



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news plus the latest **BEN** Christmas Venue Guide.

MEA mentor record

RECORD numbers of participants have signed up to Meetings and Events Australia's (MEA's) 2019 mentoring program.

MEA CEO Robyn Johnson confirmed 62 mentors and mentees will take part in this year's Mentor Program, up 10% on the 2018 number. "We are delighted with this growth, as we know from the testimonials received at the end of the last two programs that it is a valuable resource to grow leadership skills in our industry," Johnson said.

The program is being supported by Tourism Australia, for the third successive year.

"I am pleased to hear that it has received such a strong response," Tourism Australia Executive General Manager Events Penny Lion said.

"I see the program as being an opportunity for the industry to cultivate robust relationships as well as nurture young talent to ensure Australia's events industry remains competitive on the world stage."

Throughout the program MEA will monitor the progress of mentees, to provide further support, to ensure they are getting value and using their time and that of their mentor to maximise their experience.

The MEA is taking bookings for the 2020 Mentor Program, which is due to start on 01 Jul, subject to feedback from this year's participants.

GOLDEN RULES FOR BIZ EVENTS

JUDGING the long-term success of business events by counting coffee cups and hotel rooms fails to identify the value of conferences, an international study has revealed.

Research conducted by the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) found traditional measures of success "seriously underestimated and undermined the rich legacies conferences deliver".

"Business events have long been judged under the narrow assumption that their legacies are best measured in terms of hotel rooms and cups of coffee," UTS Director (PostGrad Research), Centre for Business and Social Innovation, Associate Professor Deborah Edwards said.

"Governments, in particular, have largely focused on what is commonly known as the tourism contribution, which ignores the significant scientific and research value on offer – value that directly drives economic development, creativity and innovation. Our research also shows that these benefits have a multiplying effect."



The study, conducted on behalf of the Joint Meetings Industry Council, identified "six golden rules for a highly successful business event", providing specific guidance for organisers to set their legacy objectives and evaluate the success of their events.

The researchers said event organisers follow these golden rules:

1. Involve stakeholders in setting legacy agendas.
2. Coalesce legacy design around industry problems, issues and opportunities, saying it was "important for uniting

stakeholders behind legacy initiatives.

3. Set legacy objectives, as failing to do so "can mean lost opportunities for making a difference".

4. Execute legacy plans, and plan for the evaluation of legacy outcomes.

5. Evaluate legacy outcomes.

6. Disseminate legacy outcomes widely, to ensure governments, communities, industries and universities, as well as event organisers and individual delegates and any stakeholders that have invested in the business event.

GPJ opens Auckland office

EXPERIENTIAL agency George P Johnson is opening its first Trans-Tasman office in Auckland, to service the New Zealand market.

The company has appointed Kiwi, Tomaz Kljakovic (**pictured**), as Country Manager, having previously headed up GPJ's Business Development Team in Australia.

"I'm looking forward to bringing GPJ's global knowledge, experience and network to the brilliant Kiwis and Kiwi brands increasingly being recognised globally,"



he said.

GPJ ANZ Managing Director, Caleb Bush, said the new International Convention Centre in Auckland and list of major international events in NZ were key factors behind the opening of the new office.

Aussie takes DIP

ADELAIDE Convention Bureau Business Development Manager Casey Smith has won the 2019 Destinations International Prize (DIP).

Smith has been named as one of three Aussies on Destinations International's 30 under 30 program, which will be held at the organisation's annual convention in St Louis, Missouri 22-25 Jul.

Renee McMahan (Melbourne Convention Bureau) and Melissa Trost (Destinations Gold Coast) will also attend.



PCB appoints Martin as new CEO

PERTH Convention Bureau (PCB) has appointed Gareth Martin (pictured) as its new CEO.

Martin has worked with the PCB and its membership for 12 years, most recently as Acting CEO following Paul Beeson's departure in Feb.

His appointment follows an international recruitment search, with Chairman, Kevin Skipworth, saying the board welcomed the appointment, and was excited about working with Martin towards a renewed long-term strategic plan to transform the Bureau into 2020 and beyond.

