



## Today's issue of BEN

*Business Events News* today has two pages of news.

## Wine and dine Mangan-style

**SYDNEY'S** Waterloo dining district recently welcomed a new addition with the opening of Luke's Kitchen, a warehouse-type restaurant and event space owned and operated by renowned chef Luke Mangan.

The unique venue, which opened in Feb, can be booked out in its entirety to cater for up to 200 guests, is a fresh take on existing events locations, with its contemporary furnishings and rustic decor giving it a more homely vibe.

Functions & events can opt for a sit down meal or canapes, [CLICK HERE](#) for info.

## Small biz expo for Brisbane

**MORE** than 200 businesses from the Brisbane, Gold Coast and Logan areas will showcase their products & services on 11 May in the city's biggest small business event.

The Brisbane Small Business Expo connects business owners with potential customers and provides them with info and workshops on how to run a successful small business.

Guest speakers for the event include Phillip Di Bella from Di Bella Coffee and Glen Richards from Network Ten's popular show *Shark Tank*.

Event organiser Paula Brand said the expo would generate \$2m in sales leads for small business owners.

# NZ RIDES INTERNATIONAL WAVE

**A REPORT** released by New Zealand's Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) showed a significant increase in int'l convention delegate spend in 2017.

The Convention Delegate Survey (CDS) stated spend was up 17% compared to the 12 months to Dec 2016.

Conventions and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) chief executive officer Sue Sullivan believes the latest growth figures only tell the beginning of the story.

"This can only grow as our value proposition strengthens and we gear up for major new convention centre and hotel infrastructure which will give us the ability to cater for much larger multi-day conventions," Sullivan said.

"These figures do not reflect the economic impact these



international delegates have after they leave the country like ongoing relationships and knowledge transfers."

The factors driving the growth in international spend for 2017 included an overall increase in delegate numbers which were up 9% and the duration of stay which improved by 20% to an average of 7.2 nights.

The only cause for concern for NZ was a 10% fall in nightly spend down from 2016 to \$299.

Encouragingly, multi-day convention delegates stayed an estimated 1,080,000 visitor nights in New Zealand with around 82% (882,000) of visitor nights spent in the region that hosted the event.

**Pictured:** Auckland

## Live the luxe life in Fiji

**TWO** Hilton Fiji properties will be bringing the tropics to the table with the release of a selection of events packages designed to showcase the best of Fiji.

Meeting planners who book with the Double Tree Resort by Hilton Fiji - Sonaisali Island will receive exclusive use of the entire private tropical island for up to 240 guests.

Those who opt for Hilton Fiji Beach Resort & Spa will have access to a range of packages maximising the resort's meeting and restaurant spaces for up to 240 delegates.

For more information on each of the event packages [CLICK HERE](#).

## Novotel Melb South Wharf opens

**A NEW** golden era for Melbourne's hotel and exhibition scene has begun, following the official opening of the much-anticipated Novotel Melbourne South Wharf Hotel.

Rising 26 storeys above the city, the \$150m "golden tower" was constructed with a distinctive golden facade and is situated directly adjacent to the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC).

The 347-room hotel follows the \$350m expansion of the MCEC, which is set to become the largest facility of its kind in the southern hemisphere.

With Melbourne's business & events space growing rapidly, general mgr Glen Erickson said the hotel would play an important role in supporting the changes.

"This hotel's development, along with the MCEC expansion, represents one of the most significant infrastructure investments into Melbourne's tourism & convention industry," he said.





## GREAT LAWN OPEN

**CROWN** Perth has taken corporate conferencing to the next level, with the opening of The Great Lawn event space.

Located alongside the resort's spectacular pool, The Great Lawn provides a unique outdoor event space that spans 1,800m<sup>2</sup>.

With its sweeping views of the Swan River and Perth City, director of sales at Crown Perth, Scott Alderson said the venue was designed to celebrate the beauty of Perth.

"We've taken the standard to a whole new level and are confident that this new offer will help attract even more business - from interstate and international markets - to



Perth," he said.

The stunning venue can be set up for anything from private yoga sessions to cocktail receptions and creatively-themed dinners, and when combined with the rest of Crown Perth's integrated resort offerings, can cater for up to 3,500 delegates at one time.

For more info, click **HERE**.

## Doors to open at South Bank

**NOVOTEL** Brisbane South Bank is set to open its doors on 14 May, making it the first South Bank property in the AccorHotels group.

Located in the heart of the city's largest culinary, cultural and business district, including the Brisbane Convention Centre, Novotel Brisbane South Bank will be headed up by a team of staff including gm Jean-Philippe Lagard and director sales & marketing Mandy Walsh.

The duo plan to drive growth and opportunity for the property by maximising its bustling location.



**A WISE** man once said that when it comes to the business events industry, the sky is the limit - well it turns out that wise man may have been a complete fool.

Plans are afoot to construct new space hotel called the Aurora Station, with a cool \$9.5 million able to buy guests the first ticket.

Planning an event in a weightless environment could be amazing, the prospect of floating speeches alone would be worth the price of admission.

The only drawback might be criticism that you aren't treating your event with the gravity it deserves.

## 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**.

### Getting on the front foot

**WE ARE** all school-kids at heart. Yes, we are a little older, some of us a little greyer (or balder) and we might have real jobs, family commitments and maybe rent or a mortgage to pay. But when it comes to entering a conference room, most people instantly become school-children again.

By which I mean we sit up the back of the room, leaving the front rows empty. We do this for the same reasons as when we were at school. It is easier to hide and be inconspicuous. We can slip in and out of the conference room easily. We can check our mobiles without anyone noticing. The presenter prone to interactive activities or question asking or.....yikes.... bringing an audience member up on stage, simply isn't going to pick on the naughty kids up the back. Bottom line, it allows us to a bit of breathing space, away from the limelight (or at least the stage lights).

Don't get me wrong. I'm not criticizing you. If I weren't the guy up on stage speaking or MC'ing the conference, I'd be up the back with you, sending a few surreptitious emails. So I get it.

But here's the thing. As a speaker, it sucks when no one is sitting up the front, or just as bad, when there's only 200 people in a room set for 300, meaning the delegates are sitting in small clumps of 1's and 2's, with copious empty seats and rows.



This makes it hard for the speaker to engage the room, to get people to laugh or confer with each other and well, the atmosphere in the room just isn't the same as a room where everyone is close to the front, packed in tight, with people on either side of them, creating energy, engagement, conversation and 'buzz'.

Simple solution. Apart from setting up roped barriers like at a concert, conference organisers or conference committee members or staff should stand at the back of the room like security guards (smiling though, we don't want to this to become too hard-line) and gently and in good humour request and usher people towards the front. Offer fun incentives for people to fill the front rows (chocolates on their seats?) or offer your arm to escort them to the front. Some delegates will smile politely and refuse to move forwards, but I am always surprised at how compliant delegates are if they are asked (which more often than not, they aren't).

So for the sake of a better conference, let's get on the front foot and head to the front.

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](mailto:andrew@lunch.com.au) or visit his website at [www.andrewklein.com.au](http://www.andrewklein.com.au).

