company and Crown would work together to "identify additional options" to address costs over the NZ\$402m contractual obligation, SkyCity said.

The date for formal approval of the preliminary design had been extended to the end of February as a result, it said.

The NZICC completion date was previously extended from mid-2017 to mid-2018 (**BEN** 17 Oct).

Both Tourism New Zealand and Conventions and Incentives New Zealand welcomed the progress in the project.

over a railway station.

The additional \$46.5m would be funded through the Centre's Future Asset Replacement Account at \$14.5m and a loan from the South Australian Finance Authority, the Minister said, meaning the only budget impact would be the loan interest payments.

The news came as the Plenary building deconstruction was "well under way", marking stage two of the redevelopment, the Minister said.

More than 600 business events had been booked for the redeveloped Centre, he said.

Stage two is due for completion in the third quarter of 2017.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read more.

## WA event calendar

**TOURISM** Western Australia has created an industry events calendar.

The calendar featured trade events, training for tourism operators, workshops, industry briefings, networking opportunities and award nights, the organisation said.

[CLICK HERE](#) to view.

## Port Arthur offers tours in Mandarin

**PORT** Arthur Historic Site is offering several tours and talks in Mandarin throughout January, following visitors from China overtaking traditional markets such as the UK in recent months as the major international source market, it said.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more.

## WA event resource

**TOURISM** WA has released a resource for event organisers with information about listing an event and using social media.

[CLICK HERE](#) to access.

## ben Events Calendar

**BEN's** calendar details events at various venues across Australia.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email [info@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:info@businesseventsnews.com.au).

### 6 FEB

Perth Convention Bureau's (PCB) 2015 Aspire Awards workshop luncheon; Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre; for enquiries, email [aspire@pcb.com.au](mailto:aspire@pcb.com.au)

### 12-13 FEB

Ceo and Chair Symposium; Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart; for enquiries, email [kristine@associations.net.au](mailto:kristine@associations.net.au)

### 18-20 FEB

Fundraising Institute Australia Conference 2015; Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre; visit [www.fiaconference.org.au](http://www.fiaconference.org.au)

### 20 FEB

DMS Workshop; Doltone House Hyde Park, Sydney; for enquiries, email [sydneysvp@destinationmarketing.com.au](mailto:sydneysvp@destinationmarketing.com.au)

### 23 FEB

DMS Workshop; Crown Towers, Melbourne; for enquiries, email [melbournersvp@destinationmarketing.com.au](mailto:melbournersvp@destinationmarketing.com.au)

### 16 MAR

Ni hao WA 2015; Aravina Estate, Yallingup; visit [www.tourism.wa.gov.au](http://www.tourism.wa.gov.au)

### 4 MAR

NT Muster; Ivy Ballroom, Sydney; for enquiries, email [trade.tourismnt@nt.gov.au](mailto:trade.tourismnt@nt.gov.au)

### 5 MAR

NT Muster; Park Hyatt Melbourne Ballroom; for enquiries, email [trade.tourismnt@nt.gov.au](mailto:trade.tourismnt@nt.gov.au)



# business events news

5th January 2015



## crumbs!

**IMAGINE** conferencing on not just a private jet, but the King's private jet.

We're not talking about future British royalty either, but Elvis Presley, whose two personal jets are up for auction until 02 Feb through a sealed bid process, Julien's Auctions has said.

You can't actually fly the jets, which have been on display for the past 30 years, but one, the *Lisa Marie*, contains its own conference room, as well as such other trifling interior fit outs as gold faucets, a gold washbasin and a stereo system with 50 speakers - imagine the AV experience!

The other plane is named *Hound Dog II*, and Graceland operators have said they will not renew the agreement with the planes' current owners to display them.

The agreement expires at the end of April, so if you're looking to spend between US\$10m and US\$15m, according to the *Guardian*, then get on it.

**CLICK HERE** to read more.

## National events day

**MEETINGS** and events organisations in the United States, Canada and Mexico have launched the inaugural North American Meetings Industry Day.

