



Places in the heart

CIRCULAR

Quay Wharf is a major gateway into Sydney but

more recently it's where many exhibition delegates leave to make their way over to the Glebe Island Exhibition Centre.

The wharf is at the heart of Sydney's ferry network where more than 170,000 passengers pass through the area every week.

Now 14 years on since the Sydney Olympics when Circular Quay last had a makeover, the NSW Government is spending \$3m to give it a spruce up.

The new funding will give the ferry wharves new seating, a fresh lick of paint, improved lighting, cleaning and other upgrades with work expected to be completed by September, Transport minister Gladys Berejiklian has said.

Work is expected to be done outside of peak hour to minimise disruption.

Meanwhile, two new lifts are being installed in Circular Quay train station and are due to be finished by the end of the year.

Bring it on! *Jill*



Vic program sees 200 leads

THE Regional Victoria Business Events Program has seen more than 200 lead referrals for regional business events over the past 12 months, according to the office of the Premier of Victoria.

These had delivered nearly 28,500 delegate days and more than 15,000 delegate nights, it said.

Victorian Minister for Tourism and Major Events Louise Asher launched the 2014-15 edition of the Regional Victoria Planner's Guide yesterday, calling it an "invaluable resource" for anyone looking to stage a business event.

Business Events Victoria chair Andrew Hiebl said there was a 45% increase in advertisers compared with the previous edition which reflected an increased confidence in the organisation and its direction.

"The board of Business Events Victoria has spent much of the last 12 months focused

on fundamental reform of the association and restructure of cooperative opportunities, therefore reducing the cost barriers of participation.

"It is these changes that have made the guide more attractive to operators."

Asher said business events generated \$1.2b in economic activity and more than 22,000 jobs each year for the state, representing a "significant yielding sector" of the tourism industry.

The state allocated \$1.2m over four years to the program and business events secured for the state over the next few months included Australian College of Midwives Association (Gippsland Branch) Conference in Traralgon, set to see 300 delegate days and more than \$100,000 for the local economy.

For more information about the guide, [CLICK HERE](#).

A Grand occasion



WHEN The Menzies Hotel opened on 17 Oct 1963, it was the first international hotel built in the city since WWII.

Back then, the second floor ballroom was selected as the location for the 1964 Beach Boys press conference, but on Wednesday evening, the Grand Ballroom doors were flung open after having undergone a six week refurbishment.

Two hundred guests enjoyed a sumptuous selection of charcuterie and create-your-own cheesecake from pop-up food stations, prepared by executive chef James Knight and his team.

The guests sipped delicious cocktails while event partner Morton Hire showcased an array of their best table set-ups, including a circular pop-up bar.

An ecstatic Vickie Scobie of Conferences in Style (pictured left) won the much-coveted Louis Vuitton handbag prize, saying afterwards, "I never win a thing, I thought I was going to cry.

"I must say I am still on cloud nine," she told **BEN** the following day.

Pictured from left is Scobie, Grace Ng, Powell Consultants and Sonia Ghandi, Ghandi Creations.

For more pictures from the event, [CLICK HERE](#).

Melb secures conf

THE 11th Asia Pacific Conference on Diabetic Limb Problems will be held in Melbourne at Monash University's Parkville Campus.

The conference would be held from 14 to 15 Nov and was expected to see about 200 to 250 delegates, a spokesperson for Monash University said.

ADVERTISING SALES EXECUTIVE Sydney-based

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Mackay conference

THE Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre is set to host the TEQ Regional Events Conference which will see more than 200 Queensland event organisers attend from 07 to 09 Nov.

Acting Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games Tracy Davis said events played an important role in driving visitation to Queensland's regional areas, delivering significant economic and social benefits to the local community.

The conference gave the opportunity for event organisers, local councils and tourism operators to develop event management skills, she said.



GENERating Change

Director of Conference Focus, Max Turpin is sharing his insights on a range of topics with a regular column in *BEN*.

Topics will include new generation events and making events effective and valuable.



