



EDITOR: BONNIE TAI



AIME FUTURE IS BRIGHT - KAREN BOLINGER

MELBOURNE Convention Bureau (MCB) ceo Karen Bolinger says the current request for tender in relation to the management of the Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Expo (AIME) for 2019 and 2020 is an exciting opportunity to "review the whole show," with a new operator expected to introduce new elements and reinvigorate AIME going forward.

The show is currently managed by Reed Travel Exhibitions, which has organised AIME since 2001.

Last month the MCB formally invited Expressions of Interest from exhibition and event organisations to undertake the management and operation of AIME in 2019 and 2020, at the time saying the tender process was a "necessary and regular part of business as MCB approaches the end of its contractual term with Reed Exhibitions".

While Reed was invited to participate in the tender process, the industry was taken aback when the company declined to re-tender for the contract (**BEN** 30 Jan 2017).

Reed's portfolio director Kerry Prince told **Business Events News** the decision



reflected a strategic direction by the company to focus on events that it owns 100%, while AIME director Ian Wainwright confirmed that Reed was fully committed to maintaining an excellent show for this year and 2018.

"We understand and respect their decision," Bolinger said.

However after next year's event a new organisation will be in charge. Bolinger told **BEN** she was excited that some "great Australian suppliers" were among

the shortlist to take over the show, with prospective managers viewing AIME 2017 before coming back with firm proposals in the next few weeks.

She said she was very impressed at the level of interest and the quality of applications received, with MCB expecting to make an announcement about the ongoing management of AIME for 2019 and 2020 sometime in Apr this year.

While there are no specific changes in mind at this stage, Bolinger said any decisions would be informed by the McCrindle research study released earlier this week (**BEN** Mon) which looked at the future of meetings as technology evolves.

"We want to embrace the findings and make sure AIME leads best practice into the future," she said.

Bolinger said she had received great feedback from exhibitors at this year's show, with participants citing quality buyer meetings, a "massively successful" welcome party and an overall positive vibe.

"People are booking business here, which is key," she said.

InterContinental \$200m upgrade



THE InterContinental Sydney is set to undergo a whopping \$200 million upgrade of its facilities (**BEN** 03 Nov) - the most extensive improvement of the property in over three decades.

Proposed renovations will effect all aspects of the hotel including its existing public areas, function rooms, restaurants and all 509 rooms.

As exclusively flagged by **Business Events News** late last year, a brand new 900m² pillarless grand ballroom offering views of Circular Quay and the Sydney Harbour Bridge will be among one of the key features of the renovation.

ACB releases half year figures

ADELAIDE will see an influx in MICE business this year, following a large number of events secured for the SA capital.

In H1 ending 31 Dec 2016, the events won will see \$90.6 billion in economic benefit injected into the state, 1,379 jobs created, 29,555 delegates visting and 161,680 bed nights according to the Adelaide Convention Bureau's latest findings.

"The current rate of success shows our strategy is right on target - we may even beat our record breaking 2015/16 at this rate," said ACB chief executive officer Damien Kitto.

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AIME WRAPS UP FOR 2017

THE 2017 Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Expo (AIME) finished yesterday afternoon, after a whirlwind few days of learning, connecting and socialising in Melbourne.

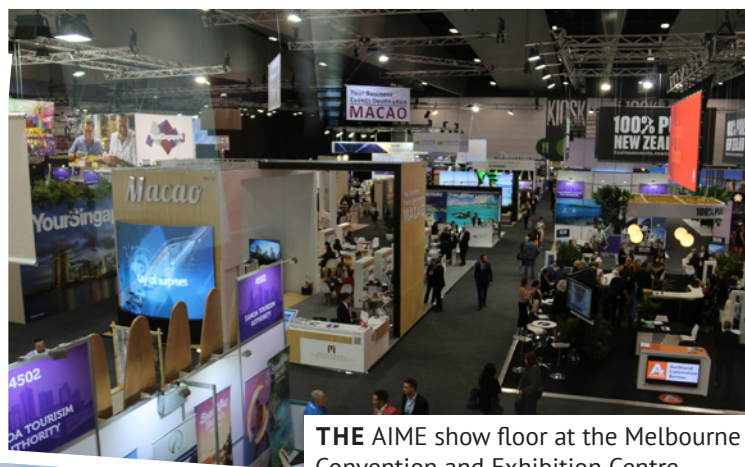
The annual event included

plenty of networking activities, with these photos (below) taken both out and about, as well as on the exhibition floor during the show.

Lots more AIME photos at facebook.com/BusEvNews.



THE Broken Hill team brought the NSW outback to Melbourne.



THE AIME show floor at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.



GUESTS partied the night away at the Carousel welcome event.



THE Rocky Mountaineer and Travel Alberta team were all aboard with AIME.



THREE from the Queensland contingent.



