



Face off

IN today's **BEN**, Peter Gray, an independent incentive practitioner and motivation consultant, has written a Letter to the Editor (page 3) that questions the need for the newly formed ICE industry body.



We welcome a response from Nigel Gaunt, ICE's inaugural president, and anyone else who would like to weigh in.

MEANWHILE a subject close to our stomachs, if not to our sensibilities, is that of food sustainability, the focus of a four day conference entitled 'Insects to Feed the World'.

Attended by 450 researchers and delegates from international groups including the US Department of Agriculture Organisation (FOA,) it was held this week in the Netherlands.

The FOA last May gave its official blessing to insect eating, declaring it not only a time honoured source of vitamins and amino acids but also an environmental boon.

While in Vietnam, if we didn't eat, we certainly looked at all manner of food during a cooking experience in Hoi An with Ms Vy, and marvelled at how the Vietnamese ate the animal from nose to tail, wasting nothing.

The most daring food I tried was a jellyfish salad and found the dish quite flavoursome with a pleasant crunch, passing on the marinated pig's ear!

Of course, many countries eat bugs of all kinds and on a planet facing environmental stress and exploding populations, it won't be too long before we too are tucking into grasshoppers, yellow meal-worms and ants.

Bon appétit! Jill



NTIA finalists announced



FINALISTS for the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) have been announced, with three companies in the Best Business Events Travel Agency category.

In the running are Event Travel Management, last year's winners cievents and The Events Authority, with the winner to be announced at the award ceremony on 19 Jul, which is allowing for 100 more attendees this year from last year, up to 1,300 (**BEN** 26 Mar).

The category involves a presentation of a maximum of 40 minutes and recognises the travel agency which demonstrated best practice in conference, event and incentive travel management and service delivery.

AFTA ceo Jayson Westbury said finalists in judged categories had a job ahead of them to put their best foot forward before the judging panel.

"Nine judges via three panels of three will undertake over 65 face to face interviews across the categories which now present before the pane."

Destination NSW, South Australia Tourism Commission, Tourism and Events Queensland, Tourism Victoria and Tourism Tropical North Queensland are all up for the Best Tourist Office - National award, while Tourism New Zealand and Dubai Tourism are included in the finalists for Best Tourist Office-International.

Meanwhile in the accommodation sections, Best Hotel/Resort - Australian Property

will go to one of Langham Melbourne, Palazzo Versace Gold Coast, QT Hotels & Resorts, Qualia and Crown Metropol Melbourne.

Best Hotel/Resort Group will be decided between Accor, Fairmont Raffles Swissotel, Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts, Starwood Hotels & Resorts and Mantra Group.

Check AFTA's website for the full list of finalists.

Solid Aus IMEX start

BUSINESS Events Australia general manager Penny Lion said it had been a solid start for Tourism Australia and its 14 stand partners (**BEN** 21 May).

Lion said the organisations were focused on proving that Australia could deliver better business events than other destinations.

"It is an increasingly competitive environment, but the good news is Australia is widely considered as a highly appealing events destination.

"Our stand partners know the international market place, and it's been very impressive to see them share insights from our world-class infrastructure developments through to our exceptional food and wine offering for high end incentives."

Anecdotally, there were good reports from across the sector, supported by the UK and North America showing positive returns to growth, she said.

"We anticipate this will have a positive impact on business confidence and ultimately the business events industry."

Four pages today

BEN has three pages of editorial plus a full page from (**click**):

- Accor Hotels

Japan's a BestCity

THE Tokyo Convention and Visitors Bureau (TCVB) has been announced as a BestCities partner, the first North East Asian member of the Alliance.

The announcement was made at IMEX Frankfurt, where it was also confirmed TCVB will be the first partner to go through the Regional Affiliate Member program, designed to help bureaux that wanted to take the membership process in stages or did not have the resources to dedicate to the membership in the first stages of being a partner, BestCities said.

TCVB chairman Kiyofumi Kamijo said the program offered the best way for the bureau to become a partner, allowing it to take the membership at its own pace.

