

EDITOR: BONNIE TAI

**Today's issue of BEN**

*Business Events News* today has three pages of news plus a full page from AIME.

**cievents rebrands**


**FLIGHT** Centre's cievents business has unveiled a "significant brand development," reflecting the company's ongoing growth and evolution.

Global general manager Natalie Simmons said the refresh follows two years of expansion for cievents, not only geographically but also in terms of the services offered to customers.

"cievents recognised the need to undergo a brand refresh to remain relevant within the market and continue to add value to customers," Simmons said.

As well as a new logo (**pictured**) the refresh includes a website update which gives an insight into the world of cievents, "shining a spotlight on its employees across the varying business areas".

cievents now operates in seven countries, with 200 staff across the brand.

**AMWAY BREAKS HOTEL RECORDS**

**SYDNEY'S** flourishing hotel sector hit record levels of occupancy during January, boosted by the giant Amway China Leadership Seminar.

Preliminary figures released this week by data company STR shows Sydney hotels hit an average occupancy rate of 82.1% for Jan, an all-time record for that month.

STR attributes the peak to the Amway event held that month, and says the record was particularly impressive given a 3.5% increase in supply since the start of last year.

The Amway China Leadership Seminar (**pictured**) brought 8,000 delegates to Sydney in one of the largest events to visit Australia this year.

It was the third time Amway has held its event in Sydney and provided an early test for the newly opened International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney) at Darling Harbour.

STR's figures show hotel demand in Sydney during January was 4.8% higher than the same period last year.

Average daily rates were up a whopping 7.8% to \$219, while revenue per room increased 9% to \$180.

The occupancy peak highlights tight hotel supply in Sydney and the associated restraints for major event organisers.



Several major new city hotels are in the pipeline including a Sofitel under construction at Darling Harbour, the Ritz Carlton planned for The Star at Pyrmont, the Crown Sydney proposed for Barangaroo and the redevelopment of two heritage stone buildings on Bridge Street.

ICC Sydney ceo Geoff Donaghy said the Amway China Leadership Seminar had been a huge success and client feedback had praised the centre's layout and capabilities.

"Amway China has helped us kick off the year with style and substance," he said.

"We have had great feedback from the organisers who were thrilled with our ability to support a range of event types within the overall program."

**Sunshine Coast up**

**THE** Sunshine Coast has been breaking records too, hosting \$40.8 million worth of business events last year.

The record year involved a total of 27,384 delegates, with overall numbers up 10% and international visitors increasing by 165%.

Business Event Sunshine Coast (BESC) is expecting an even busier period in the year ahead.

"With hotels in many cities now charging very high accommodation rates, we can offer better value for the conference dollar," said the coast's business events manager Tiffany Bower.



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NEW Zealand convention and event organiser The Conference Company is this month opening its first dedicated off-shore office in Sydney.

The Castlereagh Street office in the city's CBD will be headed up by Asia Pacific manager Stephen Noble and is a major investment for the company.

Managing director of The Conference Company Jan Tonkin said investing in Sydney bricks and mortar was a "logical next step as we continue to develop our international connections".

"We are presently experiencing a strong growth phase following the announcement of Auckland's

International Convention Centre, which has put New Zealand on the global conference map, and the investment in Australia represents a major push for new regional and international business," she said.

The company, which is an accredited International Association of Professional Congress Organisers member, has been operating in Australia for the past nine years, however this marks its first physical presence down under.

This new Australian presence is expected to open up more Australian, Asia-Pacific and other international opportunities.

## NZ event planners rugby fun



**EIGHT** lucky New Zealand event planners got swept up in rugby fever over the weekend during a three-day famil in Brisbane, held in conjunction with the Brisbane Global Rugby Tens.

Hosted in partnership with Business Events Australia and the Brisbane Convention Bureau, the trip showcased how to align a meeting, conference or incentive program with a major event.

Delegates were treated to a star-studded Brisbane Global Rugby Tens gala dinner at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre then watched the game at Suncorp Stadium

**Pictured** are: Adair Cameron, Williment Event Management; Shelly Atkinson, HOT Events; Israel Dagg, NZ Crusaders; Trish Panapa, Parnell Partners Group; EJ Westein, Event Dynamics and Brendan Drury, Orbit World Travel.

