



EDITOR: BONNIE TAI



Today's issue of BEN

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

Business Events Vic appoints new board

SIX new members have been appointed to Business Events Victoria's board following the group's AGM on Tue.

New members include RACV Cape Schanck's Relly Bruce, Ramada Phillip Island's Nicole Hill, Albury Entertainment Centre's Brendan Maher, Mt Buller Alpine Resort's John Huber, RACV Healesville Country Club's Kylie Shorter and Mildura Rural City Council's Julie Jewell.

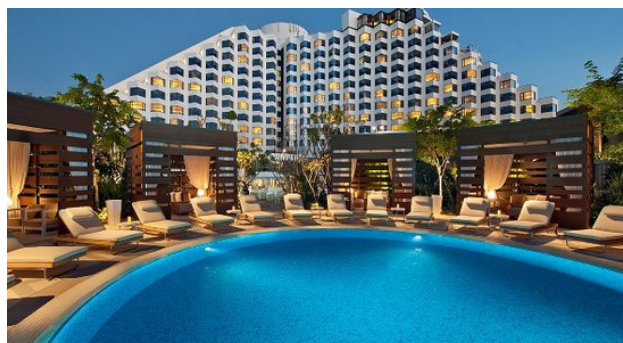
CROWN PYRAMID SET TO DEBUT

CROWN Perth will soon introduce a new flexible meeting space which offers 6,000m² of unobstructed internal floor space.

Situated across from the hotel's Riverside Entry, the custom-made, two-peak Crown Pyramid measures at 105 metres in length by 59 metres in width.

Commenting on the new venue space, Crown Perth chief operating officer - food, beverage and entertainment Andrew Hill said the Crown Pyramid "is one of a kind not only in Perth - but in Australia".

"Crown Pyramid will be the largest portable pyramid dome in Australia, providing the ideal



outdoor venue for the ultimate event and adds to the current entertainment options available in Perth," he said.

Specifically designed by Unique Attractions, the event space has been created to cater for various events including concerts, festivals, sporting events, conferences, exhibitions, functions, trade shows, productions and displays for up to 5,000 people.

Come Dec, Crown Pyramid

will be transformed into a winter wonderland, with Santa's Magical Kingdom slated as the first event to be held in the venue.

MEANWHILE, Crown Towers Perth is on track to welcome its first guests from 01 Dec.

Once open, the six-star property will be the largest hotel in Perth.

The 500-key property features villas, restaurants, bars, ballroom, a convention centre, pool and spa.

"Simply put, this will be the most luxurious hotel in Perth," said Crown ceo Rowen Craigie at the agm held last week.

"In fact, we believe this will be one of the most luxurious hotels in Australia and the region and set a new benchmark in six-star accom."

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NT Conventions walkabout Syd



A DELEGATION from the Northern Territory Convention Bureau (NTCB) held its annual roadshow in Sydney last night, showcasing the destination's most exciting MICE experiences.

Suppliers in attendance included the Alice Springs Convention Centre, the Darwin Convention Centre, Mantra, Hilton Northern Territory, Oaks Elan Darwin and many more.

Speaking to *Business Events News*, NTCB director of business events Daryl Hudson said the Northern Territory is a destination like no other, encouraging PCOs and event planners to experience it for themselves as it "will surprise you".

When questioned if the ICC Sydney's upcoming debut posed as a threat to the NTCB, Hudson replied that the new centre simply represented a renewed focus on Australia.

"We welcome that sort of new facility coming online because it raises the right profile around Australia, giving the Northern Territory even more opportunities to develop more satellite meetings and preimposed touring."

Pictured at the event from the NTCB are: Louise Kitchingham, bde; Daryl Hudson, director of business events; Rebecca McCaig, bdm and Lucy Morris, bde.



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TNZ INCENTIVE CAMPAIGN DEEMED A SUCCESS

TOURISM New Zealand has reported NZ\$94 million in converted value following its campaign to promote the country as a premium incentive destination last year.

Bjoern Spreitzer, TNZ general manager Americas and Europe, said he expected this figure to further rise due to increased air capacity between the US and New Zealand.

"New Zealand's natural landscapes, unique visitor experiences, cuisine and world class conference facilities are now more accessible than ever,"



said Spreitzer at the recent IMEX conference in Las Vegas.

He said the country was "unique in being able to offer itineraries where groups can hold a business function in the morning, jet boat or enjoy a game of golf in the afternoon and top it all off by dining at vineyard that same evening".

World Routes to Adelaide

ADELAIDE has won a bid to host World Routes 2019, the largest aviation conference in the industry.

The three-day event will bring more than 3,000 delegates from major airlines, airports and tourism businesses to the state.

SA Minister for Tourism Leon Bignell said securing the massive event was a "coup for South Australia".

