



How GC is this?

ONE thing you can say for sure about the Gold Coast, it never stands still.



Just when you thought you'd had it covered another extraordinary building pops up, another event centre opens, a number of hotels have reinvented themselves or you learn that there are more canals on the Gold Coast than in Venice!

Hosted buyers at a lunch at the new Sea World Resort Conference Centre during the *This is Gold Coast 2015* experience last week were assailed by a bunch of Cowabunga Ninja Turtle dudes, a Marilyn Monroe look-a-like, a tooty Austin Powers, the horses from Outback Spectacular, a kid goat and Digger the dog from Paradise World - and all before we entered the building.

At the lunch, the first official event to be held in the Centre, food stations were filled with cuisines including Aussie, Korean, Japanese, Indian and fresh local seafood, plus fabulous desserts – a testament to the creativity of the Sea World kitchens.

But wait, there's more. With food on our plates, Those Tap Guys who cunningly disguised themselves as exhibition workers, set the floor alight with their street infused tap dancing, later shuffling their way to a more laid back song and dance routine.

All this on a day that started from our accommodation at the Hotel Grand Chancellor Surfers Paradise with a ride through the Gold Coast streets on the back of a Harley Davidson to a site inspection at Bond University.

MEANWHILE I ran into former Pullman Sea Temple GM Kelvin Dodt during our gala event at Jupiters hotel. He had just joined the Echo Entertainment Group as general manager hotels – Queensland, overseeing the daily management, operations and refurbishment of Jupiters' 592-room hotel and Treasury's 130-room heritage hotel.

Another thing is for sure, on the GC there's never a dull moment.

Major test program for ICC



THE new International Convention Centre Sydney will host at least twenty events over a three month period to "test and commission every centimetre of the venue" prior to its formal debut in December next year.

ICC Sydney ceo Geoff Donaghy announced the commissioning program at an industry showcase of the new venue today, saying that as the operator of the venue AEG Ogden has three months before the opening to ensure every element is "functioning to its world class benchmark".

He said the tests would also ensure staff are trained in situ for every event type, while the lead-up program would also allow ICC Sydney to be previewed to business and local communities ahead of its opening.

The industry showcase also included an address from NSW transport and infrastructure minister, Andrew Constance, who outlined the state government's vision for the ICC precinct.

"ICC Sydney is the centrepiece of a \$3.4 billion transformation of Darling Harbour that will completely reinvent the way business events are delivered in our great city," he said.

Constance said construction of the facility was well advanced.

"This project is tracking along apace: structural steel installation and concrete structural works are progressing, and about 1.8 million man hours have already been put

in to build this incredible new destination," he enthused.

Donaghy said the update was an opportunity to "excite the industry with our progress" as well as providing reassurance that ICC Sydney is on track for its scheduled Dec 2016 opening.

MEANWHILE ICC Sydney last week announced the appointment of Malu Barrios, Johnny Naofal and Ivan Sanhueza (pictured) as new directors.

Barrios will be Director of Event Services; Sanheza is Director of Technology Services; and Naofal is ICC Sydney's Director of Building Services.

In the lead-up to the opening Barrios and Naofal will continue their existing roles managing the interim Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island, and will also be responsible for the "seamless transition of the industry's events to ICC Sydney in December 2016".

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has four pages of news plus full pages from: (click)

- Pullman meetings deal
- Travel Industry Exhibition

First P&O conference

P&O Cruises has confirmed that the first conference to take place aboard its new *Pacific Eden* will very appropriately feature a group of cruising experts.

The Travellers Choice travel agency group will host its annual Cruise Forum on board the ship during its inaugural voyage, with participants getting on board on 23 Nov for plenary sessions in its dedicated conference facilities.

The cruise line launched a major assault on the conference market at AIME this year, with its new *Pacific Eden* and *Pacific Aria* to be fitted with dedicated meeting facilities and operating shorter itineraries to suit the corporate meeting and incentive markets.

