



## New registration option for MEA

**MEETINGS & Events Australia** (MEA) has announced a new type of registration for its 2016 National Conference from 17-19 Apr in Melbourne

The new Company Registration option will allow businesses to send a different staff member to separate sessions at the conference.

The cost of this new style of registration remains the same but means more staff members can enjoy the MEA conference.

The deal is only open to MEA members.

For more information, delegates should contact Shirley Larkin by email at [shirley@mea.org.au](mailto:shirley@mea.org.au).

## Uluru MICE market shines

**AYERS** Rock Resort has seen its largest spike in history for business events bookings, with the complex nearly doubling its MICE market this financial year.

"We are running this financial year about 40% ahead of last year for business events bookings at the resort - it's the biggest increase we've had," Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia exec gm sales, marketing and distribution Ray Stone told **BEN**.

While Stone said the market was already "gaining momentum", the launch of Bruce Munro's Field of Light installation at Uluru (**TD** 23 Mar 16) has been contributing to the rise in MICE bookings.

The artwork which features 50,000 solar powered lights will be open to the public for one year from 01 Apr, and has already piqued the interest of many tourists and companies alike.

"We've seen definite bookings come through for both this financial year and next year based very simply on Field of Light," Stone said.

"It's as if people had been thinking about coming here,

hadn't quite made up their mind and this has sort of taken them over the line," he continued.

Stone explained several large companies had been looking for a 'wow factor' for their event and Field of Light was it for them.

In another first for Ayers Rock Resort there has been two instances where a company has completely booked out the resort's Sails in the Desert hotel.

"That's unusual to buy exclusive use of Sails in the Desert which can hold 200 to 400 people," Stone said.

"There's no question in our mind Field of Light is having an effect on the booking pace and that it will be a key element for us over the next 12 months".

The MICE market accounts for about 8% of the resort's total bookings with the Asian market the fastest growing.

See more on **page 2**.

## Easter long weekend

**WE'D** like to wish a very happy Easter to our **BEN** readers.

**BEN** will take a break on Easter Mon but will be back with the latest news on Thu 31 Mar.

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## Disney corporate rewards

**HONG** Kong Disneyland Resort has launched a Disney Magical Corporate Rewards program, offering overseas corporate groups special dining, shopping and entertainment privileges.

The three-tier rewards scheme with categories determined by group size have benefits such as main gate priority group entry and an exclusive ceo procession.

"Since the launch of the program in Feb 1,200 corporate guests from SE Asian countries & China have already enjoyed the special corporate privileges," business solutions & events director, Hong Kong Disneyland Resort Karen Kwan said.

"All corporate guests and event planners were highly satisfied".



## crumbs!

**HAVE** you ever seriously impressed your prospective employer during a job interview?

Try topping this one - a teenager hoping to score a job at a fast food restaurant in New Orleans stopped a robbery mid-interview.

According to *Sky News US* a man walked into the restaurant asking the cashier for some change before reaching over the counter to help himself to the till.

As the burglar tried to flee the scene the 18-year-old interviewee stopped him in action.

He grabbed the thief from behind in a "reverse bear hug" and held him down along with several of the other staff until police arrived.

The managers had already decided to give the youngster the job, but hadn't had a chance to tell him when the robbery took place.

As soon as the ordeal was over the teen was told "You're hired, you earned it!"

Well, that's one way to secure a job.

The robber was arrested and is being held by police over the offense.



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# business events news

24th March 2016

## Field of Light comes to life



**SELECT** media were treated to the first viewing of Bruce Munro's spectacular Field of Light artwork at Uluru this week before it opens to the public on 01 Apr.

The internationally recognised UK artist first conceived the idea for Field of Light when visiting Uluru back in 1992.

He said once the idea landed in his sketchbook it "kept on nagging" at him to be done.

In 2004 he first created the vision for London's Victoria & Albert Museum followed by a larger iteration in a field behind his home.

