



PERTH RECEIVES MAJOR FUNDING BOOST

BUSINESS Events Perth has been granted a \$250,000 funding boost from the Western Australian Government to help the state's events industry navigate the predicted downturn created by COVID-19.

The industry body's Chief Executive Officer Gareth Martin said he anticipates that events in Western Australia will be "impacted" by the ructions caused by the virus, as delegates continue to face tougher travel restrictions in a bid to contain the health emergency.

"We will continue to work with Business Events Australia and the Western Australian Government to monitor the impact of COVID-19 for business events locally," he said.

"Business Events Perth is working on strategies to help mitigate the impacts to local businesses," Martin added.



One of these strategies include a new dedicated webpage relating to the risks posed by COVID-19 in WA, including what travel restrictions are currently in place, and information on the virus itself and what symptoms and actions to be aware of.

MEANWHILE, in more positive news, the state has recently secured the hosting rights to Asia Pacific's largest agri-food conference, evokeAG, scheduled to take place in Perth in 2021.

The industry body has also

bolstered its executive team recently, with Narelle Cant coming on board as Director Strategy & Corporate Relations and Vivienne Ryan joining in the role of Director Corporate Communications.

Access Business Events Perth's dedicated COVID-19 site [HERE](#).

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news.

Resilience talk

THE Exhibition & Event Association of Australasia is hosting a Young Stars meet-up, where resilience amid current industry challenges will be on the agenda.

The meet-up will be held on 19 Mar in Melbourne at Harry the hirer Productions Showroom - register [HERE](#).

ITB Berlin cut

ITB Berlin 2020 has been cancelled due to coronavirus.

Known as the largest travel and tourism event in the world, the German Federal Ministry of Health cancelled it, with the health authority of Charlotteburg-Wilmersdorf in Berlin imposing tighter restrictions.

New EventsAIR

EVENTSAIR has launched its latest event management platform, 6thGen, which claims to offer a "highly secure, fast and mobile cloud-based system" which houses "all the tools an event planner needs".

Features include a range of pre-defined templates to create event sites, a registration form builder, over 100 set reports plus custom report designer and more.

Hawaii MICE

HAWAI'I Tourism Oceania will host a MICE roadshow in Auckland, Melbourne and Sydney from 23-26 Mar, giving Australian and New Zealand professional conference organisers the chance to network with the island's visitor bureaux as well as hotels and activity providers.

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JERRY'S PARADISE



JERRY Schwartz's newest purchase, Paradise Resort Gold Coast, was complete on the weekend, with the eclectic billionaire pledging \$12 million on an upgrade to the facility.

The Sat night ceremony was attended by a range of delegates, including Queensland Minister for Tourism Industry Development Kate Jones who

declined the invitation for a "ceremonial, fully-clothed jump in the pool," from Schwartz - who was reportedly happy to go it alone.

The property initially launched as the Mercure Resort Surfers Paradise over two decades ago, and having long been threatened with demolition, is now saved, thanks to Schwartz's intervention.

Schwartz Family Co Sustainability & Project Coordinator Paul Briggs will be speaking at *Business Events News'* sister publication *Travel Daily's* Sustainability Summit next month - **CLICK HERE** to purchase tickets.

Pictured, Schwartz encourages Jones to have a dunk following the ribbon-cutting; not pictured: a very wet Jerry Schwartz.

Cologne growth

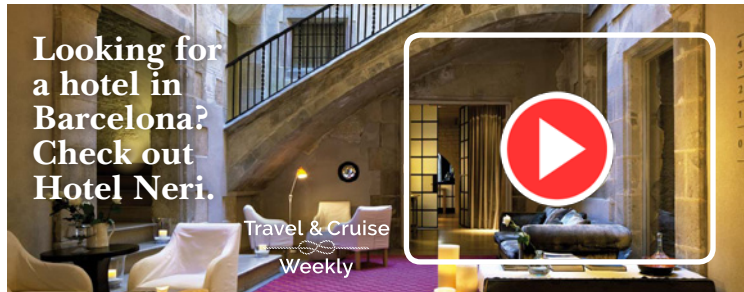
THE city of Cologne in Germany has seen a significant jump in its meetings market, bringing in more than 4.44 million visitors (up 2.2%) from 53,397 events last year.



THE ghosts of Coolgardie, WA, will be brought out of their hidey-holes for two nights in Mar, when self-proclaimed ghost whisperer Anthony Grzelka arrives to lead two haunted tours.

Occurring on 13 and 14 Mar, Grzelka will lead travellers around the gold rush town, and into supposedly haunted buildings, such as the Wadren Court, the Post Office Building and the old jail yard.

Departures will be limited to just 20 people, with six able to stay on for a seance after the tour.
BOO!



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.

What price 'influence'?

IT HAS long been recognised by marketers around the globe that 'word of mouth' is the most influential in promoting almost anything. A friend or relation recommending a shop, a product, or service has a great impact on the buying decision. And its almost risk-free; you're hardly likely to sue a friend or relative if a product fails to perform as expected.

Nowadays, the Internet and the Web have seen the rise of the 'influencer' - a person whose web presence is derived from their popularity in recommending products or services many of which they have neither experienced for themselves nor about which they are qualified to comment. The difference between these people and your cousin, aunt or next door neighbour is that they are paid for their recommendation, usually on the size of the audience they attract.

Not so long ago an industry magazine reported that an Australia influencer by the name of Jamie Zhu, "who has 1.1 million followers on Instagram and over 700,000 YouTube subscribers" persuaded an airline to give him an upgrade by pretending he had a broken ankle and could not fit into any economy-class seat. But not content with that he then boasted about it to his followers

by posting a video on YouTube. This brings into serious question the ethics of this so-called 'influencer'.

Perhaps we should be asking whether the event management software companies which offer hotel reservations at a range of hotels around the world, have actually experienced the properties they are promoting and whether they are being paid a commission, or other consideration for their recommendation. The answer is almost certainly that they are but they refuse to reveal it.

This puts PCOs and Incentive Practitioners in an invidious position? Hidden commissions are illegal in Australia unless you're in one of a few restricted professions. When my company puts together a proposal for a client, it is obliged to reveal any commissions it's being paid by any of the suppliers involved. As these companies are part of that supply chain they, too, should reveal whether they are being paid a commission and how much it is. However, my company and probably most Incentive Practitioners and PCOs these days, work on a fee-for-service basis which uses nett prices and shows our costs and profit margin separately. Very clear and very ethical.

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

