



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news.

NT welcomes new strategy

THE Department of Tourism and Culture has appointed KPMG to deliver the first long-term strategic plan for business events in NT.

The appointment coincides with the Territory's \$103 million stimulus package, which includes \$2.33 million to support business event bids and guide the development of local events through to 2030 while "articulating a shared vision and framework" for growth. It will be finalised by Oct.

WESTIN COOLUM EVENTS PUSH

THE Sunshine Coast is gearing up to make its way back into the competitive pool of top business events destinations following approval of the Yaroomba Beach Project.

The development will create a new coastal village just ten minutes from Sunshine Coast Airport, encompassing the Westin Coolum Resort & Spa, as well as serviced apartments and extensive conference and recreation facilities.

"The Westin is an internationally recognised five-star hotel brand, renowned for its business events capabilities," said Simon Latchford, ceo of Visit Sunshine Coast.

"Its scheduled opening in 2021 will complement the opening of our upgraded international airport and will help us fulfil our aim of becoming one of the most significant regional



business events destinations in Australia."

Latchford added that the new Westin resort would "play a fundamental role in attracting domestic and international business to the Sunshine Coast," as well as high-yielding conferences and incentives.

The resort will have over 1,000m² of combined function

and meeting space to cater for up to 800 delegates in a range of venues including four breakout meeting rooms, a function room, and hall that is 500m², expandable to 800m².

Conference and incentive groups will also be able to take part in a wide selection of team-building, health and wellness activities.

Syd to host Lifestyle expo

THE Best World Lifestyle's (BWL) International Convention for 2019 is set to take place in Sydney at the International Convention Centre following a successful bid by Business Events Sydney, Destination NSW and Tourism Australia.

The event will deliver almost 6,000 delegates to the harbour city, & generate an estimated \$30 million for the NSW economy.

BESydney ceo Lyn Lewis-Smith said the event was an opportunity to create "authentic experiences with locals, sample fresh Australian produce and catch a glimpse of why Sydney is such an appealing destination".

Speakers announced for PCOA

THE Professional Conference Organisers Association has announced seven of the eight speakers who will take to the floor at this year's PCOA Conference and Exhibition in Melbourne.

The event, which will be held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre between 09 and 11 Dec will welcome a range of speakers who will address topics such as leadership, "the key to happiness", augmented reality, and personal triumph.

The lineup includes Belinda Brosnan, Andre Eikmeier, Tomer Garzberg, Samantha Gash, Simon Griffiths, Robbi Mack and Stephen Scheeler.



IF SPELLING, grammar and punctuation are your thing, then you should consider yourself lucky to have missed a minor mishap at the site of the soon-to-be-opened Hard Rock Cafe Hotel & Casino in Atlantic City, USA.

The nine-metre tall guitar sign installed outside the new venue caught the attention of curious passers-by, who were quick to pick up the spelling of "rhythm" contained an extra letter, instead reading "rythem".

Officials managed to swiftly correct the typo by removing the rogue letter, although perhaps those responsible should enlist a proofreader on future projects.

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27th June 2018

SA CONVENTION WIN

ADELAIDE has secured the hosting rights to the World Congress on Medical Physics and Biomedical Engineering for 2024, an event that's set to attract more than 2,500 delegates and inject \$17.6 million into the economy.

Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment David Ridgway said a key part of growing the local tourism sector was attracting more events and conventions to

the city.

"We're boosting the Events Bid Fund to \$40 million over the next four years which includes \$5 million to attract more conventions," he said, adding that the next opportunity to maximise the event would be to "disperse delegates into our regions before and after the conference".

The event will deliver 18,700 bed nights for the city's hotels.



WIN WITH HKTB

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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.



Gray's Say



Peter Gray, an independent Motivation Consultant, presents a regular *Business Events News* feature on current issues in the Conference and Incentive industries.

Times they are a'changing

I CONSIDER myself fortunate to have a young daughter who enables me to experience a part of life I thought I had left long behind me. It seems these days that television programs move very quickly from Peppa Pig to battles for world domination, without anything in between. In the world of so-called digital entertainment this is true too, with some 90% of programs for Xbox, for example, being mainly concerned with killing and maiming which, frankly, I can't see as being relevant to kids.

So too, in the incentive industry we have moved from practitioners whose main purpose was in providing a thoroughly professional approach to their clients' needs to a very much dog-eat-dog industry where profit margins are being sacrificed and the pressure on suppliers to do the same is becoming the norm.

Software is available that reduces compiling a proposal for a conference or incentive reward almost to a button-pushing exercise. Lists of hotels and venues in a given destination can be downloaded and an RFP sent all of them in just about the blink of an eye. Gone is the need for personal relationships with suppliers and the creativity that used to be provided not so much as a matter of course but of pride.

Speed these days is the name of the game and cutting margins is, it seems, the way to go.

Prior to emigrating to Australia I was pursuing a similar career in the UK. In the 10 or so years

I was in the conference and incentive industries there I never had a contract with any of my clients and those clients ranged from blue-chip to one-man-bands. Everything was agreed upon with a handshake - "dictum meum pactum" - my word is my bond (motto of the London Stock Exchange). I also never had any complaints. My company was pleased to go the extra distance to ensure our clients' complete satisfaction and generally at no additional cost to them.

That would never be possible these days. Everything has to be spelled out in multi-page contracts which are carefully monitored to ensure that everything promised is indeed provided. Yes, there are still PCOs and incentive practitioners, who do take great pride in their work and who do provide a very high level of service but it would appear that this is the exception rather than the rule.

That standards within our industry are diminishing is all too obvious. Some of this is brought about by changes in working practices such as introduction of new software products but many of the cuts and changes that we see are brought about by the supposed need to make more money.

Perhaps the motto of the London Stock Exchange has been superseded by that of fictitious investment banker Gordon Gekko: Greed is good!

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www.businessesnews.com.au

Business Events News is part of the Business Publishing Group family of publications.

Business Events News is Australia's newest online publication dedicated to the vibrant meetings, incentives, conferences and events sector.

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