



SUNNY COAST A HIT WITH DELEGATES

AN INCREASING number of domestic and international tourists, including business delegates, have been seeking out the summery climate and beautiful beaches of Queensland's Sunshine Coast, research by Tourism Australia has revealed.

The latest National Visitor Survey (NVS) reflected a 14.8% increase in the number of domestic tourists visiting the Sunshine Coast, reaching 3.97 million for the year Sep 2018 to Sep 2019.

National visitor nights rose by a record 17.4% to hit 14.2 million, while overnight domestic visitor expenditure also broke records, up 12.7% to \$2.6 billion.

Visit Sunshine Coast (VSC) attributed the year's record-breaking figures to the opening of the Sunshine Coast Convention Centre (**BEN** 28 May 2019) and the "increased and enhanced" airline services introduced between Sydney and Sunshine Coast Airport.



VSC CEO Simon Latchford said the increased capacity has "helped considerably to attract more corporate and conference travellers", with business travel up 34.6% for the year - a trend he believes will continue once the new runway opens at Sunshine Coast Airport in May.

Meanwhile, the International Visitor Survey shows that tourists from around the globe are also splashing more cash in the Sunshine Coast, with international overnight

visitor expenditure up 14% to \$284.3 million, overtaking the national average international expenditure growth rate of 5%.

New Zealand upheld its status as the region's best-performing market, while North America rose 11.7%, with the expansion of Air New Zealand services making access to the Sunshine Coast from North America "even more convenient".

Pictured: It's all sun and smiles for this Asian trade group on their Sunshine Coast famil.

Today's issue of **BEN**

Business Events News today has two pages of news.

AACB assists

THE Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) is available to assist event organisers with queries in relation to the impact of the bushfires on business events destinations.

AACB CEO Andrew Hiebl said convention bureaux across the country are "best placed to provide up-to-date business events information given they are on the ground in each state and territory with direct connection to industry operators in their respective regions".

"Almost all Australian destinations are safe to meet in and visit," AACB emphasised, also endorsing Tourism Australia's **BUSHFIRE INFORMATION** page as an accurate online resource.

EEAA appoints

THE Exhibition & Event Association of Australasia (EEAA) has appointed Claudia Sagripanti as its new Chief Executive.

Sagripanti will commence her new role on 17 Feb, having most recently worked with Optus as its Business Program Manager, where she worked on "digital transformation" and new technology pilot projects, in addition to developing project management value creation frameworks.

Previous EEAA Chief Executive Officer Joyce DiMascio stepped down 27 Dec (**BEN** 12 Nov 2019).

Vic initiative

BUSINESS Events Victoria (BEV) has applauded the State Govt for announcing the launch of a program that will see more than 115 major organisations hold multi-day stays in bushfire-affected areas.

"BEV is well placed to assist businesses looking to support this program...we have the right contacts in the regions and can connect businesses to the venues that best suit their event needs," said BEV Executive Officer Chris Porter.

"We encourage all organisations, associations, not for profits, sporting and community groups to make a pledge and take their next event into Victoria."

For more info, **CLICK HERE**.

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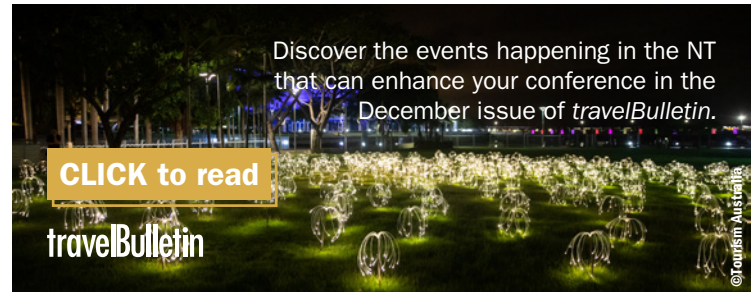
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NEW NAME IN EVENTS



AUSTRALIAN companies Miles Per Hour and Event Workforce Group, both established identities in the industry, have merged under the name Spark Event Group, which claims to provide an “end-to-end solution for event management, logistics and workforce”.

The two companies had already been collaborating on a number of big events, including Australian Formula One Grand

Prix and the Australian Open. “It makes great sense to combine the experience and know-how of two proven high performers in an industry which is ever changing and evolving,” said Event Workforce Group co-founder Shannan Gove.

Pictured: Event Workforce Group co-founders Shannon Gove and Bennett Merriman; and Miles Per Hour Managing Director Geordie Miles (middle).



HYATT Hotels has teamed up with Headspace to offer its employees and customers around the globe mindfulness exercises, guided meditations and sleep content.

Event planners will be able to add Headspace content and meditation experiences to meetings packages in the coming months, while all guests will get free access to Headspace via in-room content, including short meditations and soothing sounds to assist with sleep.

Global help

OUTBOUND industry tradeshow Get Global is offering bureaux or local council representatives affected by the recent bushfires the chance to have a presence on its show floor at Get Global 2020.

The company has five spots up for grabs, providing access to leading event and conference organisers, and the opportunity to assure the MICE buyer community that your region is open for business.

To apply, send an email to admin@getglobal.com.au.

VSC appoints

VISIT Sunshine Coast (VSC) has welcomed destination tourism specialist Jo Prothero as its new Head of Marketing.

Prothero was most recently Director of Marketing & Communications at Falls Creek Resort in Victoria, the state’s largest alpine resort, and has a proven track record of developing new products, including events and nature-based experiences.

“The Sunshine Coast has just recorded international and domestic visitor numbers, and we will be looking to Jo to enhance our relationships with key industry stakeholders to ensure the region continues to grow market share,” said VSC CEO Simon Latchford.

Phuket for OZ

A NUMBER of resorts on Mai Khao Beach in Phuket have come together to celebrate all things Australian, in what will be a week-long festival of special events.

SALA Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort will co-host a series of Australian-themed dinners, networking events and festivities to promote Australian food and beverage products and services.

The week will conclude on 26 Jan with an Australia Day BBQ at the M Beach Club, complete with live entertainment, sports, games and activities for the kids, plus a prize auction to support the bushfire relief.

MICE SHOW ASIA 2020

REGISTRATIONS are now open for MICE Show Asia 2020, with an earlybird special allowing exhibitors to save 5% on listed prices when they register their interest before 31 Mar, while buyer registration will open at a later date.

The event will be hosted at Sands Expo & Convention Centre in Marina Bay Sands, Singapore on 21-23 Oct, and will attract industry suppliers, meetings & events professionals and “up-and-coming MICE innovators”.

An on-stage series of MICE Destination Talks will identify and showcase “some of the



most interesting and promising destinations” across all of Asia, Oceania, Europe, America and Africa that are set to emerge as MICE options in coming years.

CLICK HERE to register as an exhibitor and **HERE** to view the event program.

Pictured: Speakers on-stage at the inaugural 2019 Mice Show Asia.