



AIME SET FOR A BUMPER YEAR

THE MICE sector will be out in force in Melbourne next week for the Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Expo (AIME) at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC).

This year will be the last AIME under Reed Exhibitions which will be replaced as organiser in 2019 by Talk2 Media and Events.

The event will also be the first under project manager Angela Sciacca's responsibility.

New this year is an invitation-only hosted buyer program which includes a tailored knowledge program & city tours.

Organisers have also seen a surge in participation from international convention bureaux and organisations.

Sciacca said int'l bodies would bring fresh eyes and unique propositions to the event.

"AIME's show floor will showcase a diverse range of local and international suppliers, and destinations set to inspire buyers when planning their world-class events."

Int'l attendees include CINZ, Tourism Fiji and groups from Japan, Abu Dhabi and Korea.



On the domestic front, exhibitors include Moreton Hire, ICC Sydney, Destination NSW and bureaux from across Australia.

Through a partnership with Saxon Speakers Bureau, people such as writer Bill Bennett, thought leader Dr Jordan Nguyen and trends analyst Casey Hyun will run sessions.

Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) will also run the Melbourne Edge Event Series and will be themed under the creative future of biz events.

Taking place on 19 Feb at Showtime Event Centre, the

program includes workshops, collaborations and presentations.

The two-day show will have a six-foot "selfiebot" that will interact with attendees and roam the show snapping selfies.

Courtesy of Rentertainment, the selfies will form a giant picture mosaic of the event.

MCB will also run a social media competition offering \$250 VISA prepaid credit cards.

To win, post a pic to Facebook, Twitter or Instagram of creative Melbourne experiences using the #Uncovermelbourne hashtag before 27 Feb.

Le Meridien brand to Australia

MARRIOTT International has unveiled plans to bring its Le Meridien brand to Australia.

The Parisian chic brand will open its doors in 2020 in Melbourne's CBD.

Fronting Bourke and Spring streets, the property will have 235 rooms.

Marriott International snr director development for Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Richard Crawford said Le Meridien's arrival was a momentous move for Marriott.

"It comes at a perfect time. Alongside Melbourne's growing demand from

domestic travellers, new international direct routes from the United States, Asia-Pacific and South America are driving continued growth in international visitation," Crawford said.

The property will feature a 90-seat all day dining restaurant, a 210m² function space and three breakout rooms, a heated swimming pool and large fitness centre.

The new opening comes as part of Marriott's plan to open 50 hotels in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific by the end of 2021.

Corroboree heads to GC

THE Gold Coast has been named as host of Tourism Australia's 2018 Corroboree Asia event.

This is the first time the Gold Coast has hosted the biennial trade event, which will bring over 100 Australian tourism operators and 300 delegates from China, Japan, Korea, India, Indonesia and Singapore.

The event will take place on 26-31 Aug 2018 and will be followed by five-day famil trips around the country.

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has three pages of news.

UNICEO seals Marriott deal

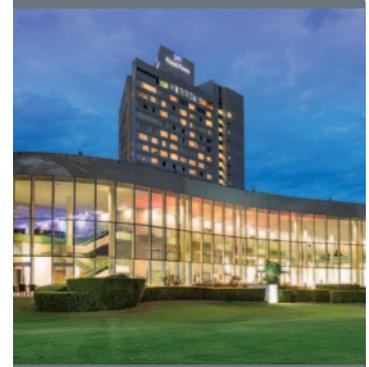
UNITED Networks of International Corporate Event Organisers (UNICEO) has announced a partnership with Marriott International.

The deal will see Marriott participate in UNICEO and support activities for the Geneva-based association.

Marriott said the move would strengthen and grow the group's MICE capabilities.

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Waterside Endeavour casts off



THE Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney's Darling Harbour opened its new Endeavour Pavilion space in style last week, inviting prominent players from Australia's MICE sector who gathered to enjoy the grand opening along with a healthy dose of live entertainment and plenty of gin cocktails.

The Endeavour Pavilion, named in honour of Captain Cook's vessel, offers event planners all-inclusive packages, including venue hire and catering, and is promoted as a great venue for product launches, corporate functions and award ceremonies.

The venue accommodates 200 guests seated or 350 cocktail, with packages starting at \$140 per head.

Pictured is the venue at Sydney's Darling Harbour.

Ask the Chef

THIS week we get to know Alannah Fox, the head chef at Mantra on Russell in Melbourne.

