



SILVERSEA BUSINESS EVENTS PUSH

ULTRA-LUXURY cruise operator Silversea Cruises yesterday launched a concerted assault on the business events sector, with the debut of a dedicated brochure at a Sydney function.

Guests included key meeting and event organisers, with Silversea regional chief Amber Wilson saying the company is seeing a strong demand for both full charters and group bookings across the fleet.

However much of the interest is being generated by travel agents who regularly present Silversea as an option to their clients, with Wilson urging the MICE professionals to also consider a luxury cruise option.

The new program showcases "The Motivating Power of Events at Sea" and highlights Silversea's fleet of nine ships visiting all seven continents.

The product offering can be fully customised and branded for a particular group, right down to crew uniforms and even the swizzle sticks.

Silversea's largest ship carries 596 guests and the fleet offers full butler service for every



passenger in every category.

Smaller options, which form the Silversea Expeditions fleet, start at the 100-guest *Silver Galapagos* and include the *Silver Explorer* (130 guests), *Silver Discoverer* (120 guests) and from Nov this year the revamped *Silver Cloud* (260 maximum).

"Unlike most big ships and land-based resorts, there are no hidden fees or extra charges, and that includes room service and wines and spirits.

"Nor are there charges for

breakout sessions, AV, gratuities or breakfast in bed," she said.

In the case of a full charter, Silversea can also customise itineraries to visit particular highlight destinations, with the Silversea fleet already covering a massive 800 ports across all seven continents.

Copies of the new Silversea business events program are available on 02 9255 0600.

Pictured above at yesterday's brochure launch are Silversea's Craig Owens and Amber Wilson.

Today's issue of **BEN**

Business Events News today has two pages of news.

PCOA opens registration

EARLY bird registration has opened for the 10th annual PCOA Conference and Exhibition, to be held on the Gold Coast.

Themed around 'MEETING Beyond Tomorrow', the event will be held between Sun 26 and Tue 28 Nov.

More than 400 delegates are expected to attend the event.

CLICK HERE to register.

Sold Out to manage GC18

SOLD Out National Event Management will be the official event management company for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.

As the supplier, Sold Out will assist in delivering promotional and marketing events for the Games.

Thomas Staunton, ceo of Sold Out, said he looked forward to contributing to the Games.

Sunshine Coast campaign launch

SUNSHINE Coast Council and Visit Sunshine Coast have launched a marketing campaign that will promote a diverse range of major events hosted on the Sunshine Coast.

The campaign, "Major Events Come to Life" on the Sunshine Coast features television and radio ads, plus a 54 page major events guide and a digital and social media activation.

Visit Sunshine Coast ceo Simon Latchford said the new promotion was the final piece of the puzzle in the 'Come to Life' national campaign launched earlier this year.

"We know that events provide the perfect opportunity to not only showcase our region as a tourism destination but also position the Sunshine Coast as the regional events capital of Australia," he said.

Sunshine Coast's latest campaign follows the 'World is Coming' marketing program, which was a finalist in the Australian National Event Awards for promoting the Sunshine Coast as Australia's regional events capital.

The region is hosting 55 major and regional events this year.

AACB offering scholarship

AACB has partnered up with Tourism Australia and Qantas to offer a staff scholarship for a middle to senior level convention bureau member.

The successful applicant will receive a \$5,500 grant and return int'l flights to undertake a professional development project that brings benefit to their bureau and AACB members.

Samantha Thompson from Gold Coast Business Events was last year's winner.

Four Points Melb appoints AV

FOUR Points Melbourne Docklands has appointed Staging Connections as the in-house event services provider for the brand new venue.

The recently opened hotel offers seven meetings spaces across 500m².

Staging Connections will invest and manage AV and lighting equipment in the conference and meeting spaces.



MEETINGS ON THE GO

CONVENTIONS and Incentives New Zealand's (CINZ) annual event MEETINGS has kicked off in Auckland.

The show began with a welcome event for 650 delegates at the Grand Millennium hotel.