MEETING every need

AN EXCLUSIVE MasterClass for leading PCOs and event managers to inspire them to learn new skills will be part of new networking and professional development opportunities at MEETINGS, held in Auckland from 17 to 19 Jun.

The MasterClass will include a two-hour session with international presenter and author Jonar Nader.

Another new addition to the programme is MEETINGS Mix and Mingle, being held after the exhibition closes on 18 Jun, at which hosted buyers and exhibitors can enjoy drinks and nibbles around the regions on the floor at ASB Showgrounds.

MEETINGS social events kick off on 17 Jun with a welcome function hosted by Pullman Auckland Hotel.

Auckland's Viaduct Events Centre has been chosen as the venue for the farewell dinner.



Zipline operator decision

A PREFERRED operator for the proposed Obi Obi Gorge zip line ecotourism project at Kondalilla National Park has been announced, but community groups have concerns about its environmental impact.

Australian Zip Line Canopy Tours has been invited by the Queensland Government to submit a more detailed proposal after meeting the Government's environmental, social and economic criteria in stage one.

Community groups have said there are environmental concerns, including National Parks Association of Queensland executive coordinator Paul Donatiu telling the *Australian* that building the project's steel platforms, supported by trees, and clearing vegetation would threaten Koala populations.

Sunshine Coast Environment Council liaison Narelle McCarthy said national parks needed to be protected as places of conversation for biodiversity and refuges for threatened species and that it was difficult to see how the environment would not be negatively affected should the project proceed.

Cementing its position

AYANA Resort and Spa above Bali's Jimbaran Bay now allows groups to stay on its newly developed RIMBA property in 450 rooms and use RIMBA's ballroom, meeting rooms and event spaces, as a supplement to AYANA's extensive facilities and oceanfront venues.

The integrated resort concept saw RIMBA booked out over five days by more than 600 guests of the Presidents' Club APJ 2014, with events accommodated between both properties.

The event's organiser for the past seven years, Scott Wilson of One Forty Seven, said the ability to use the surrounding forest at night as a blank canvas to do an array and laser work imagery was unique to RIMBA.

She said a zip line could be suitably located in an area outside the park.

"No other site has been considered and only preliminary conceptual documents have been produced before going into a state government tender process.

"This made the proposal 'commercial-in-confidence' effectively excluding community consultation and necessary external scrutiny."

Sunshine Coast Destination Limited ceo Simon Ambrose said it was important the local community be involved throughout development and that the Sunshine Coast had an excellent track record of balancing the needs of tourism and sustainability, with the Government ensuring the same principles would be applied to the project.

It would add "substantially" to the region's business events capabilities as the activity would be ideal for groups and suit almost everyone, he said.

"The Sunshine Coast is fortunate to have a wide range of attractions suitable for conference and incentive groups, but the zip line has the potential to become a signature new attraction for the region, especially as it is nature based and can work very well for team-based activities."

Studies had forecast the zip line could generate more than 50 full time equivalent jobs for the region, he said.

Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games Jann Stuckey said the next stage would involve Australian Zip Line Canopy Tours demonstrating that environmental checks and balances were incorporated into the planning, design and operation of the zip line development, and showing how it would deliver economically for the community.

CLICK HERE to read the government's zip line profile.

Transport me, Lanta

CROWN Lanta Resort & Spa's new managing director, Wolfgang Grimm, who many will know as a former general manager at Intercontinental Sydney, said the introduction of a seamless Airport-Lanta transport service by car and boat during the months from May to October will enhance its appeal as a conference and meetings property.

The island property near Krabi has a choice of 70 villa rooms of 50 sqm, 14 larger villa rooms with ocean and sunset views, and a Grand Villa of 235 sqm sitting on a peak overlooking the Andaman coast.

Crown Lanta also has a versatile function room to cater for up to 80 guests with conference facilities.

MV Epicure launches

THE newest event space in Sydney has launched - and is a launch.

The MV Epicure is a 35m long luxury motor vessel in Sydney harbour which can host up to 450 guests, with three separate levels, each featuring a bar, as well as a dance floor, WiFi and AV equipment.