What do you love about your position and what made you become a chef?

Food to me is home and comfort, so I see the kitchen as the heart of the hotel – for both guests and staff.

Nothing really 'made me' become a chef, it was more a natural progression of a passion that I shared with my friends and family.

What goes into designing a hotel/venue menu?

The key is to understand your guests and their needs. You can cook for your ego as much as you like, but that's not going to make for a successful business if it's not what your customers want.

What's the key to catering to large numbers of guests?

Organisation and planning.

How do you describe your



signature style of cooking?

European-influenced modern comfort food.

Most famous person you've cooked for?

Hard to choose the most famous, but my favourite

famous guest was probably Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson. All he wanted six times a day was steamed chicken and potatoes, but he would always poke his head in and say thank you afterwards.

Most interesting story or unusual request you've had?

While cooking for a certain US President, we had to prepare and cook all food under the watchful gaze of a military policeman armed with a machine gun. He literally just followed us from fridge to bench to stove, watching every move. It was pretty intimidating!

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Discover the impact the Commonwealth Games is set to have on the Gold Coast in the February issue of *travelBulletin*.

CLICK HERE to read **travelBulletin**

MICE SHAPES FUTURE

THE Federal Government has created the Beyond Tourism 2020 Steering Committee on the future of the sector.

The business events space will contribute to the future path of Australia's tourism policy after a few appointments by the Govt.

The Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB), president Karen Bolinger and AEG Ogden chief executive Harvey Lister have both been appointed to the committee which convened its first meeting late last week.

"Over recent years, the AACB has played a leading

role in advocating to Federal Government on behalf of the business events industry, identifying and addressing issues and opportunities for industry recognition and growth," said Andrew Hiebl, chief executive officer of the AACB.

"(We) welcome the opportunity for the business events industry to contribute to Australia's tourism strategy beyond 2020."

The Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Steve Ciobo made the appointments directly.

The industry group will hand down its report to the Federal Government later this year.

Novotel Surfers event refurb

NOVOTEL Surfers Paradise has completed a multi-million dollar refurbishment in time for the Commonwealth Games.

The property now offers six conference rooms including the Grand Ballroom which can cater for up to 500 delegates at one time.

The space has been designed to offer natural light and removable walls to allow for flexible meetings.

Every guest room has been updated with modern tech and ease of connection, with in-room wi-fi and bedside USB ports.

Novotel Surfers Paradise joined the AccorHotels network in Oct 2016.



IN THE spirit of celebrating events, we felt it pertinent to touch on a few events at the Winter Olympics that are no longer with us.

Skijoring involved hanging on for dear life to the reins of a horse or dog across a frozen lake - so wish this was still a thing!

Ski Ballet was a demo sport at the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, Canada, that involved figure skating on snow - I think we can begin to see what the major issue was there.



Partner Up

The low down on tech in the events world



What catering style suits your event?

FOOD has a special place at all events; it brings people together in a fun and engaging way, and will give your guests a culinary experience to remember. The catering at an event can make up a large portion of your budget, so you want to make sure you're choosing the right type of catering style for your event type. When matched with creative audiovisual elements, your choice of catering can further create a wow factor.

Here are some of the most popular:

Banquet Dinner

A banquet style dinner is a more formal, sit down catering style. It usually includes a set amount of courses, three for example: entree, main, and dessert. Everyone at the table gets their food at the same time and you can spread out activities such as speeches, awards, entertainment or dancing in between courses. Banquet dinners are a great opportunity to dazzle your guests with pin-spotlight lighting on their tables, which can also be coloured to match your brand or theme.

Cocktail

A cocktail style of catering means your guests have the opportunity to mingle and network while finger food gets served around the room. It's a great way for more people to interact and network with each other throughout the event, and an optimal choice for adding music to complement the atmosphere.

Food Stations

More and more we are seeing special food stations set up in event spaces. This could mean a dessert bar, a juice station, or a tapas section. Guests make their own way to each station and choose what they like. Food stations can be set up to go along with a more traditional style of catering such as a banquet, or as stand alone catering. Creative lighting and theming can help enhance food stations, creating further appeal.

Whatever you decide, we're sure your event will be a hit! Talk to us for more ideas.

Jarum Rolfe is the partner at RACV Royal Pines Resort with AVPartners, which creates integrated event experiences through combining state of the art audiovisual technology, unrivalled expertise and a highly-tailored approach. www.avpartners.com

