



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has three pages of news plus a full page from **One & Only Wolgan Valley**.

NZ at AFNC

NINE New Zealand reps will showcase new venues and experiences at the Associations Forum National Conference on the Gold Coast from 15-17 Jul.

First timers to the event are Te Pae, Christchurch's convention centre opening in 2020; the recently relaunched Cordis Auckland; and Venues Wellington.

Scholarships for NSW

MEETINGS & Events Australia (MEA) has partnered with the NSW Govt to offer 18 Diploma of Event Management scholarships for residents in rural NSW.

The diplomas were allocated to those "looking for extra support to expand and develop their skills" while delivering growth in their local area.

WRAPS OFF EXPANDED MCEC

MELBOURNE Convention and Exhibition Centre's (MCEC) \$205 million expansion officially opened this week following a two-year redevelopment project funded by the 2015-16 Victorian State Budget.

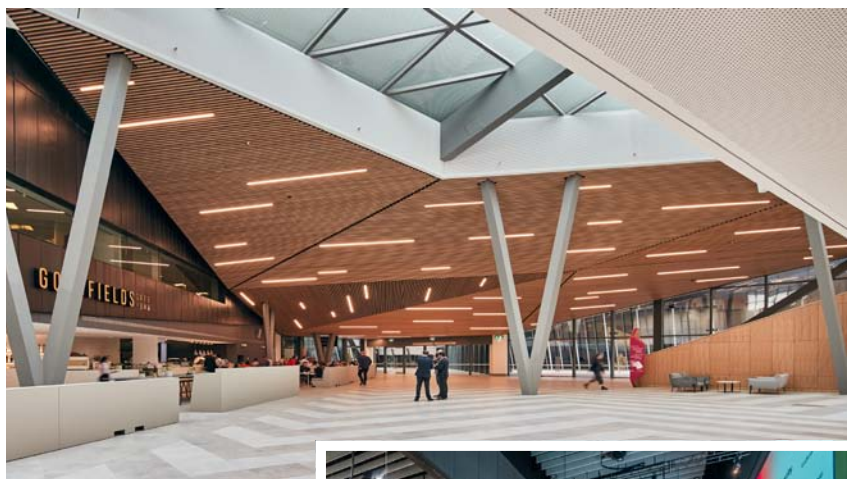
"We have delivered a world-class facility that is functional, adaptable and aesthetically pleasing with a quality and sophistication that reflects the attributes of Melbourne," said MCEC chief executive Peter King.

"We wanted to ensure our facilities suited the needs of our customers, rather than constraining them to fit within our space," he said.

The 20,000m² expansion increased MCEC's size to 70,000m², making it Australia's largest convention and exhibition venue.

MCEC now includes the Goldfields Theatre, a 9,000m² multi-purpose event space with a retractable 1,000 seat theatre; new exhibition halls; Eureka meeting rooms; outdoor terrace area; sovereign room banquet space and Goldfields cafe & bar.

"Victoria is the national leader when it comes to major business events and the new MCEC expansion will help us attract even more visitors to our



state," said the state's Minister for Tourism and Major Events John Eren.

Along with boosting tourism, the expansion will "create more than 900 new jobs and provide a massive boost to our local economy," he said.

The expansion is part of the South Wharf project by Plenary Group and its partners that includes a new 347-room Novotel Melbourne South Wharf and a new 1,150 space carpark, all connected

and integrated with existing buildings.



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AC HOTEL FOR MELB

MARRIOTT International will introduce the AC Hotels by Marriott brand to Australia in 2020, following the signing of an agreement with Melbourne-based property development company Capital Alliance.

The 200-room AC Hotel by Marriott Melbourne Southbank will be located in a 40-storey mixed use building called Normanby.

It will feature a 24-hour fitness centre, pool, three food and beverage outlets and 150m² of meetings and events space, along with a range of collaborative areas such as the AC Lounge, a co-working space for gatherings by day and a “social hub” offering European-style tapas by night.

“The AC Melbourne Southbank underscores the growing demand we’re seeing in Australia for premium lifestyle



hotels that offer style and functional design, as well as authentic and memorable travel experiences connected to the location,” said Richard Crawford, senior director development, Australia, New Zealand and Pacific, Marriott International.

The property will also offer apartments, dining venues and shopping in the heart of Fishermans Bend, near Melbourne’s city centre.

Brisbane delivers record events

BRISBANE’S economy will receive a \$96 million boost following a record year of events from Brisbane Convention Bureau.

Lord Mayor Graham Quirk said Brisbane had secured 78 conferences, including 34 international events in the last financial year, creating “valuable, professional development, networking and investment opportunities within local growth sectors” which delivered flow-on economic benefits for tourism and hospitality businesses.

The majority of wins were supported by a growth in the city’s “world-class infrastructure & diverse leisure activities” said Juliet Alabaster, gm at Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre.