The ship could sail when events are held and pricing would depend on various factors, an Epicure spokesperson said.

A launch (oh ho) event will be held on 25 Jun.

Schroder for BCD M&I



DANNY Schroder, who led the meetings and events sales for AU/NZ for Carlson Wagonlit, has joined BCD M&I's management team in Australia.

Based in the Sydney office, Schroder brings with him 12 years of event experience in both the New Zealand and Australian markets.

He will be responsible for the Australian business operations, client management, and event and conference sales.



IS it a beer, is it a hotel, is it a ship?

Actually it's all three because when the Super Bowl XLVIII Anheuser-Busch takes place in January 2015, the Bud Light Hotel New York will dock on the Hudson River.

The 4,028 passenger *Norwegian Getaway*, Norwegian Cruise Line's brand new ship, will become a floating hotel playing host to corporate parties and a four day concert line-up with performances by Foo Fighters and Imagine Dragons.

The event will see the Bud Light moniker plastered all over the ship as well as on thousands of pillows, hand towels, shampoo bottles and other shipboard items.

Hosted parties will extend beyond the cruise ship to take in the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum footprint.

A Bud Light Hotel amphitheatre will also host nightly concerts and parties while the two level, 1,500 person venue will encompass more than 300,000 sq ft of event space.

The 146,600 ton *Norwegian Getaway* features a sprawling, deck-top fun zone with five water slides; a restaurant-lined boardwalk; large production shows such as Broadway's 'Legally Blonde'; and a giant, two-deck spa.



At your service

EVENTS Butlers are now part of the Centara Grand Mirage Beach Resort Pattaya's guarantee to planners and organisers that every meeting and event staged at the five star beachside resort will be defined by 24 hour service commitment and responsiveness.

The Thailand resort's general manager Robert J Lohrmann said planners would have 24/7 support, from inception through to the post-event analysis.

The resort has all the facilities to cater for meetings and events.



EY's touch of class

ETIHAD Airways first Australian lounge was officially opened at a special ribbon cutting ceremony, on Wednesday, at Sydney's Kingsford Smith International Airport.

It is the lush domain of Etihad Airways Diamond First Class and Pearl Business Class guests and qualifying members of the Etihad Guest loyalty program.

Officiating at the ceremony, Etihad Airways president and ceo James Hogan said the lounge was another milestone in their commitment to Australia.



comfortable armchairs in the relaxation zone.

The Sydney route will be among the first in the Etihad Airways network to experience The Residence by Etihad (**BEN 07** May) when the UAE flag carrier commences scheduled A380 services to Sydney in June 2015.

Pictured above from left are Visit Ireland ANZ manager Diane Butler and Visit Britain Australia country manager Mark Haynes.

For more photos, see **BEN's** Facebook and Google+ pages.



"It's all about offering an experience in the lounge that not only sets the tone for but is also consistent with the flight experience ahead."

Hogan also revealed the airline will open a new lounge in Melbourne within 18 months.

Set over two natural light filled levels and an area of 798 sqm, the Sydney lounge includes business amenities with Apple computers; complimentary WiFi connectivity; multi-zone electrical and USB power outlets; dedicated male, female and accessible bathrooms with shower facilities; a children's play room; male and female prayer rooms; and

\$12m blues for GC

THE Gold Coast economy is set to receive a \$12m injection thanks to its securing of the Blues on Broadbeach Music Festival, running from 22 to 25 May.

The festival was launched by Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games Jann Stuckey, with 60 performers lined up to show their stuff.

"Last year's event is estimated to have delivered an economic impact of \$12.3 million.

"This year's incredible artist line-up sets the stage for a bigger and better event in 2014."

Letter to the Editor

THE formation of the Incentive, Conference and Events Society (ICE) has prompted this letter to the editor from Peter Gray, an independent incentive practitioner and motivation consultant, headed 'MICE vs ICE':

Nigel Gaunt recently announced the formation of yet another industry body, the Incentive, Conference and Events Society of which he is, apparently, its self-styled President. He makes a number of claims for his actions.

He asserts that Australia recognises the need for a new industry body.