PCOA webinar today

THE PCO Association will host its "The future of conferences... becoming meeting designers and architects" webinar from 1.30pm AEST today.

Ed Bernacki from The Idea Factory will speak on the rapidly evolving industry and in particular overseas trends and the emergence of so-called "meeting architecture".

To register [CLICK HERE](#).

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business events news

25th June 2015

Stand and delivered

WHEN the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC) used their latest sustainability project – their trade stand at last week's This is Gold Coast 2015 Business Exchange, it won them the Best Stand award.



Made almost entirely from repurposed materials, the stand (above) was executed by the GCCEC team whose commitment to sustainability earned them a place in history in 2013 as the first convention centre in the world to be verified against the EarthCheck Responsible Management and Events Standard. "Sustainability is not only one of the Centre's core values, but is something which is ingrained into the corporate culture of the GCCEC," said gm Adrienne

Reading. Born of an idea to re-use leftover materials after the installation of more than 10,000 sqm of carpet across both levels of the Centre, carpet pallets were stained and sanded to reflect

the property's boardwalk, photo frames were re-purposed from a Christmas event, and the banner above the stand was a cut-down, former conference screen.

In the past they have also repurposed old banners into bags, aprons and other useful conference materials.

"While the stand took on a more unique look than what some might generally associate with the Centre, it reinforced our key message in both the use of materials and the execution of the project," Reading said.

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Historic venue hire

WARM hospitality is just the beginning when you book and host a daytime event in the Gloucester Room at the 106-year-old historic Edwardian Isaac Theatre Royal in Christchurch before 31 August.

With a capacity for up to 120 people, the room offers flexibility and a unique heritage experience.

Packages include venue rental, free wi-fi, complimentary use of projector, screen and PA, stylish furniture and a flexible range of catering packages - for details see 360de.co.nz/isaac-theatre-royal.

2016 cruise events

THE annual Cruise3Sixty industry conference hosted by the Cruise Lines International Association will be staged later next year, with the event to be held at the Star Events Centre on Fri 06 May.

That separates the conference from the annual Cruise Awards which are set for Sat 20 Feb - also at the Star Events Centre.

IHG supper club

INTERCONTINENTAL Sydney has announced the launch of an "exclusive dining and champagne Supper Club" at its Club InterContinental lounge.

Open to Club InterContinental members, hotel guests and invited others, the after-hours Supper Club debuts today as an "upscale, sophisticated experience catering to guests looking to relax and unwind with bespoke cocktails, French champagnes and delectable dining with spectacular Sydney views".

The new Supper Club will open from 9pm Wed-Sun, with access provided upon arrival at the hotel's concierge reception with prior reservations essential.

Club InterContinental is located on the top floor of InterContinental Sydney, with the Supper Club offering 27 Champagnes, a bespoke cocktail list created by Grasshopper and unique culinary creations - more info on 02 9240 1396.

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business events news

25th June 2015

AGPC on track for a huge race



COMPANIES can gain access to the Melbourne Formula 1 Grand Prix circuit at Albert Park around the race period like never before for events and incentives, the Australian Grand Prix Corporation has announced.

Space is running out however, with around 70% of capacity already booked for the 2016 race.

AGPC general manager sales and commercial Corina Black told **Business Events News** the firm had linked with the Melbourne Convention Bureau to encourage more groups to secure space.

"It's Team Melbourne, coming together with the MCB to get these groups coming down."

Events to suit all budgets were possible, Black added, saying event facilities were available all around the circuit, however close to pit lane was the most popular.

Slots to hold an event around the Grand Prix were generally all in the week prior to race day.

Lead-in prices start from \$300pp inclusive of food and beverage right up to \$3,000pp per day for the ultimate corporate hospitality.

Spaces catering from 10 to 300 people were available in various locations around the circuit as well as key locations in the city.

AGPC can handle events at all times of the day, from breakfast through dinner or all-day.

