



Big role for Ruwan

INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels Group has promoted Ruwan Peiris

(right) to the role of Director of Operations, Australia.

Peiris joined IHG in Mar this year as Regional gm for NSW, ACT & Vic, after a long career with Mirvac and then Accor.

IHG said the promotion "comes at a strategic time of growth," with the recent opening of Holiday Inn Cairns as well as new properties for the group in Perth, Hobart and Adelaide.

In his new role Peiris will oversee the performance of all IHG managed properties in Australia as well as the National Convention Centre Canberra and Parliament House Catering by IHG.

"Ruwan is a leader with a stellar reputation in the industry, and we are delighted to have him step up into this new position to support us as we grow our business and drive even greater performance across our hotels in Australia," said IHG chief operating officer Karin Shepherd.



Hilton coffee bonus

HILTON Worldwide has launched a global promotion offering a free coffee break for all meeting attendees on arrival, or 15% off the Day Delegate rate.

The deal applies to all meeting planners making bookings at any Hilton Worldwide brand from 01 Sep to 15 Nov 2015.

For more information see hiltonworldwidemeetingsapac.com.

Planners generational shift

MEETING planners in Australia have an increasing focus on venue technology - and dislike receiving phone calls, according to the first ever Australia Asia Pacific survey conducted by the International Association of Conference Centres (IACC).

The organisation has conducted similar polls in Europe and the Americas, with the findings aiming to prepare meetings industry suppliers and allow them to tailor their offerings to accommodate the needs of each generation of planners.

IACC ceo Mark Cooper said there were some important differences highlighted in terms of preferences and priorities across different generations, with a particularly strong response in the local poll from Generation Y participants.

He said this indicated the growing influence of Generation Y meeting planners in the local region, with this cohort saying the prefer attending venue promotional events rather than trade shows, which were the preferred choice of Generation X.

Both Generation Y and X disliked taking phone calls "which suggests that telesales is not the way to promote venues to buyers any longer," IACC said, with digital information the top priority for providing planners with what

they need to consider a venue.

Generation Y buyers placed more importance on the technology capabilities of a venue than any other generation, while Generation X placed a higher priority on the food and beverage offerings than both younger and older counterparts.

Baby boomer planners appeared to be more cost conscious than younger planners, while 75% of those surveyed said they preferred to use a venue which provided a meetings focused environment and dedicated staff.

To view the full report see the IACC website at iacconline.org.

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news and the latest **BEN** Christmas Venue Guide on **page three**.

Busy AVPartners

AVPARTNERS provided audiovisual support, styling and technical assistance for over 40 events during the recent Audi Hamilton Island Race Week.

The biggest offshore yachting regatta in the southern hemisphere saw AVPartners light up Audi vehicles, assemble a host of event stages and a massive LED wall, along with support for an awards presentation and dinner for 660 attendees in the Hamilton Island Convention Centre.

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New MCEC chef

THE Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre has appointed Peter Haycroft as its new Executive Chef, joining the MCEC after 14 years with EPICURE at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Russell

engineers and executes cutting edge audio visual to meet and exceed our client's needs. It's more than just light and sound, with meticulous planning and detail our Audio Visual department can orchestrate seamless events large or small to some of the most technically complex in Australia.



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business events news

10th September 2015

Cairns lifts delegates

THE Cairns Delegate Advantage program has been highlighted by conference organisers in Tropical North Queensland as a key marketing tool and delegate booster for their events.

TTNQ director of business events, Rosie Douglas, said more than 8,000 Cairns Delegate Advantage Program brochures had been delivered to delegates since the expanded scheme was launched at AIME earlier this year.

"It has been extremely well received by both domestic and international PCOs and meeting planners as a device to help them look after delegates," she said.

The program offers touring options as well as discounts on dining during delegate visits to the region - call 07 4015 1239.

AlliedPRA IMEX win

ALLIEDPRA Las Vegas has been named the official DMC for the fourth year in a row to handle hosted buyer program arrangements for IMEX America.

This year's show will take place at the Sands Expo, Las Vegas from 13-15 Oct.

NZ to host ARMS

THE Australasian Research Management Society has announced it will hold its 2017 conference in Wellington, New Zealand, with an expected attendance of 600 delegates.

