



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news plus a full page from **Novotel Wollongong Northbeach**.

Vanuatu Convention Centre delivered

THE Vanuatu Government has taken delivery of its new US\$16.4 million convention centre.

Developed by China's Jiangsu Provincial Construction Group, the structure took two years to complete, some six months later than originally slated due to damage caused by Cyclone Pam which struck Vanuatu in Mar '15.

The centre features an assembly hall accommodating up to 1,000 people, conference room for 200 and a banquet hall for up to 600.

Handing over the centre facility last month in Port Vila, China's Ambassador in Vanuatu Liu Quan said the facility has proven itself to be a "hurricane-resistant strong house".

Sheraton grows MICE biz

FORWARD MICE bookings for the next two years at the Sheraton Mirage Port Douglas Resort are showing "exceptional growth", following the completion of the property's \$40 million revamp.

"Feedback has been incredibly positive from our MICE customers

and interest is strong from the domestic market, in particular Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, as well as our neighbours in New Zealand," remarked Nathan Gadd, director of sales and marketing, Sheraton Mirage Port Douglas.

"They are excited about the new and upgraded facilities and the creative ways we can host large scale events down to small team building incentives."

Key upgrades to the property include transformed rooms; refurbished function facilities including ballroom; enhanced poolside areas with more usable outdoor spaces for stand-up receptions and seated dinners; a deck space designed to seat 120 people; the debut of Lobby Cafe and much more.

Jupiters revamp

JUPITERS Hotel & Casino on the Gold Coast has this week revealed the first of its new Superior Deluxe rooms.

The refreshed keys feature local artwork, natural wood finishes and high polished chrome; incorporating cool hues and natural tones of the Coast.

Jupiter's revamp of its 600 rooms is slated to be completed by the end of the year, while construction of the new six-star all-suite tower is scheduled to be finished by 2018.

ADL Riverbank refresh

THE Adelaide Riverbank precinct, which includes the likes of the Bio-Medical City, Adelaide Convention Centre and Adelaide Oval, is set to enter the next phase of development with works set to commence in Aug.

Kicking off with the \$220 million development of Festival Plaza - located steps away from the Adelaide Convention Centre - the site has been pitched as one that will "transform one of the city's most important public spaces into Adelaide's premier meeting and entertainment hub".

Wide promenades will connect major city streets to the plaza, the Adelaide Oval footbridge and through to the convention centre.

"This concentration of venues and facilities positions Adelaide as the easiest city in the country - and undoubtedly one of the easiest in the world in which to travel," said Damien Kitto, ceo, Adelaide Convention Bureau.

"It also eliminates travel time and its associated costs for event planners whilst providing an exceptionally attractive and full package offering for delegates."

CTM appointment



SYDNEY based marketing representation company, Complete

Travel Marketing, has welcomed Michael Thomson (**pictured**) to its team as Account Director - Boutique, MICE and Corporate.

Thomson joins the fold having spent the last 15 years working within the hospitality industry, most recently with Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts where he held the position of Director of Business Development.

He will officially commence his role with Complete Travel Marketing from 01 Jul.

Westin Coolum resort

STARWOOD Hotels & Resorts has this week penned a deal with Sekishui House Australia to operate The Westin Coolum Resort & Spa in Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

Scheduled to open in 2021, the resort will offer 220-keys and nine suites, four dining venues and spa.



A KIWI chocolatier has married two unlikely ingredients together to create a product more appetising than it sounds: meat and chocolate.

The brainchild of food scientist Mustafa Farouk and Auckland-based Devonport Chocolates, the chocolates comprise of 50% New Zealand beef encased in tantalising chocolate.

"When you try it now, you don't know what you're eating," said Farouk to *Stuff*, "We knew we could turn meat into different forms, but whether we could actually fool people by making it look like chocolate is what we didn't know."

The sadistic sweets first debuted at Fieldays, an agriculture convention, last week.

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business events news

23rd June 2016

\$175m for major events

THE NSW Government has announced it will set aside \$175 million in the 2016/17 Budget in a bid to boost the state's global tourism and events profile.