"We build a lot of facilities and they're really state of the art - the epitome of luxury aligned with world class catering," Black said.

Guests are able to access driver autograph booths, walk pit lane at select times, go on circuit tours and even access the roof of pit lane for race start and finish if the budget stretched far enough.

More unique team-building activities such as a tyre-changing challenge were also not out of the question, Black mentioned.

The Paddock Club, which is a revolving door of celebrities and Formula 1 personalities, was also a popular option for VIP guests.

Black told **BEN** ticketing options had been significantly refined over the 20 year history of the event at Melbourne's Albert Park.

"We've made it a lot more flexible. A decade ago, you couldn't buy tickets for less than four days. We've seen a big growth in single day ticketing. To have that single-day flexibility has been really popular."

AGPC is able to coordinate all aspects of an event request, from flights, hotels and transport, due to an established relationship with GP Travel, which holds room inventory for custom packages.

Black said space was quickly filling up, and that planning should be underway by Oct to do an event from scratch.

The 2016 Australian Grand Prix runs from 31 Mar to 03 Apr.

Pictured above from left is Barry Markoff, ICMi Speakers and Entertainers; Corina Black, AGPC and Karen Bolinger from the Melbourne Convention Bureau.

This is the Gold Coast

IF THERE was any doubt, the Gold Coast which shares the title with Brisbane as the most desirable place to live, proved it was up for it last week with 45 hosted buyers representing 40 associations and corporations from Australia, NZ and South East Asia to *This is the Gold Coast Business Exchange*.

Held 18-21 June, forty Gold Coast business events providers showcased their products at a one-day trade exhibition at the Gold Coast Conference and Exhibition Centre (GCCCEC) with over 1500 pre-scheduled appointments.

Acclaimed a major success by



delighted buyers not only helped wildlife in the local community by contributing to the Wildlife Wishing Tree, which raised money for the Dreamworld Wildlife

Foundation, they experienced a hands on encounter with a koala, bilby, snake and crocodile.

Other highlights included a Welcome Reception at InterContinental Sanctuary Cove Resort that drew

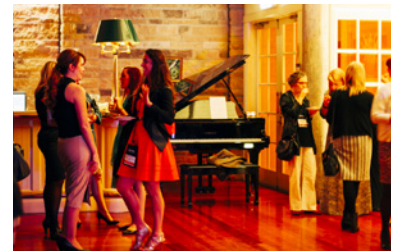
attention to the cuisine of local producers, and a Gala Dinner at Jupiters Hotel Gold Coast with a combination of intimate poolside drinks, Jersey Boys-style entertainment and an enchanting dinner (**above left**) strikingly themed by Dreamweavers.



those who participated in the program, Anna Case, director of business events, said initial buyer feedback had already resulted in many actively seeking to secure the Gold Coast for a future conference or meeting.

"The hosted buyers also made mention of the cohesive and collaborative approach of the Gold Coast Business Event industry, and how that strong sense of community translated into an overwhelmingly positive experience."

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business events news

25th June 2015



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CONFESSIONS OF A COMPULSIVE CONFERENCE-GOER

Andrew Klein, professional MC and presentation skills speaker and director of SPIKE Presentations, presents his front line observations on conferences in a regular feature in **BEN**.

YES, MINISTER.

I enjoy listening to politicians giving speeches. Australian politicians on the whole give excellent presentations and speak naturally, from the heart, often with honesty, passion, humour and engage audiences young and old.

But I need to make one clarification. I refer only to politicians who have left politics. Former Premiers, retired Prime Ministers.....ex-politicians.

Conferences commonly include an address from a Minister, either a local member or the Minister who oversees the portfolio covered by the conference subject matter. Yet, in my experience of attending conferences - while they are in politics, the vast majority say very little during their conference presentations. They tend to speak longer than their allocated time slot and invariably fail to engage their audience or give any of their real personality away.

