



Going for gold

THE Royal Easter Show is over for another year, drawing a crowd of around 856,000 people.



More than 21,000 tickets were sold via inbound tour operators and airline partners in countries including China, Korea, Malaysia and Japan, a 22% increase on tickets similarly sold via these channels in 2013.

With things getting back to normal at the Park, where business events play an important role in driving its economy, there was a frisson of expectation at the Pullman Sydney Olympic Park's Barcar restaurant with the introduction of their new autumn menu.

The inspiring dishes of scallops, quail and duck, scattered with raspberries and edible flowers and created by the executive chef Gary Howieson and his talented kitchen staff, surely means a One Hat gong is hovering on the horizon! Jill



Barcar's sou chef Benjamin Nicholls & director of comms & PR, Accor's Greater Sydney Hotels, David Lowe.

IBTM nets 1500 appts

IBTM Africa saw almost 1,500 appointments over two days and has been labelled an excellent new event for business development, Reed Travel Exhibitions said.

The table top event saw 45 international hosted buyers meet 45 African and Indian Ocean exhibitors at the Cape Town International Conference Centre and its opening event, the Africa Forum, was attended by more than 100 delegates.

VR launches at Worrina



WIRRINA Resort has been chosen by VR Hotels as its launch point into the Australian market, with a multi-million dollar redevelopment underway.

The New Zealand based hotel chain already operates in the US and NZ, and has spent more than \$1.5m so far on renovating 50 of Worrina's 87 rooms, with further plans for a spa and kids' club.

Phase two is slated for completion by the end of June.

VR Hotels said no further upgrade of the resort's conference facilities was needed, as it had "one of the finest conference facilities in regional South Australia," seating up to 500 delegates theatre style.

The Australian business events market was important to the company, VR Hotels said.

The potential to attract more business events to Worrina was "significant," it said.

"This segment of the market represents an important part of our overall business strategy."

The company said it was investigating a number

of Australian investment opportunities and looked forward to making further announcements once discussions were complete.

NSW's 25 years

NSW tourism operators celebrated the launch of the 2014 NSW Tourism Awards at First Fleet Park this week.

Supported by Destination NSW and hosted by the NSW Business Chamber, the event commemorated the awards program reaching its 25 year mark and a 130% increase in international visitors since its inception, with major increases in tourists from Asia.

NSW Business Chamber ceo Stephen Cartwright encouraged tourism businesses everywhere to get involved in the 2014 awards.

Benefits included the opportunity to benchmark business against colleagues and increased exposure and awareness.

To get involved, [CLICK HERE](#).

Tourism funding cut?

THE Commission of Audit report released yesterday has proposed Government slash funding for Tourism Australia.

The organisation, which includes Business Events Australia, would see its funding halved under the recommendations of the report, which looks at Government efficiencies and actions to keep spending sustainable.

The report said much of the approximately \$185m in funding for tourism was for Tourism Australia, with two thirds of the organisation's budget directed to advertising and promotion.

"While tourism is one of Australia's main exports, most of the benefits of tourism accrue to the tourism operators. There is no clear reason why significant funding should be provided to tourism above other Australian export industries."

FTE four sleeps away

FIJI'S first Fijian Tourism Expo (FTE), which will open in less than a week's time, has welcomed more than 40 international buyers for pre-FTE familiarisations.

MEANWHILE on Denarau, work has begun constructing the 130 exhibition booths in preparation for the event's start.

Letter to the Editor

PETER Gray's column about hotels that charge for WiFi ([BEN](#) 23 Apr) prompted this response from The Conference Business director Laura Richards:

"The internet is as ubiquitous as television and far more useful: complimentary internet is fast becoming a given at almost every turn in our daily lives.

WiFi in hotel guest rooms is not an added luxury - it is part and parcel of the total guest experience, or it most certainly should be."

If you would like to weigh in on other issues, email us at info@businesseventsnews.com.au.



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crumbs!

WHEN New Zealand's biennial Antarctic Festival, IceFest 2014, is held in Christchurch from 26 Sep to 12 Oct, the city will not only undergo an icy transformation, but will also send people on a time travel journey from 50m years in the past to generations into the future.

