



BATTLE OF THE ICCA RANKINGS

SYDNEY and Melbourne are vying for the title of top Australian event city in the latest International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) 2016 Country and City Ranking Report.

Based on the number of meetings per city, Sydney was ranked top in Australia at 41st place worldwide, tied with New York City with 61 meetings held during 2016.

Melbourne was close by at 44th place with 58 meetings.

Business Events Sydney ceo Lyn Lewis-Smith said, "With no purpose-built convention centre for the past three years, BESydney also deliberately adjusted its strategy to drive short-lead Asian incentive business to the city".

Melbourne Convention Bureau ceo Karen Bolinger said Melbourne came out on top for delegate attendance in Australia.



"We strategically target events that are going to have the greatest benefit to the client and the city, whether that be legacy outcomes, trade and investment opportunities and importantly strong delegate attendance."

Brisbane jumped up an impressive 17 positions to rank 76 in the world with 34 business events in 2016.

Brisbane Convention Bureau acting gm Juliet Alabaster said

Brisbane also experienced a growth in delegate attendance.

"Our city welcomed almost 3,900 more delegates in 2016 to reach 16,719," she said.

ICCA rankings apply to international association meetings with 50 or more delegates that occur regularly.

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has three pages of news.

TEDx Speakers

TEDxSydney has announced its second line-up of speakers and performers who will be sharing their ideas at the TEDxSydney 2017 on 16 Jun at the ICC Sydney in Darling Harbour.

The second round of speakers is fronted up by journalist Peter Greste, who was arrested in Cairo while working for the Al Jazeera news service.

Other speakers include Jane Gilmore, a freelance journalist with a strong focus on data journalism, feminism and violence against women.

Professor Elanor Huntington, one of the only female Deans of Engineering will speak about attracting more women into the field.

Airling and Andy Dexterity will perform at the event.

HGGC acquires etouches

ETOUCHES has been acquired by HGGC, a leading middle market private equity firm based in California.

HGGC's investment will aim to expand etouches by investing in its cloud platform to win a greater share of the event management software and venue sourcing market.

etouches has customers including Ticketmaster, National Australia Bank and Lufthansa, and has an office in Australia.

Steve Young, md of HGGC, said with extra resources the company was confident it could accelerate etouches' future growth.

David Grant fellowship

APPLICATIONS for the first David Grant Creativity Project will open on 24 May.



The Project will fund a fellowship for young people in the events industry, and will boost their creativity through professional development in Australia and overseas.

The fellowship honours the late David Grant (pictured). Applications close 17 Jul - for more info [CLICK HERE](#).

CeBIT finalists announced

THE finalists for CeBIT Australia PitchFest have been revealed ahead of the Asia Pacific's largest business technology conference and exhibition at ICC Sydney later this month.

Some of finalists include Ontoto of Moss Vale who will show an advanced water monitoring solution to measure water level, and temperature and Smart Grid Energy of Coolum Beach, a solar power metering system to address the rising costs of power.

Previous winners of CeBIT PitchFest have gone onto become multi-million dollar, multi-national companies.

EVENTS BY

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LUXURY IS BACK - AND BETTER THAN EVER

With the GFC almost a decade behind us, companies have begun to fully embrace extravagance again. For premium business events and corporate meetings, that means big budgets and high-end experiences. Industry feedback tells us fireworks are back. Helicopter transfers are back. Business class and first class travel for high achievers is back. Reward trips to exotic locations are back. Ultra luxury is something that can celebrate high achievements and encourage loyalty and dedication. Beyond that, simply getting the logistics right isn't the main challenge of the event planner any more. Now, they must create an engaging, innovative, unconventional, experience-based event that their attendees – and the industry – will be talking about long after its over. They are now giving every audience the brand led, experience led messages that were formerly only reserved for consumers.

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ZIPPING AROUND YAS VICEROY

Hotel Review

IT SEEMS Abu Dhabi doesn't settle for mediocrity.

The thriving city is home to the world's fastest roller coaster, the highest roller coaster loop on the planet, the world's furthest leaning man-made tower, the most complex bridge and one of the world's largest mosques, to name a few.

So it was almost no surprise (although no less impressive) when we rolled into the five-star Yas Viceroy to find it is the only hotel to straddle a F1 race track.

Two hotel towers are linked by a connecting bridge which doubles as a brilliant vantage point during the Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Formula 1 Grand Prix.

The hotel boasts 499 luxurious rooms, which are all meticulously well maintained and impossible to fault.

Fans of the sport who can't afford the premium rate during the F1 can get lucky out of peak period, with drivers often conducting training at the track during the off season.

The hotel is well-practiced at hosting large events, featuring six meeting rooms, four boardrooms, and a 504m² grand ballroom which can be divided into three separate spaces.