They stick to their script (written by someone else) and the audiences play the game of applauding the pro-industry comments made from the lectern, but generally are left underwhelmed and thinking "OK, Minister's boring address is done, let's get on with the conference".

Yet something miraculous occurs when the same politician leaves politics. Freed of the shackles of sticking to a party line and less concerned about their comments being misconstrued by the media, they start to express what they really think. What's more, they start to insert "themselves" into the presentation, showing previously hidden parts of their personality...or in many cases, showing they have a personality.

Politics aside, I never warmed to Peter Costello while he was Treasurer. But at a conference a few years back, he bounded on stage, made various insightful off the cuff remarks about the conference and proceeded to charm the pants off a very cynical conference audience. No smugness, not a snide smirk in sight. He spoke about his relationship with his children, some regrets and his "real" views on the world today. And he was hilarious. Yep, Peter Costello was LOL funny.

I had the honour of interviewing Julia Gillard at a Dymocks Books Conference in Canberra last year and again, whether you agree with her politics or not, a more charming, quick, witty, self-deprecating and dare I say it "real" presenter, you are unlikely to meet.

Regardless of what you thought of John Howard, he was never known for being a good public speaker. But for those who haven't had the privilege of hearing him speak at a conference, I assure you, he is a great one. He speaks with authority and insight on industry specific topics, a different presentation every time - and no notes in sight. Again, often with great humour and warmth.

Kernot, Downer, Kennett. I could go on.

Such a pity that in this overly media managed, sound bite driven, 'stay on message' world, us voters only get to see the real "human" side to our politicians once they leave politics.

If you are looking for an MC for your next conference or a speaker/trainer on presentation skills or pitching skills, email andrew@lunch.com.au or visit his website at www.andrewklein.com.au.



New Sofitel BDM



SOFITEL hotels has appointed Nathan Telfer as senior business development manager, representing its properties on the Gold Coast and in Fiji.

Based in Sydney, Telfer (pictured) is a former pharmaceutical meetings planner and his primary focus will be engaging with the business events market on behalf of Sofitel Gold Coast and Sofitel Fiji.

Marriott meetings

MARRIOTT International will formally launch its Meetings Reimagined offering in Australia, with an event taking place at Pier One Sydney Harbour tonight.

It will follow today's Marriott Global Sales Mission, with the unveiling by the hotelier's Asia Pacific Chief Sales & Marketing Officer, Peggy Fang Roe.

As well as a live demonstration and Q&A, guest speaker performance coach Matt Grigg will give a keynote presentation on the importance of meetings in today's day and age.

Meetings Reimagined launched in some overseas markets about 18 months ago, with the aim of going beyond the traditional focus on dates, rates and room layouts to help planners create more engaging experiences.



FREQUENT travellers will enjoy the opportunity to share their airport experiences - pleasant or otherwise - in a new initiative launched by TripAdvisor.

It's an expansion of TripAdvisor's massive bank of hotel and attraction reviews, with more than 200 world airports to have dedicated pages where passengers will be encouraged to "rate and review every aspect of their experience" such as bars, restaurants, retail...and delays.

First cab off the rank is Singapore's Changi Airport, with London Heathrow and New York JFK to be added next month.

THE opportunity for people to meet in pubs can be attributed to the Black Death which ravaged Europe more than 600 years ago, according to a leading historian.

Professor Robert Tombs from Cambridge University said that the plague, which killed an estimated 1.5 million people across Britain between 1348 and 1350, actually significantly boosted living standards and leisure time because afterwards there were fewer people competing for work and land.

"Peasants had increased leisure time and freedom, so pubs became places for playing games, meeting and socialising," he said in a presentation at the Chalke Valley History Festival this week.

"This was when the English pub was invented and people started drinking lots of beer and playing football and so on," Tombs added.

Interestingly the standard of living people reached in the 15th century was not exceeded until the 1880s after the Industrial revolution, "and the amount of leisure they took was not equalled until the 1960s," he said.

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