"We beat the rest of the world to bring this massive conference to Adelaide," he said adding, "we know South Australia is a great place to live and now more people from interstate and overseas are discovering what our State has to offer."

Hilton Brisbane's re-vamped function space



HILTON Brisbane's events and conference spaces have been completely transformed following a \$4 million upgrade.

The facility now boasts state-of-the-art AV equipment and lighting, as well as operable walls in the main ballroom.

NEW APPOINTMENT

STEPHEN Ferrigno (**pictured**) has been named the new general manager of Four Points by Sheraton, Melbourne Docklands, which is due to open in Mar 2017.

Commenting on his appointment, Ferrigno said he was honoured to be part of the opening team.

"I started my career as a porter for a new hotel and know from experience that a strong team of associates, who work well together, is essential for a successful opening," he said.

Ferrigno brings to the table more than 20 years' experience working for Marriott International and prior to this was the hotel manager for Four Points by Sheraton Sydney, Darling Harbour, before moving into a gm role at Four Points in Geelong.



South Bank Concierge partners with PCO

THE PCO Association is working closely with the South Bank Concierge Program to ensure delegates travelling to Brisbane for the group's upcoming conference in Nov "have a wonderful time" while exploring the city.

Delegates who access the South Bank Concierge site will be privy to exclusive offers and receive 10% off at participating retailers during the conference.

The website will also allow conference-attendees to book event tickets, plan their itineraries and much more.

For further information visit southbankconcierge.com.au.



BESC hosts Sunshine Soiree



BUSINESS Events Sunshine Coast showcased the region's very best food attractions to some 35 Brisbane-based PCOs and event planners at the annual Sunshine Soiree earlier this week.

The specially designed menu featured produce locally-sourced by Spicers Clovelly Estate chef Cameron Matthews.

Attendees were also introduced to 14 business events operators from the Sunshine Coast who presented them with the region's latest conference and incentive products.

Pictured at the event are Tiffany Bower from BESC and Genia Gamaschenz from Austrex.



■ **A BIOMEDICAL** researcher in the US has come up with a way to turn the sugar-rich urine of elderly diabetics into a high-end single malt whisky, suitable for export.

Learn more about it [HERE](#).



GEMS expansion

GEMS Event Management is on the look out for a new event coordinator to join its team in Sydney.

The candidate will be responsible for liaising with venues, suppliers, speakers, sponsors, delegates and exhibitors, and will bring to the table a minimum of 12-18 months' experience in the events space.

For more information on the role or to submit an application contact GEMS gm Julie McGraw at jmcgraw@gemspl.com.au.

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

Quality or quantity

THE hotel booking sites we now see advertised ad nauseam on television were originally conceived as a way to sell 'last minute' accommodation that the hotels themselves had not sold. Nowadays the same booking sites are often the mainstay of hotel accommodation sales for many properties. The fact that these booking sites insist on rates of commission far higher than is normally granted to a travel agent - and often on items for which commission is not normally paid - and are accompanied by some very specific conditions which endeavour to insist that the sites cannot be undercut, even by the hotels themselves means that the consumer is not always best served.

The same thing happened in the UK several years ago - pre Internet - when 'bucket shops' - usually sales outlets which were not covered by ABTA or IATA guarantees - sold airline tickets at a fraction of the cost of a normal airfare. Sometimes the consumer lost out because there were some pretty shady bucket shops around, however although the airlines railed against the use of such outlets they frequently depended upon them to fill otherwise half-empty aircraft.

Now online conference software companies are getting in on the act. I frequently receive offers about accommodation I could use to satisfy the needs of my clients. And this is where I draw the line. My company and that of many of my incentive industry colleagues has been built on

the quality and integrity of the services we offer and, where an incentive travel reward is involved, this means personally checking out the hotels we use and establishing a relationship with the sales team and the management. We also take pride in personally matching our clients' requirements with the hotels we recommend, not leaving it to someone else whose main motivation is profit first and client satisfaction a poor second.

In these days of busy company executives it is often not possible to arrange site inspections where the clients can experience hotels and venues themselves. While this is the ideal, if it isn't possible then the client will rely heavily on our recommendation - and this is only given when we are satisfied that we have obtained exactly what the client requires. Good enough simply isn't good enough!

There are many factors to be taken into consideration and this is part of the initial brief we request from our clients. Incentive Travel Rewards used to be referred to as 'building dreams' and this isn't achieved by a third party with little or no idea about what the client wants to achieve or who the participants in the incentive program are. It also muddies the water inasmuch as hotels are now required to pay commission to parties not involved in the negotiation - money often passed back to the client because of a management fee structure.

Peter Gray is an independent, Accredited Incentive Practitioner and motivation consultant. He can be contacted at peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net



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