Meeting spaces are equipped with high-tech facilities, including projectors and teleconferencing equipment, TV broadcasting infrastructure, centralised AV control system, wireless touch panels and more.

But the Yas Viceroy doesn't draw the line there.

The hotel is a destination in its own right, boasting six international restaurants, two rooftop pools with sunset views, a gym and spa.

The entire hotel exudes opulence, highlighted by a glistening gridshell made up of over 5,000 diamond shaped glass panels which wraps around the towers and lights up at night.



But what really makes this hotel fantastic is its warm and attentive staff.

Each passing exchange feels personal and unique, revisiting tiny details from passing conversations and appearing almost out of nowhere when needed.

The Yas Viceroy leaves nothing to be desired, offering an all-rounded, spectacular venue for business, leisure or a blend of both.

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NO EVENT BID FUND

THE Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) has expressed its disappointment in Tue's Federal Budget, flagging a missed opportunity to invest in the business events industry by establishing a national convention bid fund.

A bid fund remains a high priority for the business events industry, said AACB ceo Andrew Hieb who added it was even more important given Australia had slipped in the latest International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) rankings to 16th place in 2016. "Governments invest in and support business events

because they recognise the high yield and long-term benefits accruing from growth in the visitor and knowledge-based economies," he said.

The AACB said countries such as China, Japan and the Republic of Korea were currently ranked ahead of Australia in the number of international meetings held and among the reasons for this is additional government assistance.

AACB president Lyn Lewis-Smith said in AACB's budget submission that it promoted the establishment of a bid fund to provide support and increase Australia's share of events.

Regional fund

THE Queensland and West Australian governments have announced new funds for regional events.

Qld has allocated a total of \$245,000 for regional events, while WA has provided \$850,000 for events in its state.

WA's government said the funds would go to events including the Broome Marathon, Campdraft and Country Music Showcase.

Qld Tourism and Major Events Minister Kate Jones said the new funding would help events such as Toowoomba's flower festival and Mt Isa's rodeo.

"Events help bring people together to celebrate Queensland's unforgettable experiences," said Jones.



LOOKING for an excellent venue for your next pre-event ceremony or dinner?

Well in another classic 'only in America' tale, an Orlando man has combined wrestling and dining at his Manor Pro Wrestling Dinner Theatre.

Guests can prepare themselves for a three course meal with dishes such as Head Lock Tossed Green Salad and Body Slam Oven Roasted Chicken, while watching five wrestling rounds at the venue.

There is also an in-house band to cap off the night.

The Manor Pro Wrestling Dinner Theatre creates a whole new meaning to event entertainment for guests.

Confessions of a compulsive conference-goer

Andrew Klein, professional MC and presentation skills speaker and director of SPIKE Presentations, presents his front line observations on conferences in a regular feature in *BEN*.

A pie in the face (and other conference mishaps):

AS YOU have no doubt heard, earlier this week while speaking at a business event in Perth, Qantas CEO Alan Joyce received a lemon meringue pie in the face courtesy of a gentlemen who somehow managed to escape the attention of any security. Ever the professional, Joyce excused himself by saying "I don't know what that was about, we might take a break for a second," and walked off-stage for a minute and cleaned himself up.

He soon returned to the stage, made a few self-deprecating remarks including later that he needed the number of a Perth drycleaner and then simply went on with his presentation.

In my time as a conference speaker and MC I have seen many mishaps, accidents and technical difficulties take place mid-presentation. An audience member having a heart attack, sponsors' on-stage banners toppling over, dropped glasses of water smashing on-stage, mild earth-tremors mid-presentation in New Zealand, a speaker's three-year-old child run on stage and grab his leg, the ever-common IT or PowerPoint issues and even a blackout when a freak storm blew the power at the Hamilton Island Convention Centre.

Some event organisers panic, some presenters get totally flustered and some of the clients hosting the events get hugely embarrassed, believing that this might totally derail their event. The truth, as experienced event



organisers know, is that (serious health issues aside), none of these mishaps really matter. It is how you react to the issue that matters.

Audiences rarely care at all. If anything, it makes for a very memorable talking point. Conference audiences understand that accidents will happen. Things get dropped or fall over. Technology, no matter how much risk management and planning takes place, can still fail you. A good MC simply tells the audience to sit tight, chat with your neighbour and the problem will soon be fixed.

The audience if anything love the opportunity to have a quick stretch, check their emails and chat with their colleagues. They are almost never phased at a short interruption.

Alan Joyce actually received a spontaneous standing ovation upon his return to stage. He showed good humour and humanity and just got on with it.

So prepare and plan for a seamless event but also plan for the unplanned to happen, fix the problem and get on with it. And perhaps keep your eye out for delegates entering the conference room with a creamy pie in their hands.



If you are looking for an MC for your next conference or a speaker/trainer on presentation skills or pitching skills, email andrew@lunch.com.au or visit his website at www.andrewklein.com.au.

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