



Best in show

FOLLOWING

on the heels of the Best Conference Hotels (**BEN** 10 Dec) we bring you the World's Best Conference Centres from World Luxury Tourism.



Numbered among the best is the Adelaide Convention Centre.

The criteria for being chosen included having the right facilities and standards for event success and state-of-the-art facilities through to planning for the space and catering.

In no particular order, featured centres included the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida with its West and the North/South Buildings, 2.1 million sq ft of exhibition space and the bonus of being in close proximity to six theme parks.



Adelaide Convention Centre (pictured) was featured for its location in what is described as the '20-minute city', its ease of access and travel, affordable and flexible multi-purpose convention, exhibition and banquet facilities and for its atrium that links exhibition and plenary halls, conference and banquet areas.

The Vancouver Convention Centre was on the list for its excellent services, technical capabilities and high quality banqueting.

Its East and West buildings, with 466,500 sq ft of meeting, exhibition, ballroom and plenary theatre space, its six-acre 'living roof' and a marine habitat built into the building's foundation, also helped its appearance on the list.

Jill

Events drive Welly nights up

A **BROAD** event program has driven a 7.85% increase in hotel rooms sold in Wellington over the last three months, compared with the same period the year prior, Positively Wellington Tourism (PWT) has said.

Events including the All Blacks versus South Africa test and the World of WearableArt Awards had helped drive the rise, PWT ceo David Perks said, with total rooms sold in August up slightly and weekend rooms down 1.7%.

For August to hold its own compared with the Bledisloe Cup test night occupancy in 2013 was an "exceptional result", helped by conference activity and events, Perks said.



Credit: Sylvie Myers

"By focusing on a year-long approach to events, the city is supporting the economic sustainability of businesses and is a huge part of why we have such a vibrant hospitality sector."

Hotel rooms sold were measured using PWT's Hotel Monitor.

The government's latest Commercial Accommodation Monitor data saw guest nights in Wellington for the year to October up to 2.43m from 2.42m in 2013, with a rise in the month of October to 225,132 from 209,402 in October 2013.

AIME's new farewell dinner

AIME has announced an addition to its social program for next year, adding a farewell dinner on 25 Feb, the last night of the exhibition.

The dinner would be a finale to reunite business event professionals for "the most exciting night" of AIME, the organisation said.

The venue is to be confirmed, with tickets costing \$165 per person.

Elizabeth Quay to open in 12 months

THE Elizabeth Quay development in Perth (**BEN** 19 Sep) is on track to be ready for use by spring 2015, with the capacity to host events for up to 15,000 people.

Its public spaces amounted to 2.7 ha, the office of the WA Minister for Planning, Culture and the Arts John Day said.



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New five star Crown in Melbourne

CROWN Resorts Limited has confirmed a \$50m investment in land opposite the Crown Melbourne Integrated Resort and is negotiating joint venture arrangements with the Schiavello Group to construct a new five star hotel and apartment complex.

The Crown Melbourne would remain its flagship resort, the company said.

Designs were being finalised but it had been agreed in principle that Crown had the right to acquire and manage a hotel on completion of construction, it said.

CLICK HERE to read more.

AACB presents to ACTE



ASSOCIATION of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) executive director Andrew Hiebl presented at the Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) conference this week on the value of business events.

As part of a panel including Starwood Pacific sales and marketing regional director Daniella Tonetto, Hiebl said the recent Deloitte Access Economics report (**BEN** 21 Nov) had allowed the AACB to give an update on the value of business events to the Australian economy.

"This is an exciting time and the future for business events in Australia is very bright."

Pictured from left is Incentive, Conference and Event Society Asia Pacific president Nigel Gaunt; Tonetto; Hiebl and Oracle Global Meeting Services JAPAC senior manager Aileen London.



business events news

12th December 2014



EVER purchased your morning coffee at a conference or convention using bitcoin? Know what bitcoin is?

Best get to stepping when it comes to digital currency knowledge then, considering the news that George R. Brown Convention Centre in Houston has introduced its very own bitcoin ATM, in a bid to attract more conventions to its halls.

The software-based digital currency is a curious phenomenon, sweeping the world since its introduction in 2008 and incurring warnings about its consumer protections.

The *Houston Chronicle* reports the new ATM allows users to convert cash to bitcoins and vice versa, and ceo of the company it belongs to, Sheldon Weisfeld, believes the machine will attract business, given the bitcoin community's loyalty and population size.