AACB scholar

APPLICATIONS for the AACB Staff Scholarship are now open until 5pm 27 Jul.

The successful applicant will receive a \$5,500 grant and Qantas international return flights for a career development project.

To access the application [CLICK HERE](#).

Davis to sales

AVPARTNERS has promoted Ben Davis to the role of sales for Crown Perth.

Davis was previously the venue’s technical director.

Destination update

SCENIC Spirit and *Scenic Aura* cruise the waters of the Mekong and Irrawaddy rivers and feature world-class facilities that would not be out of place in a boutique luxury hotel, from the luxurious one-bedroom suites, to the range of dining options to the thoughtful touches such as umbrellas and even USB ports in each suite.

Catering for just 68 and 44 guests respectively, *Scenic Spirit* and *Scenic Aura* offer your team an exclusive and intimate experience that is truly all-inclusive.

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It’s about going a degree above and beyond to ensure that your trip is a carefree experience.

The Sebel opens in West Perth

THE Sebel West Perth Aire Apartments opened its doors on 09 Jul, adding 64 new studio apartment style rooms to Perth’s accommodation market.

The Sebel occupies the first four levels of the 22-level Aire West Perth apartment tower and includes a swimming pool, fitness centre, outdoor dining area and conference room.

“The addition of The Sebel to West Perth comes at an exciting time as the city is readjusting from the mining-related activity with major investment in new tourism infrastructure such as the Perth stadium,” said Simon McGrath, coo Pacific for AccorHotels.



PARKING prices always seem to be going up at venues and hotels, but spare a thought for car owners in Hong Kong where the average park now costs HK\$2.25m (A\$390,000) to buy.

According to *Bloomberg*, local Darrin Woo recently shipped his 1968 Mercedes limo and a 1957 Fiat Abarth to California to save money.



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MANTRA FOR ALBURY

THE NSW city of Albury has officially opened the doors to its first new property in three years, the Mantra Albury Hotel.

The \$40 million development spans eight floors, its 146 one- and two-bedroom rooms offering floor-to-ceiling views over the Bogong High Plains and Victorian Alps.

Mantra group executive director of operations, Mark Hodge, said the hotel would offer something unique to both

business and leisure travellers. "We are confident this property, with its modern design and stylish features will provide a market-leading hotel offering, which is well-positioned to become the region's premier corporate, meetings and leisure hotel," he said.

Corporate visitors have access to conference & events facilities catering for more than 200 people, an exclusive sky lounge, wet bar, and lounge seating.



WIN WITH HKTB

Recognised as one of the world's most exciting and vibrant cities, Hong Kong is a destination where you can take your corporate event to new heights. Whether it's a conference for hundreds or a meeting and incentive group, Hong Kong has it all.

Be in the draw to win a weekly prize, leading up to Get Global by answering the special Hong Kong weekly question:

To win be the first person to send the correct answer to the question to hktb@businessesnews.com.au

Contrast is never far in Hong Kong. Think outlying islands, sandy beaches, quaint villages and rugged mountains for your next group. Name a famous hike on Hong Kong Island where you will need to conquer the "dragon".

Visit Lisa and Jessica at Get Global to discuss why Hong Kong should be your venue of choice. See you 20 July at the International Convention Centre, Sydney.



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*.

The Bow Tie Guy on my TV

AS A Presentation and Pitching Skills trainer, one of my messages is try and be a little different. Not 'gimmicky' different, just do the little things differently to your competitors so your presentation stands out.

This message was brought home to me this week as I travelled to Auckland for a speaking gig and stayed in a cute hotel in the waterfront area - the M Social... now my favourite hotel in Auckland. Here's why...

As a person who works in the conference industry, I stay in a lot of hotels. Over time you start to notice that some hotels simply do things better than others.

Generally, most hotel rooms are very similar - bed, shower, large TV screen, way too many pillows, light switches you can't find and air-con units that you need a Mechanical Engineering degree to operate.

Most hotel rooms are fairly inter-changeable. So as a business traveller, I do notice when things are different.

Until my stay at the M Social, one thing I had never really paid any attention to is the message on the TV screen when you enter your room. You know the one I am referring to? The usually generic screen with the hotel logo or a photo of the pool lit up at night, that says "Welcome Mr Klein. We Hope you Enjoy Your Stay" (or words to that effect). I've never paid much attention to it and I usually grab the TV remote and flick on the tele.

But the one at the M Social caught my eye, because it was a little different, it had personality, fun and no hotel branding. It featured a colourful, arty picture



of a guy in a bow tie with quirky font and it said more or less the same as any TV welcome screen message, but with less formulaic wording.

"Welcome Andrew Klein. It must be fate that brought you here and we are very glad to have you. Kick back, have a great stay". Same message, just presented a little differently. I'm guessing most hotels have given little or no thought to their TV welcome screens in years. But this hotel has and well done to them for that.