"Martin has promoted a positive shift within the organisation towards increased collaboration and new strategic



initiatives while continuing the successful operations of the PCB," he said.

"I am confident we have the leadership to take the Bureau forward to achieve great success in attracting increased business events to Western Australia."

Pres Cup Update

THE "Presidents Cupdate" offers information and insight as anticipation builds for the event's return to Melbourne, contested at The Royal Melbourne Golf Club on 9-15 Dec.

Last week, the US Open crowned its 2019 champion, with Gary Woodland lining up a potential Presidents Cup debut in his three-stroke victory over 2018 champion Brooks Koepka.

Woodland jumps from 12th to seventh in the US team's standings, with less than two months until automatic qualification for the top eight is confirmed.

Americans have won three of three majors in 2019.



TEXANS are being urged to suppress their natural instincts this Nov and be "polite, courteous and maybe even a little affable", towards "flat Earthers".

With the Flat Earth International Conference (USA) 2019, to be held in Dallas, one local paper has encouraged its readers to brace themselves for an influx of people so convinced that the planet we reside on is as flat as a pancake.

The paper warned rational arguments were unlikely to sway proponents of the disc-shaped Earth theory, so they should not waste their time.

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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.

Are we witnessing the demise of the PCO?

EARLIER this month I attended a presentation by a major (and seemingly ever-expanding) supplier of event management software. The majority of attendees were, so far as I could determine, corporate employees. I listened attentively to a very slick presenter who managed to fast-forward over much of the presentation. He also managed to avoid answering questions about whether the company derived commission from the hotels and other suppliers it recommended. The impression given was that hotels in particular love this software because it makes life easier and brings them much needed additional business. And yet when I have discussed the same software with hotel sales people I get a very different impression. Not about the additional business - they're hardly going to protest about that - but the sheer volume of work that's necessary and the lack of personal participation.

The digital age has eliminated many tasks and reduced the effort required for many others. There's nothing wrong with that. But the business events industry has depended in many instances on experience and personal expertise which are very hard to build into an app and which depend, in many cases, on personal relationships. It seems that software developers are determined to replace event

management skills with the press of a computer key; reducing event management professionals to little more than 'box-tickers'. And, of course, given this option many clients are taking it up.

There are significant differences between association and corporate events but nevertheless the knowledge acquired by individual PCOs/Event Managers in the course of their professional careers is invaluable and cannot simply be replicated by software. When asked to organise a conference or an incentive travel reward my company draws on many years' experience and relationships formed with DMCs, hotels and hotel groups. We know how much negotiation is required to obtain the best rates and how much added value we can persuade suppliers to build in. Those suppliers we work with know our expectations and that we are striving for the best value, not merely the lowest price. Yes, we use software to make our lives easier, to reduce costs to our clients, for budgets, communications and surveys but we control negotiations with suppliers.

Software that reduces personal involvement by eliminating valued relationships is not helpful to the business events industries - or its clients.

Peter Gray is an independent, Accredited Incentive Practitioner and motivation consultant. He can be contacted at peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net



CHRISTMAS VENUE GUIDE



business events news
presents

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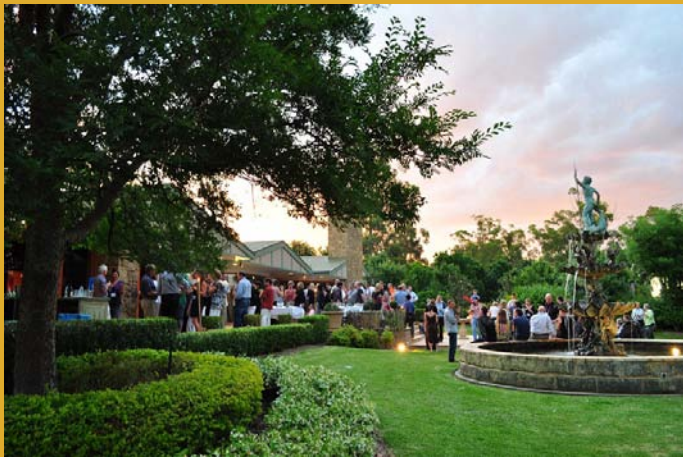
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