



Bombed!

FOLLOWING the MEA NSW Christmas Party on Wednesday night, I overnighted at the host hotel, the brand new Intercontinental Sydney Double Bay, more of which will be covered in Monday's **BEN**.

Throughout my stay, I kept running into people who I either knew or vaguely recognised.

One woman in the lift saw my AIME trolley bag and remarked that she had one too.

I thought perhaps she was going to the MEA function, but no.

Then in the morning on my way to breakfast, it was more of the same.

It turns out they were attending the 'Winning in MICE' 2014 IHG Australasia MICE Workshop.

Checking with the conference team as to when they would be breaking for morning tea, I photo-bombed some of the delegates, including Paul Rushton, Dee Prendergast and Jennifer Dwyer Slee.

Too good an opportunity to miss. Jill



DCC posts \$33m in events

THE Darwin Convention Centre (DCC) said it has had its second highest season in six years in terms of delegate spend and numbers, with 9,000 delegates attending 24 conferences between July and November, generating \$33m in economic impact for Darwin and the NT.



The highest season was 2011-12, DCC gm Janet Hamilton said, an "extraordinary" year with economic impact of \$64m.

She said the Centre's strong performance this year was achieved through consistent delivery of products and services, as well as a collaborative approach to meeting client objectives.

The Centre had "solid bookings" through to 2018 and was focusing on activities in line with the government's development of Northern Australia, Hamilton said.

Events held at the Centre this year included the Australian-Japan Joint Business Conference and the Northern Australian Defence Summit.

ACC West handover

THE handover of the Adelaide Convention Centre's (ACC) new West Building took place this week.

The first stage of the multimillion dollar expansion, the phased handover would continue into the first two months of next year, when ACC would take possession of the central and southern parts of the West Building, ACC said.

Handover included the Panorama ballroom, with capacity for 600, as well as the Riverbank meeting rooms, ACC said, with an official launch in March.

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New Shanghai venues

AT A presentation for the business events sector on Wednesday, the Shanghai Municipal Tourism Organisation outlined three business events venues set to open next year.

The largest single block building and exhibition complex in the world, the National Exhibition and Convention Centre Shanghai, is slated to open in March.

The Centre would have 40,000 sqm indoor space and include the Grand Mercure Hotel, the Organisation said.

The Shanghai Tower, slated to open in mid-2015, would feature the J-Hotel on levels 84 to 110, while Shanghai Disney Resort in Pudong would see two themed hotels with more than 1,200 rooms, set to open in November.



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Crowne for CHC

INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels Group (IHG) has signed a management agreement to develop the new Crowne Plaza Christchurch.

Situated across from the Christchurch Convention Centre, the 200-room hotel would include a business centre and function space, IHG said.

The move follows the demolition of the earthquake-damaged Crowne Plaza in 2012.

Development would start next year, IHG said.





business events news

5th December 2014



EVEN the torrential rain on Wednesday couldn't stop the world of events, although it may have put a damper (oh ho!) on a few people's night.

At one event, **BEN** arrived looking much like a drowned rat and proceeded to the bathrooms to make sneaky use of the hand dryer, only to be joined soon afterwards by another drenched guest, who placed the front of her dress carefully inside the Airblade for an emergency drying session.

However, she managed it much more gracefully than Mr Bean's infamous attempt, now all over YouTube as a more impolite version of 'Mr Bean Makes Love to a Hand Dryer'...**CLICK HERE**.

In terms of practicality and beauty, you could take a leaf out of Jill's book when, at a similarly-thunderous Four Seasons event years ago, she saved her shoes and attended the event dinner in daisy covered gumboots.



DMS Workshops

THE 2015 DMS Workshops, to coincide with AIME 2015, will kick off in Sydney at Doltone House Hyde Park on 20 Feb and at Crown Towers in Melbourne on 23 Feb.

The workshops allowed for industry partners to get acquainted with more than 20 DMCs, DMS said.

Based on industry feedback, pre-scheduled appointment sessions are now in place.

CLICK HERE for more.

Relighting the light



COCKTAILS and canapés from Chifley's Bar & Grill marked the reopening of the Hotel Kurrajong Canberra at Sydney's Button Bar on Tuesday, hosted by TV personality Tracy Spicer.

The 147-room hotel with five function rooms for up to 160 people officially opens on 16 Dec.

A joint venture between TFE Hotels and the National Road and Motorists' Association (NRMA), TFE Hotels group director of marketing Emma Fraser delivered a message from ceo Rachel Argaman and NRMA ceo Tony Stuart.

"The history behind the famed Hotel Kurrajong Canberra marries well with NRMA's proud history and together NRMA and TFE Hotels will deliver a unique hotel experience."

Fraser tied this theme in with a famous 1949 Ben Chifley speech.

Chifley coincidentally made the Hotel Kurrajong his home during his tenure as Prime Minister, and in the speech, talking about Labour movement bringing better standards of living to the people, he spoke about the light on the hill having been relit.

Fraser said the companies recognised that the hotel was a part of the fabric of Canberra and a fixture in political history.

"The light on the hill has been relit."

Pictured from left is Fraser, Robert McKenna, gm Hotel Kurrajong Canberra, and Spicer.

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.



2005 called. If you're doing nothing new, they want their events back!

AS ANOTHER year draws to a close, now is a good time to reflect on the events you held this year and the ones you may be already planning next year. Here are a few things to consider:

• Meeting Architecture & Design

Did you use last year's program and agenda as a template to plan this year's event? Therefore, it could well be a copy of a copy of a copy from several years ago? In other words, you're not creating a fresh new event, you're copying past events.

• Event Technology

Are you still using email and Excel spreadsheets to gather and collate data and other 'old-school' manual systems and processes to manage your events? And what new event tech are you integrating into your meetings and conferences to add value to them and enhance the experience for your participants?

• Content Creation & Delivery

Is all your event content developed by senior management? Are any topics or content created by your participants? Who delivers the content and how? What new methods are they using to deliver content? How much time do you spend briefing and mentoring your speakers? How much interaction is there in your event sessions?

• Engagement & Learning

Do you take the view that as long as content is being broadcast from the front of the room, everyone's fully engaged and listening intently? Providing everyone has a pen and a notepad, they

are diligently taking notes and learning?

• Younger Attendees

Have you noticed your attendees and delegates are getting younger? Are you aware they think and learn differently to Baby Boomers and Gen Xers? Have you considered what this means to your events and how to fully engage them?

The world is changing rapidly. Events should be too. If you're not doing anything new, the events you're producing today are probably identical to the events you held a decade ago.

"We've always done it that way" is a phrase that should be banned in all organisations, including event planning sessions! Starting next year, make positive changes to your events to optimise their value and return on investment. Design them with specific objectives in mind. Create them fresh, don't copy. If you do this, your events will be much better, your participants will experience something new (not last year's event dressed up in new colours) and we'll let 2005 know you're moving on!

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.



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Postal address: PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710 Australia

Street address: 4/41 Rawson St, Epping NSW 2121 Australia

P: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760) **F:** 1300 799 221 (+61 2 8007 6769)

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Publisher: Bruce Piper

Editor: Jill Varley info@businesseventsnews.com.au

Deputy Editor: Alex Walls

Advertising and Marketing: Sean Harrigan and Katrina Ford advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au

Business Manager: Jenny Piper accounts@businesseventsnews.com.au

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