To be held on 16 Apr, the day would show the value of meetings, conventions, incentives and exhibitions, the Convention Industry Council said.

Organisations in the three countries would hold events to celebrate the day, with toolkit materials to be distributed, it said.

## BestCities' makes a statement

**BESTCITIES** Global Alliance has said it will join its strategic partner, Professional Conference Management Association, at its event, Convening Leaders, from 11 to 14 Jan in Chicago, where it will also unveil its new position statement, 'When the world wants to meet, we set the standard'.

BestCities would also announce its newest partner, it said.

## Tourism blind spot

**THE** last issue of the Survey of Tourism Accommodation, released in December, left Australia's tourism industry "flying blind", Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) ceo Margy Osmond has said.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey provided a comprehensive picture of the accommodation sector's performance, which was critical to tourism investment decisions, Osmond said.

TTF called on the government to reinstate funding for the survey on a quarterly basis, with Osmond saying it was hard to say Australia was "open for business" without providing the basic tools that allowed potential investors to assess the market and make sound decisions.

The survey found accommodation takings and occupancy rates had increased in Victoria for the 2013-14 financial year due to higher numbers of overseas leisure tourists, but WA and Queensland saw decreases.

ABS said it and the Australian Trade Commission were working to secure future funding for the survey - **CLICK HERE** to access.



# FACE : FACE

Paul Wilson

Director of MICE and regional S&M  
Mantra Group



*Business Events News* recently caught up Paul Wilson, director of MICE and regional sales and marketing NSW/ACT for the Mantra Group.

If you could create any animal hybrid, what would it be and why?

A Wolkat! Wolf + Meerkat.

Wolves are intensely interested and incredibly perceptive, while meerkats live life at a 100 mph pace, are great social connectors and loyal creatures.

What analogy best describes being Mantra Group national director of MICE and why?

A Rugby Captain.

It's important I'm on the field with the team, organising and motivating them.

It's fast-paced, competitive and an adrenaline-fuelled challenge every day.

There's been a bit of unrest in the industry about the acronym 'MICE' - what's your take on it?

This is one of the few exceptions I accept ambiguity on an acronym; as long as there's understanding from those outside the industry, it's moot if the E is Exhibitions or Events, or the C is Conferences or Conventions.

What is the outlook for the Australian business events sector for next year? How is Mantra positioned?

Events will always be there, winning them gets that much harder each and every year as clients' needs and wants continually change, technology changes and what's in fashion in the event industry changes.

So the key here is that Mantra

continually listens and moves with change.

What do you think hotel groups often struggle with when it comes to business events? How can they address this?

The escalating expectation for greater flexibility and automation; from real-time accommodation purchase options to hybrid event setup and short-lead events, hotels must anticipate the company's needs before they arise - if they don't, someone else will!

What one change in the industry would make your job easier?

Stronger parity with the international dollar to keep domestic events on-shore and greater attractiveness to the global market.

What's the weirdest hotel myth you've ever heard?

That all sales and marketing people in hotels do is drink coffee and eat muffins.

Will robots ever take over the hotel industry?

Never; it didn't work in 'I, Robot' and it won't work in the industry.

With competitive parity on the rise, people buy emotionally.

We bond with those we trust and gravitate toward mutually beneficial relationships - the need for real human integration will be more imperative than ever.

What's the most embarrassing song on your play list?

Vanilla Ice - Ice Ice Baby.

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

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Postal address: PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710 Australia

Street address: 4/41 Rawson St, Epping NSW 2121 Australia

P: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760) F: 1300 799 221 (+61 2 8007 6769)

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Publisher: Bruce Piper

Editor: Jill Varley [info@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:info@businesseventsnews.com.au)

Deputy Editor: Alex Walls

Advertising and Marketing: Sean Harrigan and Katrina Ford [advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au)

Business Manager: Jenny Piper [accounts@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:accounts@businesseventsnews.com.au)

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