It was then installed at locations across the UK, US and Mexico before coming "home" to Uluru.

"I now have the honour and the privilege of returning to create an iteration of this artwork for the place that inspired it," Munro said this week.

The enormous spectacle (pictured above on sunrise) spans an area the size of four football fields in front of Ayer's Rock, with viewers invited to walk through paths weaving amongst the lights.

The awe-inspiring exhibition which can be best appreciated

after sunset and before sunrise will remain open to the public for one year until 31 March 2017.

Entry level passes start at \$35 per adult and \$25 per child.

The viewing can be tied in with several special passes such as a dining in the desert experience with a three course bush tucker inspired menu or a pre sunset camel ride, finishing with a view of the Field of Light coming to life as darkness falls.

For information or for bookings **CLICK HERE**.

## Fiji open for business

**IN THE** wake of Cyclone Winston Sofitel Fiji is reassuring conference clients and PCOs Fiji is still 'open for business'.

"There is no reason to be concerned about bringing a prospective event to Fiji," the resort said.

The resort is offering several discounts when the spa is booked as part of an event, including a free treatment for the conference organiser while delegates can enjoy 50% off selected treatments.

# VIC on show for events

**BUSINESS** Events Victoria is hosting a buyers fam on the Mornington Peninsula next month with hopes the program will boost visitation to the area.

Tourism Victoria and The Mornington Peninsula Destination Management Plan have both identified business events as an important avenue for increasing tourism.

"Not only do business events provide increased visitation and expenditure in a region, but they can also assist with growing mid-week and low-season visitation and encouraging re-visitation with family and friends," exec officer of Business Events Victoria Chris Porter said.

"We have hosted a number of

buyer events into other regional areas that have been a catalyst for some fantastic event bookings and we expect the Mornington Peninsula event to reap similar results," Porter said.

The 15 to 16 Apr fam will see eight buyers visit the Mt Eliza Business School, Brooklands of Mornington, Lindenderry at Red Hill, Flinders Hotel, RACV Cape Schanck, Peppers Moonah Links, Portsea Village Resort and the Mercure Portsea Resort.

The site visits will also be accompanied by special food and beverage experiences to highlight the unique culinary options that are on offer to business event delegates who choose to stay on the Peninsula.



## How to hold an experiential event

Sometimes all an event needs is the element of interaction to really set it apart from the rest. An experiential event is one that offers guests a unique experience that leaves a lasting impression.

This could mean anything from 3D elements to product demonstrations, from physical activities to virtual reality experiences. Here are our top ideas for planning your next experiential event:

**Explore creativity** - people come alive when given the opportunity to be creative. It reminds them of a more carefree time. Try something outside of the everyday - such as having a chalk graffiti wall they can draw on, or a photo booth where they can be silly then take home a souvenir.

**Get people learning** - giving people an opportunity to learn something new makes a big impact. For example, you could try a cooking demonstration, an origami lesson, or a dance class! Have fun with it and people will be talking about it for months.

**Get up close** - if your event includes entertainers or dancers, allow them to go outside of the norm and showcase their talent in unconventional areas, such as amongst the guest's tables or on the bar. If it's different, it's interesting.

**Incorporate AV technology** - AV technology can create spectacular experiences which resonate with guests. From virtual reality, to creating an immersive look and feel through lighting, AV can make a big difference. Talk to your AV specialist about how you can incorporate digital elements, lighting and sound to create a 360 experience.

*Rick Keane is the partner at One&Only Hayman Island with AVPartners, which creates integrated event experiences through combining state of the art audiovisual technology, unrivalled expertise and a highly tailored approach.*

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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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**Editor:** Bruce Piper [info@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:info@businesseventsnews.com.au)

**Contributors:** Guy Dundas, Nathalie Craig, Jasmine O'Donoghue, Bonnie Tai

**Advertising and Marketing:** Sean Harrigan and Magda Herdzik [advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au)

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