The festival celebrates the country's and Christchurch's unique relationship with Antarctica and the Southern Ocean and will provide a unique and quirky Antarctic experience, as well as speaker events, exhibitions and interactive kids' activities.

Then at night it will transform with an Antarctic bar and live music.

The 'Antarctica Time Travel Exhibition' will be an immersive and interactive experience highlighting climate change and the important role Antarctica plays in a warming world.

Canterbury Museum will host Ice Lab: 'New Architecture and Science in Antarctica' and there'll be an Antarctic Arts Trail that visits art galleries, cafes and outdoor spaces hosting a series of visual art, while the Antarctic Air Day held at the Christchurch International Airport will give people a chance to go inside the planes that fly to Antarctica.



Sunshine for China, Korea

THE Sunshine Coast has set its sights on the Chinese and Korean markets to boost its conferencing and incentive business.

China is Australia's fastest growing market in terms of business events spend, with the recent Australia Week taking aim at the \$284m in growth to 2013 (**BEN** 11 Apr), and more than 12 incentives from Korea have been booked for this year (**BEN** 07 Apr).

Business Events Sunshine Coast (BESC) attended the Business Events Australia North Asia Showcase as part of Australia Week, with the business events team reporting a "much higher level of interest" this year, Sunshine Coast Destination Ltd (SCDL) ceo Simon Ambrose said.

BESC executive Tiffany Beal said the destination received a lot of

interest as a "new and unspoiled destination," with most Chinese groups in particular having 'done' Sydney, Melbourne and the Gold Coast and looking for destinations off the beaten track.

"The message I received repeatedly from Chinese and Korean corporates is that they are looking for fresh and unique experiences for an increasingly sophisticated MICE travel market."

Sunshine Coast operators are gearing up for Chinese tourists, including Narrows Escape Rainforest Resort, which recently added Chinese language signage to its rainforest walk, BESC said.

Vila convention centre

VANUATU'S long-touted Chinese Government-funded convention centre is expected to open for events in 2016.

The project has been on the table for years, with negotiations going back as far as 2010 and construction work finally starting late last year.

China is spending VT1.5 billion (AU\$17.2 million) on the centre and aiming to bring a wide variety of events as part of its investment.

Vanuatu Tourism Office general manager Linda Kalpoi told **BEN** at this week's Vanuatu roadshow in Sydney that the new centre would allow Vanuatu to step up its efforts on luring new business events to the island destination.

"It's going to be the Tourism Office working with event organisers, PCOs and doing a lot more participating at AIME to get a lot more of those incentives and conferences to Vanuatu.

"We're very excited at that and it will hugely open up the conference market for us."

Kalpoi added that the completed centre will offer capacity for up to 3,000 people, with rooms and halls capable of catering to all size meetings, functions and events.

It will be located next to the Parliament building, close to the town centre, airport and hotels.

Exhibiting online

ALWAYS There Trade Fair, an online trade show that allows exhibitors to interact anytime, anywhere, has been launched.

Created to meet the needs of the gift, fashion and home wares industries, the site is an online showroom for exhibitors that allows wholesalers to interact with buyers online.

Director Adrian Falk said the site offered flexibility to buy and trade when exhibitors and buyers wanted.

Buyers can register online for free with exhibitors paying \$199 per month.

CLICK HERE for more.

Ben on BEN



Each month Business Manager for inPlace Recruitment, Ben Carnegie, writes his observations from the recruiter's perspective to help job hunters find the perfect job.

Ben has more than 15 years working in 5 star hotels and the MICE industry and has worked on some of Australia's biggest events.

Word of mouth is a channel we all hear things from: good, bad or indifferent. Contractors in event management often get



their next job this way through recommendations from their previous work.

But how much of what you hear can be taken as verbatim?

Good reputations take a long time to build and can be completely destroyed within seconds.

People can be very quick to judge based on second hand information and this can relate to individuals or companies. Whether you choose to interview with a company or to hire a particular employee, is listening to the grape vine the most reliable source from which to make these big decisions?

I've seen companies decline to interview & candidates refuse to interview based on industry gossip.

Gossip has its place and validity, but basing your entire decision on hearsay can be a mistake.

Attend these meetings (reference check thoroughly) and often you can be pleasantly surprised and at least you will have made up your own mind!

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