The two-day event, which ends today, is bringing together 19 regions of New Zealand together under one roof and delegates and exhibitors will conduct more than 6,000 appointments over the course of the show.

Earlier this week it was announced that Tourism New Zealand had secured NZ\$300m worth of events over the past four years.

The events secured are expected to bring 100,000 people into the country.

René de Monchy, TNZ director trade, PR and major events, said NZ was performing well as a business events destination and had secured NZ\$39.7m worth of events this financial year plus NZ\$33 million from secured incentive business.

MEANWHILE Auckland has secured the World Veterinary Association Congress in 2020.

Around 3,000 delegates are expected to attend and bring NZ\$6.2m to the economy.

It will be held at the NZ International Convention Centre.

Vivid events

BUSINESS Events Sydney (BESydney) is using the city's Vivid festival as a tool to attract business events.

Speaking to **BEN**, BESydney ceo Lyn Lewis-Smith said the light and ideas festival offered a unique backdrop for MICE events in Sydney.

"Aligning conference programs to the city's existing calendar of major events allows delegates to enjoy a truly immersive experience in our city."

Lewis-Smith said the event provided a chance for Aust and foreign firms to identify potential partners.

Previous events including the 2013 Aust Int'l Design Forum and the 2014 Rotary Int'l Convention have involved aspects of Vivid.



CARTOON animal lovers are being invited to the world's largest "furry convention" Anthrocon 2017 from 29 Jun until 02 Jul.



The David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, will be taken over by a group of "furrries"- people who enjoy dressing up as fictional animal characters exhibiting anthropomorphic attributes.

Seminars in acting, costume building, animation, writing and more will be explored.

GENERating Change

Director of Conference Focus, Max Turpin is sharing his insights on a range of topics with a regular column in **BEN**. Topics include new generation events and making events effective and valuable.

What a survey can tell us

CVENT recently released the details from its second annual Global Events Industry Benchmarks Study compiled by surveying over 800 event professionals from around the world. I admit to not having read the entire report but have reviewed some of the headline data. Here's a snapshot of the results and what I find most interesting....

Apparently 81% of respondents believe meetings are effective to achieving their business goals. At the same time, the top three challenges facing these same planners were Budgeting, Proving ROI and Event Promotion. These top three challenges accounted for almost 50% of all responses...so way more than any others. Event planners were also asked how they measure ROI. The top two responses were Attendance Numbers (16%) and Attendee Satisfaction (14%). (So you know, Leads Generated, Revenue Generated and Budget v Actual all came in at 9%). And so for me this is what I find interesting...

If you were to ask any event planner if they thought their vocation, their job, their role was 'important' in as much that it is effective in achieving business goals, I'd say you'd get a biased response and most would answer in the affirmative. Even so, 19% admitted they did not believe this to be the case. In reality,

in truth, I'd guess it's much more than just 19% and I could speculate why.

On the subject of challenges, 15% of respondents sighted Proving ROI as a significant challenge (the second highest behind Budgeting). And when asked how they measure ROI, the large majority said it was via Attendance Numbers and Attendance Satisfaction. If you were to ask me, neither of these is a valid or credible indication of ROI. Numbers attending (quantity) has nothing to do with value or benefit (quality) and smiling, happy faces can be deceiving and could mean many things. As I've said previously, many event surveys are poorly designed and are often stacked with hospitality-related questions, not more meaningful ones.

And, for me, this is where it comes full circle: Rated as the biggest challenge was Budgeting – ie. working with stagnant or reduced budgets. Proving ROI was a close second. It's clear to me that the methods many planners use to measure ROI is completely flawed or invalid. So is it really any wonder when ROI is not being measured properly or effectively (and as a result not being proved), why event budgets are not being increased? Not to me.

If you'd like to learn more about how to make your events fresh, innovative and effective, please contact **Max Turpin** at Conference Focus on 02 9700 7740 or visit the website at conferencefocus.com.au



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