Most of the attendees will come from Australia, with the \$1.1m in economic benefit from the event the latest in a string of successful bid wins which has seen Tourism NZ surpass its business events targets in the last financial year, with 58 international conferences worth \$97 million.

ITB Asia GBTA deal

UPCOMING Asian travel show ITB Asia in Singapore will see a stronger strategic partnership with the Global Business Travel Association.

Taking place 21-23 Oct 2015 at Singapore's Marina Bay Sands, the show will feature a GBTA Business Travel Outlook session, providing delegates with insights into economic conditions in the emerging markets of Brazil, Russia, India and China, during a dedicated Business Travel Day.

A new element this year will be the inclusion of GBTA's Global Travel Professional examinations which will take place on the second last day of the show, while GBTA will also unveil the latest results of its Business Travellers Sentiment Index, created alongside American Express.



AN upcoming exhibition at Sydney's National Maritime Museum promises to help visitors "find out if they have what it takes to be a really horrible pirate".

The *Horrible Histories - Pirates* exhibition is based on the bestselling *Horrible Histories* books, which bring history to life with "foul facts, lively illustrations and gruesome games".

Opening on 15 Dec, just in time for the holiday season, the exhibition also includes more than 100 objects from real shipwrecks, while visitors can also take command of a pirate ship, design their own flag and even try out weapons ranging from cannons to cutlasses.

And naturally they will be able to practice talking like a pirate - and why pirate women were "just as bad as the men".

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

Sign up for a free subscription at www.busesseventsnews.com.au.

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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**.

IN MINT CONDITION

A QUESTION. How did Mentos manage to corner the market in supplying conference mints? I don't know how many years ago they got that gig, or how they managed to have dominated the event mint market, but surely it is one of the most lucrative contracts in Australian conferencing history.

In recent weeks, our papers have been full of reports about the lucrative AFL and NRL contract negotiations with the TV Networks and Fox Sports. Social media is packed with conjecture about the amount of money Aussie footballer Jarryd Hayne is likely to net through his contract with the San Francisco 49ers.



But for my money, the big money is in the Aussie mint monopoly. And I'd say the fresh-breathed team at Mentos are making a mighty mint out of it.

I attend a lot of conferences all over the country each year and I'd say 95% of those events supply Mentos exclusively as their conference mint of choice. Those senior executives at Jila Mints, Wrigleys, Kool-Mints, Eclipse and Life-Savers must be spitting chips (minty ones) that they didn't get the contract. How did Allen's iconic Minties miss that opportunity, when they were surely the front-runner, given their popularity over the years?

In seemingly every conference room in the country, you see a multitude of Mentos's (is that the correct plural?) in the middle of the round tables, in those innocuous little white bowls, glistening invitingly in their tiny little individualised blue packets, beckoning for you to take one or two....or ten if the conference presentation goes on a little long.

My extensive research (well, a quick Wikipedia search) tells me they are a Dutch product and that the shape of each Mentos in an "oblate spheroid", with a hard exterior and a soft, chewy interior. And let's not forget they are totally delicious. I often eat them when I'm not even hungry and - sometimes first thing in the morning with my latte from the barista cart in the Exhibition area. If a presentation is a little dull, I'm likely to break open half a dozen just to pass the time. I've even been caught with a chewy Mentos or two in my mouth, having to hop on to stage to thank a speaker who has finished early. "Fank you for vat bwirrant presentation" I say, trying to get the mint small enough to swallow, without the delegates noticing.

Some conferences, perhaps those with slightly larger budgets, even splurge on the colourful, fruity options (orange, apple and strawberry seem to be the favourites) but usually it's the plain light blue mint flavour that frequent most events. Have a look at the table-tops during any afternoon tea break and you'll see the little wrappers strewn across the white table-cloths, evidence of the minty mayhem from the last few presentations.

So, well done Mentos on your minty monopoly. If I could buy shares in Mentos Australia, I would.

I'd make a mint.

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.



Christmas Venue Guide

Looking for a Christmas venue or staff celebration?
Business Events News guide to 2015/16 Christmas venues is the place to showcase!
To feature here email advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au.

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