

REACH FOR THE STARS WITH THE NT

Looking for an inspiring destination to deliver your next business event? From the outback and desert of the Red Centre to the tropical and lush Top End, the Northern Territory offers unforgettable experiences for your event attendees.

The NT's stunning landscapes, diverse destinations and venues, unique activities and cultural exchange ensure successful business outcomes and offer the opportunity to leave a lasting legacy.

Apply to join one of our exclusive familiarisation programs to experience the NT first-hand and gain an invaluable perspective on why the Northern Territory is such a desirable business events destination.



REGISTER YOUR INTEREST



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news plus a front cover wrap from Northern Territory Convention Bureau.

HK incentives

THE Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTb) has implemented a rewards program to attract more business events to the city.

Added incentives include free cultural experiences, transport options and hospitality packages.

"We want to step it up a notch and heighten our competitiveness," said HKTb manager, trade marketing and business tourism Australia, Lisa Lee.



Hobart makes more waves

TASMANIA has landed a major contract win for 2020, signing on international transport body Interferry as the venue for its annual meeting.

The conference, to be held in Hobart, will run for several days and incorporate multiple networking and social activities for the trade, with close to 500 people expected to attend.

"Events such as Interferry put Tasmania on the global stage and showcase Tasmania's leadership in the marine industry sector," said Business Events Tasmania chief executive officer Stuart Nettlefold.

This will be only the third time the event has been held in Australia, following Sydney in 1995 & the Gold Coast in 2002.

BRISBANE TURNS UP THE HEAT

BRISBANE has wasted no time in pushing its credentials as a premier destination for business events in 2018, scoring an impressive 15 event wins in the first two months of the year.

The successful bids secured by the Brisbane Convention Bureau (BCB) amount to a sizeable \$22 million injection into the city's economy, and will produce more than 38,000 delegate days.

Events landed span a diverse cross-section of industries including health, education, technology & finance, all lifeblood sectors for the city's growing knowledge economy.

"Brisbane has a clear strategy to attract more national and int'l business events to the city, as part of our 2022 New World City Action Plan," said Brisbane Lord Mayor Graham Quirk.

"With Brisbane becoming an increasingly sought-after destination for conferences and business events, it's encouraging to see our plan is working and



that the numbers from early 2018 are so strong," he added.

The Brisbane Convention Bureau believes the latest string of winning bids are a reflection of the city's rapidly expanding list of facilities and attractions.

"(We've won) thanks to our world-class infrastructure, venues, accommodation, leisure offerings and leading industry sectors," said BCB general manager Juliet Alabaster.

"This year will see the fruition of past wins...the city is set to host major conferences including air development event Routes Asia in Mar, the IEEE Conference on Robotics and Automation in May & the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers in Nov," she added.

The Brisbane Convention Bureau was not able to name any of the newly won events when contacted by **BEN**.

Familiar with the top end?

THE NT Convention Bureau (NTCB) is offering famil programs to Darwin, Alice Springs and Uluru throughout the year in a bid to lure prospective event planners to the territory.

Selling the virtues of the Northern Territory will be done via visits to key venues as well as sampling some unique cultural activities.

The famil will also provide opportunities for planners to taste some local cuisine & chat with industry partners.

Last year saw several successful famil programs implemented.

See **cover** for more details.

Gold Coast scores retail summit

THE Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre is set to host Retail Global from 23-25 May, an industry event that brings together hundreds of local and global retail experts.

More than 60 exhibitors will be present, with the recent launch of Amazon in Australia expected to be a major talking point.

Now in its 12th year, Retail Global was founded by successful eBay entrepreneur Phil Leahy.





MEL ZOOMS ON TECH

HOT on the heels of landing VidCon last week (**BEN** 28 Feb), the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) has secured the Annual Magnify World Expo and Business Summit, the flagship event of the Victorian Government Digital Innovation Festival.

Taking place 24-25 Aug, Magnify World Expo brings together entrepreneurs in the augmented and virtual reality space and is considered the premier event of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region.

"MCB recognised that this event would fit within the digital innovation strategy for the Victorian State Government, and intentionally pursued this



event, showcasing the value business events deliver across a range of industries," said Melbourne Convention Bureau chief executive Karen Bolinger.

The VR conference is expected to deliver more than 700 delegates to Melbourne and generate in excess of \$2 million for the Victorian economy.

To register your interest in attending - **CLICK HERE**.

Apps open for GC Biz event

APPLICATIONS are now open for the upcoming This is Gold Coast Business Exchange event to be held 31 May to 02 Jun on the Gold Coast.

The three-day program will be hosted across a range of venues and will aim to heighten the Qld city's appeal as a great destination to hold a conference/business event.

Highlights this year will include a welcome party at the street market Miami Marketta & breakfast at the city's newly built Mantra at Sharks Event Centre.



WITH the hotel industry warming to the notion of robotics in order to reduce costs, the business events sector may well be the next cab off the rank to embrace the exciting new technology.

The possibilities are endless, one day you might have a robotic MasterChef whipping up your event's menu in less than a few minutes, or perhaps a mechanoid lighting enthusiast who could throw down some serious lasers?

It's all food for thought... well robots don't even need food so you would save time & money there too! Genius!

GENerating Change

conference
FOCUS
bringing events into focus

Director of Conference Focus, Max Turpin is sharing his insights on a range of topics with a regular column in **BEN**. Topics include new generation events and making events effective and valuable.

Audience engagement – part 1

FOR someone like me, studying "engagement" can become fascinating. Unfortunately, in event-land, the word has now become so ubiquitous it's bordering on being trite – dull and overused. When that starts to happen, its significance and importance can be overlooked. In the case of "engagement" that would be a big mistake. At least for me it's not so meaningless and clichéd as "taking guests on a journey" which I consider total hogwash. But back to engagement.

When it comes to events and event audiences, what does "engagement" mean? Well, that's the thing; it could mean different things to different people. It could simply mean "being interested". Or it could mean "participating" or "involvement". My basic, fundamental thinking is this: If I'm already interested in something (a subject), you're already well on the way to having me engaged. If you then provide me with content on that subject I find fascinating (something I didn't know, especially something new I could use to my benefit), my interest is peaked. I don't need much encouragement to become engaged. Throw in time and opportunity to discuss the subject with like-minded others – participating, sharing information and experiences and getting to know new people via this

human interaction – and you've got a winning formula. It ticks the top two boxes for why people attend events – learning and networking. It would rate highly and your attendees would be keen to come back for more.

The pitfalls in this instance are delivering information on the subject that is not relevant, already known (not new), not specific enough or there's no time built in for discussion and interaction. People attend, but they sit through a lecture-fest. They're passive, uninvolved and they quickly become disengaged. It's for this reason I place pre-event surveys high on the list of things that should be done in order to nail the content – find out what your attendees already know, what they don't know and what they want to know more about. It's not rocket science, but it's so often overlooked. I've said it before and I'll repeat it now: People go to the internet for information but come to events for wisdom. Don't feed them information they already know or they can easily find on the internet otherwise they'll quickly wonder what the heck they're doing at your event.

Engagement. I'm not even out of first gear yet. So much more to tell you about in future articles. Hope you stay tuned.

If you'd like to learn more about how to make your events fresh, innovative and effective, please contact **Max Turpin** at Conference Focus on 02 9700 7740 or visit the website at conferencefocus.com.au