## Adelaide events at record highs

**THE** next six months will see Adelaide Convention Bureau host and be part of more events than it ever has before in such a short period of time.

The jam packed half year will see the South Australian (SA) bureau represent the destination at trade shows across the globe such as AIME in Melbourne from 21 to 22 Feb, The Greater China Showcase in Chengdu from 19 to 21 Apr and IMEX Frankfurt from 16 – 18 May.

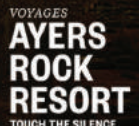
On top of this the bureau will be hosting Destination South Australia, from 26 – 29 Mar. This will be followed by key decision makers coming by in May and Jun to showcase the industry strengths of health life sciences and agriculture within SA.

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## Eventhouse Hotel brand launch



**NEW** Australian boutique hotel brand Eventhouse Hotels has officially launched with the 84-room Eventhouse Cronulla. The property which is designed for both business and leisure travel is a reworked version of the old Rydges Cronulla. A dedicated conference level overlooks the outdoor pool and beach and offers five flexible and natural light-filled spaces accommodating up to 175 guests. The Eventhouse Hotel brand which falls under the Event Hospitality & Entertainment group will continue to grow with Eventhouse Hobart currently under development.



**US RETAILER** Walmart is being sued for inventing a fake craft brewery. In an attempt to be hip, and slap up the prices on its mass produced beers, the retailer started selling its own line of boutique beers in collaboration with the brewer Trouble Brewing. The only 'trouble' with this was that the company simply didn't exist. According to US Government filings the beer was made by WX Brands in Costa Rica, known for producing "cheap college-party staples". The lawsuit is seeking damages for those who bought the second rate brew.

## EEAA MICE women

**THE** Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA) will be celebrating the women in the Australian business events industry with a special breakfast at Doltone House Hyde Park, Sydney on 08 Mar for International Women's Day. The function will see EEAA chief exec Joyce DiMascio lead an on-stage conversation between gm events at Fairfax Media, Sarah Pohlman; head of partnerships, community & events at Qantas, Michelle Walter; exec gm Events Tourism Australia, Penny Liona & event director at Reed Exhibitions, Julia Erben. Tickets are \$110 per person - **CLICK HERE** to reserve your place.

# ON THE AIME FLOOR

**THE** Asia-Pacific Incentives & Meetings Expo (AIME) has revealed some of the show floor highlights delegates can expect to experience while attending next week's event at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The AIME Community Hub where visitors can mingle, meet up and recharge their devices will return again this year, decked out in purple and silver to highlight AIME's 25th anniversary.

The hub will also feature a photo booth, interactive post-it note wall and a video wall posting live updates.

An oxygen bar will provide oxygen in a variety of flavours, to energise visitors, while there will also be a juice bar.

Other exciting additions include the Streets of Melbourne food fare celebrating locally sourced produce, as well as a chance for novelty team building activities like playing in an Orchestra.

## Partner Up

The low down on tech in the events world



## Three things to consider before you plan your next event

**AS BRANDS** strive to cut through the noise of the digital age to reach their ideal customer or client, it's more important than ever before to offer a unique experience that engages customers or clients, and leaves them with a lasting impression. Events are a great way to do just that.

But before you run out and just host an event for the sake of it, consider the following:

### Your objective

Define why you're holding the event and its purpose. Are you launching a new product or service? Are you celebrating or fundraising? Understanding your reasoning for the event will help you plan accordingly.

### Your target audience

Who are you trying to target? Think about your overall event outcome and what you would

like to achieve from the event. Are you inviting the right people to help you reach that event goal?

### Your ideal guest experience

Now that you know your event objective and target audience, it's time to consider the type of event experience you would like your guests to have. It's one thing for them to show up, but another thing altogether if they are engaged and having a great time interacting with your business or brand. Consider working with reputable event experts so that your guests' expectations can not only be met, but exceeded!

With this foundational planning complete, you can be confident that you're setting your event up for success.

**Mitch Tucker** is the Partner at Sofitel Gold Coast for AVPartners, which creates integrated event experiences through combining state-of-the-art audiovisual technology, unrivalled expertise and a highly-tailored approach, see [www.avpartners.com](http://www.avpartners.com)



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