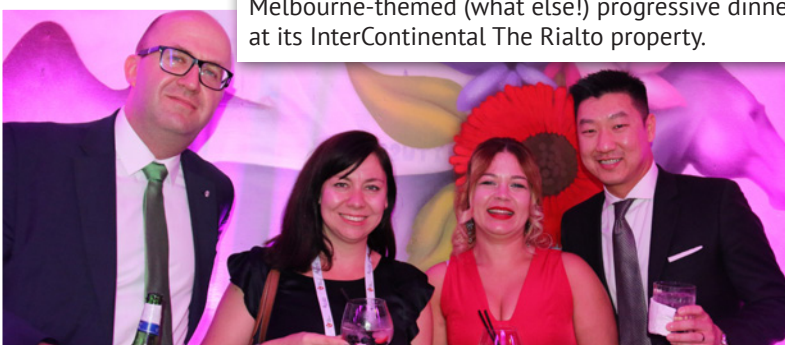
SOME of the colourful NT Convention Bureau team.



THE Melbourne Convention Bureau ladies and their furry little friends.



INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels hosted a lavish Melbourne-themed (what else!) progressive dinner at its InterContinental The Rialto property.





ICC SYDNEY DATA REVEALED

THE International Convention Centre Sydney is well on its way to achieving its goal of hosting 1,000 functions annually by 2019, according to its chief executive officer Geoff Donaghy.



"I'm proud to say we have already received return bookings from corporate events held in our first six weeks of opening, and that we have a truly impressive events line up in 2017, including the Australian Tourism Exchange, OpenStack, World Chambers Congress and the International Bar Association," he said.

Donaghy explained the results were primarily driven by "the integrated venue's world class team, who achieved an 100% approval rating across areas from event planning to hospitality and security".

"Their dedication saw more than 500 event confirmed before we even opened."

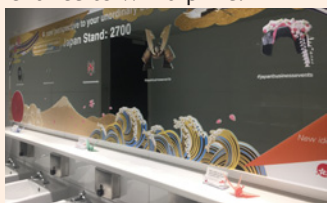
Over the next 25 years, an estimated \$5 billion will be injected into the NSW economy, Donaghy said.

"Sydney will further its position as one of the leading business events destinations in the world."



■ **THERE'S** no doubting the sales ability of the team at AIME, who even managed to monetise the bathrooms at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre during this week's show.

The mirrors in the gents (pictured) urged delegates to visit the Japan stand, while visitors were also invited to post a bathroom selfie - hopefully G-rated - for a chance to win a prize.



BNE's Herbalife win

MORE than 1500 of Herbalife's top members from across the APAC region will meet in Brisbane for the Future President's Team Retreat from 16-20 Sep.

The retreat will see higher-level Herbalife members attend a series of leadership meetings and engage in a range of lifestyle and leisure experiences in the Qld capital.

Lord Mayor Graham Quirk said he was pleased by the economic impact the retreat will play on Brisbane's economy as an estimated \$3.9 million.

He said it also reinforces Brisbane as "a major business event and incentive destination in the APAC".

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

Enough is enough!

YOU could be forgiven for blinking and missing the 25th Anniversary of the Asia-Pacific Meetings and Incentives Expo (AIME). There is only one word that I and a great many of my industry colleagues have used to describe this milestone in Melbourne's support of the business events industries and that's 'appalling'.

I was determined to avoid writing about this AIME this year as I have done in my columns over the years but so appalled was I by the lack of just about everything that I simply couldn't ignore it.

Reed Travel Exhibitions, the organiser of the event, has declined to submit a tender for the show's management after 2018 and, if this year is the pinnacle of their skills and expertise in this area, all I can say is thank goodness.

Many exhibitors tell me that AIME is, by far, the most expensive business events trade show in the southern hemisphere at which to exhibit. And the inclusion of such hi-tech facilities as the Konduko lead generation technology only adds to their costs. I have to assume that this is because AIME has two masters: the Melbourne Convention Bureau (the owner) and Reed (the organiser) and both want their 'cut' of the revenue. I have heard frightening figures about how much the MCB has collected from the show in the past and, if true, it's no wonder that exhibitors are no longer interested. To them the show simply isn't viable.

Where were Qantas, Jetstar, Virgin and Emirates? All

absent; and when major national and International airlines won't support a business events trade show there is surely something wrong! Similarly, stands for China, Dubai, Hilton, Marriott and Starwood were all missing? Singapore, New Zealand, Japan, Las Vegas and the Philippines were amongst the loyal exhibitors but their stands were almost empty when I attended.

Absent, too, were the international buyers. Apparently AIME this year attracted the lowest number for many years.

The writing has been on the wall for AIME for a long time but both Reed and the MCB have simply ignored the signs, preferring instead to 'do it their own way'. And yet these criticisms come from the people who matter, the buyers and sellers. The rise of other shows (Luxperience, Get Global) has surely been as a result of dissatisfaction about AIME.

Australia needs an international trade show; we shouldn't have to travel to Barcelona or Frankfurt to see what's available around the globe. AIME needs a major rethink and probably a new name.

I hope the MCB takes note and learns some pretty hard lessons, maybe even allowing AIME to circulate round Australia's capital cities. If the MCB allows a major event like AIME to fail I think the MCB board and certainly the CEO should consider their future.

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



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