Events Need Innovation Part 2

THIS is Part 2 in a series of articles where I'd like to share my personal thoughts on why it's hard to change the meetings industry and why I feel so many events are stale and lack innovation. To read Part 1, **CLICK HERE**.

People are risk averse. Closely related to my point about people fearing change, many people also avoid risk. There's comfort and security in the past. Anything new or innovative might be considered risky. By contrast, there's no risk or surprises if you simply repeat what's been done before. Especially if everything appears fine and no-one's complaining, it's easy to revert to the concept: 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it'. What that really means: Things are okay so why risk a change?

There's no push or demand for change. If no-one complains and there's no demand for change, things will simply stay the same. The problem with this is that everything else is evolving and everyone attending your events is changing, but your events aren't. They're likely stuck in the past. And when your events remain pretty much the same year after year, they become predictable and increasingly boring. Just because everything seems fine doesn't mean there's no need for innovation or room for improvement.

Poorly designed event surveys fool you. Many post-event surveys are designed as 'happy sheets'. They ask delegates if they enjoyed the venue, the accommodation, the food, the team-building activity, the gala dinner and entertainment. Well, why wouldn't they? You've taken them away from their desks

and everyday work for a day or more and delivered them to a new environment. You've accommodated them, motivated them, entertained them and served them lovely food. They've had a great time socialising with work colleagues, old and new. Why would anyone complain about that?! And so the feedback suggests your events are a great success. The smiling faces prove it. Problem is, you're probably not asking the right questions in the right way so you assume everything's great. And if everything seems fine, it must be, right?

People are time poor. Regardless of whether event planning is a full-time job or an occasional task, everyone's time poor. Whether affected by workload, juggling other tasks, short lead times or operating with inefficient technology, once again it's simply easier and more time-efficient to copy. Especially when looking beyond logistics and execution to innovate and add value to events is not expected of you, there's no thinking about it, let alone time to think about how.

More to come in the next article on why innovation is hard to find in the meeting and events industry.

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.

New Brisbane M&E space



A NEW conference centre has been announced for Brisbane as part of two new hotels for the airport, set to open on 01 Nov 16.

Accor announced a new 130 room Pullman and 243 room ibis hotel at Brisbane Airport's Domestic Terminal precinct.

The hotels will share the new Brisbane Airport Conference and Meeting Centre, catering for up to 600 with 735 sqm.

The Centre will include a 300 seat pillarless ballroom, eight medium to large conference rooms and four boardrooms.

Novotel Brisbane Airport gm Alex Penklis said the new centre was being built to accommodate business turned away both due to a lack of availability and to the size of the hotel's current facilities.

"We believe the new facility will address the small to medium market 50 to 200, as well as small trade fairs and exhibitions."

Accor sales, distribution and

ICC interest increase

AEG Ogden has said levels of enquiry about the International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney) were increasing, prompting the company to expand its team.

ICC Sydney ceo Geoff Donaghy said securing Sibos for 2018 had provided a "further boost" to the enquiries already being received.

AEG Ogden is looking for a human resources director and senior business development managers.

loyalty vice president Henrik Berglin said Brisbane was a "serious conference contender," and conference and business events were now more than ever a serious focus for the city.

He said Accor had been "extremely successful" in creating and driving conference business to the city, especially under the Pullman brand and particularly over the past 12 months.

The development was owned by the Flynn Property Group and Scott Flynn Properties, Accor said.

Construction would start on 01 Feb next year, it said.



TALK about catching your attention!

BEN's written a bit about the power of conventions before, particularly the block buster pop culture conventions which see hundreds of thousands of attendees.

And we all know that conferences and meetings sometimes try to shake up or wake up delegates with a variety of methods, be it five minute yoga breaks or introductions made solely through a smiley face written on your index finger (yes, this has happened).

But maybe they should take a leaf out of Comic Con 2013's book, where attendees were driven to near-hysteria when a surprise guest speaker interrupted a panel session for the movie Avengers.

Tom Hiddleston, who plays the mischievous (and just generally evil) Loki in the Thor movies, certainly upped engagement judging by the screams and the man who screamed, "My wife loves you!" - **CLICK HERE** for his appearance.

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