Just don't assume it's magic money when you're trying to buy your bagel, à la Cracked's informative video **HERE**.

Marriott meetings app in 75 more hotels

MARRIOTT International has rolled out its Meeting Services app to 75 more hotels, now available at almost 600.

Properties in Asia Pacific were expected to offer the app in the first quarter of next year, the company said.

Available in 20 languages, meeting planners could manage events through the app, including adjusting room temperature and coffee refills in real-time, it said.

Opera Bar re-opens

THE Opera Bar has reopened with a redesign, menu overhaul and two new concept bars: a raw bar and charcuterie.

A 10 year agreement was signed with Solotel group, including MorSul, to operate the venue (**BEN** 22 Aug), and MorSul co-owner Matt Moran had designed the new menu for the Opera Bar, the company said.

A standalone cafe called 'Cafe at Opera Bar' is set to open in February.

New seaside venue



CROWNE Plaza Coogee Beach has re-designed its beachfront area to create a new dining and drinks venue, Oceans Dining and Drinks (**pictured**).

Featuring a southern Mediterranean menu developed by chef Matthew Duggan and with a focus on sharing, the space takes its name from the 'Oceanic Hotel', which stood on this site until 1927.

The venue, with its Coogee Beach outlook, has a capacity to connect to one of five spaces, suitable for all sorts of events.

These include The Terrace, an outdoor cocktail bar created in collaboration with Havana Rum which offers a mix of level table seating on a sand base, and The Dining Room, separated from the main area by macramé curtains and ideal for smaller groups.

Refreshing Travelodge

The Travelodge brand of hotels is undergoing a brand-wide refresh program.

The rejuvenation will include enhanced guest room design and amenity a new customer booking experience.

The first stage has seen the Travelodge Sydney, Travelodge Southbank and Travelodge Blacktown, already completed.

A second phase is scheduled for completion by mid-2015 and the remaining hotels in the portfolio will undergo a refresh in 2015/16.

Open Space speakers announced

THE Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre has confirmed Rachel Botsman and Chris Riddell will speak at its Open Space event on 26 Feb.

Botsman speaks about the power of collaboration and sharing through digital technologies, while Riddell describes himself as "a recognised technology and digital futurist".

For more information on the event, go to www.openspace.mcec.com.au.



CONFESSIONS OF A COMPULSIVE CONFERENCE-GOER

Andrew Klein, professional MC and presentation skills speaker and director of SPIKE Presentations, presents his front line observations on conferences in a regular feature in **BEN**.

WHILE we look forward to a break, some of us can't help but look back upon the year that was. And I for one love end-of-year "Best Of" lists.

So, here in no particular order, are my Top Five Best Things Experienced at 2014 Conferences:

5. Queenstown: I've conferenced far and wide this year. And while it might be un-Australian to admit it, Queenstown remains my favourite conference destination in the world. Scenery, friendliness, the stunning flight in through the narrow mountain pass, the overall Kiwi-alpine vibe. Can't beat it.

4. Thirty minute presentations: I've noted a wonderful growing trend for shorter conference presentation time slots. A long overdue recognition that most non-professional speakers can't keep an audience engaged for an hour. Hopefully more conferences will hop on board.

3. The sandwich grills at Qantas Frequent Flyer lounges: Yes I'm a man of simple tastes. But nothing beats a "grill your own cheese and tomato sandwich" as you wait for your flight. These grills have found their way to lounges all over the country. OK, those automatic pancake-making machines are pretty cool too.

2. Corporate Social Responsibility: It's been around for a long time, but virtually every conference I attended this year did its bit for charity, often supporting local community groups. And while the financial planning community got a lot of bad press this year, from what I saw at conferences, they went the extra mile with some outstanding and genuinely philanthropic community work.

1. The Sudoku Speaker: I've long considered one of the best things about my job on the conference circuit is getting to hear countless amazing speakers. And while it's hard to single out one this past year, I continue to enjoy hearing Mick Colliss, the laconic Vice-Captain of the first ever Australian Sudoku team. If there's a funnier, more natural, self-deprecating, quintessentially Australian and surprisingly inspiring (in a "just give it a crack" kind of way) speaker on the circuit today, I'm yet to see them. Forty five minutes of listening pleasure.

So, enjoy your breaks. See you at a conference in 2015 or in the grilled cheese line at the airport.

If you are looking for an MC for your next conference or a speaker/trainer on presentation skills or pitching skills, email andrew@lunch.com.au or visit his website at www.andrewklein.com.au.



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