"This budget will see more than \$89 million in funding to secure and support major entertainment, lifestyle, sporting, arts, and business events across the State, as well as \$52 million to support the growth of tourism in both Sydney and regional NSW," said Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events Stuart Ayres.

"NSW has built a strong reputation for staging world-class events that drive visitation

and this Budget ensures we leverage our visitor economy assets to deliver increased visitor expenditure, more jobs and economic growth for NSW," he continued.

The Tourism and Transport Forum Australia (TTF) has lauded the announcement, with ceo Margy Osmond calling it a "bar-setting example of the economic value of investing in visitor economy."

"NSW is jealously guarding its crown as the nation's largest visitor economy with another strong investment in the sector in this Budget," she said.

"TTF has been a vocal advocate of the need for the NSW Government to continue to back the visitor economy and it is marvellous to see that our message has been received with open arms."

MCEC strikes gold

THE Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) has achieved Earthcheck's coveted Gold Certification standard.

"MCEC goes well beyond the tick-box approach, implementing unique and innovative sustainability measures which benefit both the environment and local community," commented EarthCheck ceo, Stewart Moore.

"We know this helps them win major events for whom sustainability is a key performance indicator," he said.

Since joining the program in 2007 MCEC has minimised energy consumption by 31.8% and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 36.7%.

Hawaii roadshow

HAWAII Tourism Oceania will host a series of 'Meet Hawai'i Roadshows' through August in capital cities Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland.

The roadshow aims to connect PCOs and event organisers with various suppliers including Hawaiian Airlines, Hawaii Convention Center, hoteliers, DMCs and more.

Three sessions a day spanning 26, 29 and 30 Aug are available in each location.



Gray's Say

Peter Gray, an independent Motivation Consultant, presents a regular *Business Events News* feature on current issues in the Conference and Incentive industries

Satisfaction not necessarily guaranteed

A COUPLE of weeks ago an episode of 'Grand Designs' featured a young couple whose ambition was to convert a 1940s derelict cowshed into their future home. However, neither had any experience in construction of any sort and were relying on the Internet to provide them with all the skills they would need. To summarise the hour-long programme, it became increasingly obvious that this approach wasn't working and professionals had to be brought in.

No criticism is intended to their approach which was adventurous to say the least, but it was their own property and the only people affected by any shortcomings, delays or failures were themselves.

Why is it, then, that so many clients use totally unskilled staff members to organise meetings, conferences and even incentives? And why do some people feel that they can set themselves up as PCOs or Incentive Practitioners without having served any form of 'apprenticeship' with an organisation that does, indeed, have the skills and expertise?

On LinkedIn, I read almost daily any number of questions asked by clearly inexperienced operators trying to shore-up their own shortcomings. If the questions were trying to find solutions to obscure problems that would be forgivable but more often than not they are requesting solutions to fairly basic situations which a fully experienced PCO or Incentive Practitioner should know about.

The list of blunders, mistakes, shortcomings and failures I hear about almost daily from within the industry have ultimately cost clients far more than their projects

needed to and yet they persist in contracting people who do not know what they are doing and certainly can't be called professional in any true meaning of the word.

Both the PCO Association and Meetings & Events Australia (MEA) offer accreditation to experienced operators and companies, something I pioneered with the previous Australasian Incentive Association and will do so again with the Incentive Association. However, the problem is that probably the majority of companies that would use a professional operator (Meeting Manager, PCO or Incentive Practitioner) know little or nothing about these schemes and rarely, if ever, ask whether the people they seek to contract are accredited. The professional organisations that offer accreditation to their members must take it upon themselves to publicise the fact and to spell out the benefits; that accredited members must have professional indemnity and other insurance policies to protect their clients and, more importantly, that the work that is being contracted will be done to the total satisfaction of the client.

As Red Adair, the American oil-well firefighter is quoted as saying: "If you think hiring a professional is expensive, try hiring an amateur."

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