



MCEC ON TRACK FOR OPENING

CONSTRUCTION work on the \$205 million expansion of the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre (MCEC) is on track for its scheduled opening in mid-2018.

The extension will add nearly 20,000m² of multi-purpose event space, including 9,000m² of new exhibition halls, meeting rooms and banquet rooms.

Acting Premier James Merlino said the project would boost the local economy and drive hotel and restaurant bookings.

Merlino said when completed, the MCEC extension would bring an additional 74,000 int'l visitors annually who would result in a \$167 million yearly boost to the economy.

MCEC ceo Peter King said the space had been designed to meet customer demands.

"This will make sure our



facilities meet their needs, rather than adapting their event to suit our space," King said.

Designed with flexibility in mind, the extension will have a retractable 1,000 seat theatre and adaptable meeting rooms.

The expansion will allow the MCEC to meet the growing demand for meeting and event spaces in Australia.

MCEC will announce the first



conference to be held in the new space closer to opening.

Pictured at the site is Vic Acting Minister for Major Projects Luke Donnellan with Acting Victoria Premier James Merlino.

Geelong venue

GEELONG is set to receive funding to construct the Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre as part of the City Deal scheme.

The money comes as part of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Federal and Victorian Govts.

While in early stages, a car park at Deakin University in the city's centre has been floated as a possible location for the Geelong Convention Centre.

Details on the project are still largely unknown.

MEA launches webinar series

MEETINGS & Events Aust (MEA) has launched a webinar program providing members with access to training each month.

The first will be held on 31 Jan on the Sales Process presented by Nicole Bates of Conversion Management.

MEA webinars in 2018 will provide practical training as well as education for events.

Webinars are free for MEA members and available to non-members for \$20.



THE Tyrannosaurus Rex fraternity gathered in Portland, Maine, over the weekend to celebrate all things good about the vicious beast.

Hundreds of humans dressed up in their scariest T Rex costumes and participated in dinosaur activities including dancing.

The idea came about after organiser Valerie Sanborn purchased a T Rex costume and held a photo shoot.

Today's issue of **BEN**

Business Events News today has one page of news plus a full page from **One&Only Resorts**.

Int'l delegates strong in Nov

THE latest arrival stats from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show 29,600 international visitors entered Australia in Nov for a conference or convention.

This was an increase of 35% compared to Nov 2016, when the figure was 21,900.

The number was down from Oct 2017, when 32,000 delegates entered.

Nov was the second best month for incoming delegates, trailing behind Oct which recorded the best monthly result in 2017.

From Jan to Nov 2017 252,400 delegates have entered Australia for a conference or convention, which is up 29.6% from the same period the year prior.

In the 11 months to Nov 2016, 194,700 entered Australia for business events.

Darwin appointee

THE Darwin Convention Centre has appointed Julie Seldon and Ashleigh Rowe as business development executives.

Seldon was previously with Exhibitions & Trade Fairs in Sydney, while Rowe was a researcher at the centre.

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