The TV welcome was typical of the colourful, quirky way the hotel has been renovated. Scrabble tiles for signage. Brightly coloured murals on the walls. Reception staff dressed professionally but casually, and slightly more modern furnishings than at most hotels. Plus the staff were incredibly friendly.

Whether it is a hotel TV welcome screen note or the way you present, it is the little touches of difference, of personality, of authenticity, of creativity that will be remembered and appreciated and that can make a big difference.

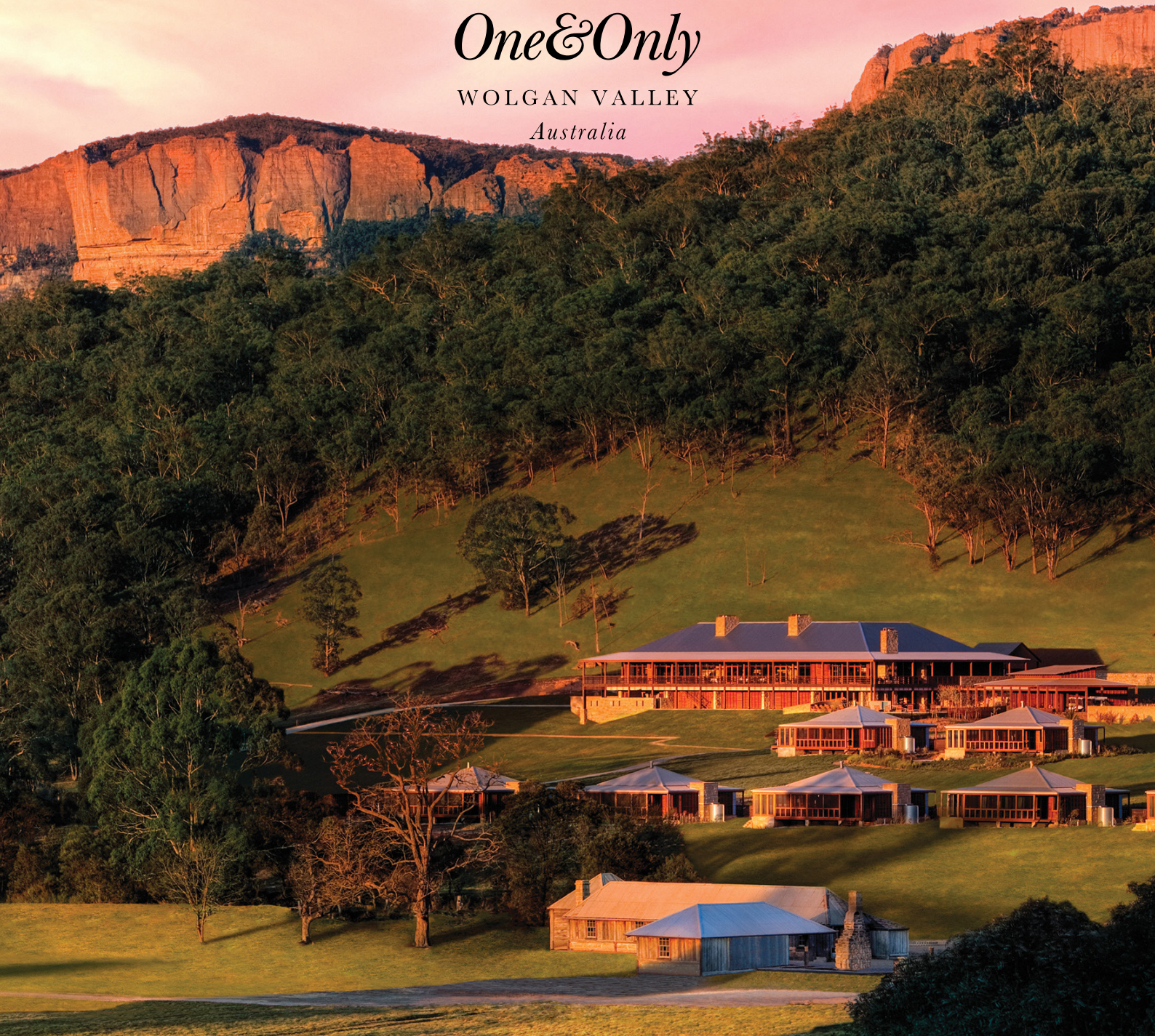
If you are looking for an MC for your next conference or a speaker/trainer on presentation skills or pitching skills, email andrew@lunch.com.au or visit his website at www.andrewklein.com.au.



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Offer is subject to availability and applicable for new group bookings only. Valid for travel until 21 December 2018 for midweek stays (Sunday - Thursday inclusive) for group bookings of 5 villas or more. Rates are quoted in Australian dollars inclusive of GST and subject to change without notice.

events@oneandonlywolganvalley.com
+61 2 9199 1811
oneandonlywolganvalley.com