This, from correspondence I have received, is very far from the truth.

Nigel also claims that these days it is more often the case that incentive travel, conferences and events combine as one. This has long been the case as Nigel well knows, but it is how the three are melded together that requires specialist skills and expertise.

The introduction of the Fringe Benefits Tax in 1986 promoted the merging of the travel and conference elements and the global economic crisis has further advanced this trend.

According to Nigel, it would seem that people working in the incentive industry spend a lot of time justifying what they are.

Well, I certainly don't believe that.

My company is an Incentive Practitioner and a PCO and there is little if any explanation required to justify our existence or delineate the two.

As far as I am aware, the professional bodies that represent incentive practitioners, meeting managers or event organisers are not obsessed about keeping their practitioners 'pure' as Nigel has suggested. The Incentive Association was formed in direct response to practitioners and suppliers who thought that the needs of the incentive industry had been neglected since the demise of the AIA in 2001.

The PCO Association, with which the IA has good relations, was formed because the practitioners in the meetings industry felt that the body that claimed to represent them - MEA - had lost its way with PCOs making up only a small percentage of its members.

The incentive industry has always rejected the notion that it should be represented by the 'I' in the MICE acronym. Indeed, at a meeting of IA members and others at the Sydney Marriott late last year which discussed this very subject (and others) an overwhelming majority vehemently rejected this notion. So, why would the incentive industry be content to be the 'I' in ICE?

The Incentive Association does not demand that its members should belong exclusively to it and no other body. It believes that practitioners should belong to the industry bodies that can provide the best intelligence, training and education for their particular speciality - whether that be one or several.

ICE is an organisation owned and managed by an international magazine publisher out of who's offices in Hong Kong the organisation is run; all membership subscriptions are paid to them. In comparison, the IA, the PCO Association, MEA and ISES are independent bodies run by their members for their members with no overriding financial master to determine policy or dictate direction.

ICE claims to have a loose association with SITE, a USA-based incentive organisation, however there are substantial differences in definition between incentives and rewards in the USA and those in Australia and New Zealand. The Incentive Association believes that it is important for its members to be able to learn from others in the industry and be qualified and accredited by those who have the specific knowledge and skills required. Although younger than its meeting industry counterpart, the PCO Association, the IA shares the belief that practitioners should be the major proportion of its members and should determine its policy. However the IA also recognises that suppliers to the incentive industry are an integral part of it and it welcomes their contribution and insight into how the industry develops.

We welcome any comments. If you would like to weigh in on this or any other subject, email info@businesseventsnews.com.au.

CONTACT US:

Publisher Editor Contributor/Coordinator
Bruce Piper Jill Varley Alex Walls

For advertising enquiries email Sean Harrigan & Katrina Ford:
advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au

P: 1300 799 220 F: 1300 799 221

PO Box 1010 Epping, NSW, 1710

Business Events News is part of the Travel Daily group of publications which also include: Travel Daily, Cruise Weekly & Pharmacy Daily.

Disclaimer: While every care has been taken in the preparation of *Business Events News* no liability can be accepted for errors or omissions. *BEN* takes no responsibility for the opinions of its contributors/columnists. Information is published in good faith to stimulate independent investigation of the matters canvassed.

THE ultimate CONFERENCE DESTINATION

EXPERIENCE THE WONDERS OF THE SOUTH COAST OF NSW

..... WITH

ACCOR HOTELS

Conference at either *Novotel Wollongong Northbeach* or *Mercure Resort Gerringong By The Sea*

& receive overnight accommodation
full buffet breakfast and internet...

from **\$150***
per room @ Mercure Gerringong

from **\$179***
per room @ Novotel Wollongong

For enquiries please contact
Mercure Resort Gerringong on (02) 4234 1359
or email sales@mercuregerringong.com.au
& Quote BEN1

For enquiries please contact
Novotel Wollongong Northbeach on (02) 4224 3154
or email H1654-sb3@accor.com
& Quote BEN1

*T&Cs apply



WOLLONGONG
NORTHBEACH

www.southcoastmeetings.com.au



RESORT GERRINGONG
BY THE SEA