



What's hot

BEYOND the tried and true conference and event destinations such as



Thailand, Singapore, Fiji and Indonesia, the idea of where we will travel to next year tends to follow popular holiday trends.

Global travel search engine Skyscanner, with 30m searches to the site every month, predicts the top 10 destinations that will surge in popularity in 2015.

These include three countries in Central and South America.

Nicaragua beat Brazil with a 48% increase in searches compared with 45%, and Panama was third with a 10% increase.

Closer to home, Aussies are venturing farther than Bali with Skyscanner's data showing the hottest destinations will be Myanmar (59% search increase), Okinawa (26%) and Colombo, Sri Lanka (19% search).

Jill

ACB, BET report strong year



ADELAIDE will have hosted 191 business events, worth \$211m to the state economy, by the end of December, while Business Events Tasmania (BET) confirmed 94 bids worth more than \$51m.

The Adelaide Convention Bureau (ACB) said about 60,000 attendees would add more than 214,000 bed nights for the year.

While the number of events was down on previous years, compared with 204 in 2013 and 264 in 2012, the benefits were "far greater", the Bureau said.

It estimated the economic value of the events in 2013 was \$141m and \$191m in 2012.

ACB ceo Damien Kitto said recently, ACB's strategy had been

to focus on securing events within industry sectors such as medicine and higher yielding events.

Business Events Tasmania said the 94 bids represented more than 19,000 delegates, an "extremely positive return" on investment, and which did not include referrals, taking it to more than 26,000.

This compared with 84 bids won to the value of \$47m in the 2012-13 year.

Ceo Stuart Nettlefold said the 2015-16 financial year would be a stand out, with a "solid number" of larger conferences (over 500 delegates) booked and enquiries very strong, helped by new and refreshed product.

Alaska downunder



Photo: Michael DeYoung

EVENT planners, agents and tour wholesalers interested in learning more about Alaska can get information first hand when the State of Alaska Tourism Marketing hosts events in Auckland, Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney from 03 to 11 Dec.

The seven Alaskan organisations include Visit Anchorage, Northern Alaska Tour Company and Alaska Holiday.

Tour operators/wholesalers are being offered business to business 15 to 20 minute meeting sessions in each city to expand their existing product knowledge.

For more information, email kasey@pattillo-and-associates.com.

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business events news

26th November 2014

New Doha conference centre

A NEW hotel and conference centre has been floated for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Doha, Qatar.

The Silver Pearl Hotel would be a 1,000 room luxury property designed to be located offshore on a structure that would "rise out of the sea", accessible via a causeway, private yacht or helicopter, architects M. Castedo



Architects said.

An adjacent structure would house a conference and exposition centre, with the total project cost estimated to be US\$1.6b, the firm said.

Manuel Castedo told **BEN** the project had been submitted to Katara Hospitality, Qatar's sovereign fund, which was evaluating the feasibility of funding, and would develop the project should approval be granted.

Approval was needed within six months for the infrastructure to be ready by 2022, Castedo said.

A wide range of possibilities for the conference centre had been proposed, from "relatively limited facilities to a major expo centre" and exact size would likely need to wait for a consultant's further review, he said.

MCB wins particle accelerator gig

THE Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) has won the collaborative bid to host the International Particle Accelerator Conference in May 2019, which will see about 1,000 delegates attend the six day event.

Held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, the event was expected to boost the Victorian economy by approximately \$5m, MCB said.

The bid was a joint effort between the MCB and the Australian Synchrotron team, MCB said.

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NZ Chinese visitor spend near \$1b

CHINESE visitor spend is at a record high of NZ\$979m to the year ending September, up 33% from last year, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment has said.

Total spend by international visitors was up 10% to NZ\$7.2b.

However, total business visitor spend was down 19% for the year to NZ\$477m.

The USA, UK and Australia continued to be major tourism markets, with the USA up 33% and the UK up 23% in spend, the Ministry said.

Australian visitor spend, however, dropped by 11% in the period.

UnionPay partnership

DESTINATION NSW and UnionPay International have partnered up to encourage Chinese people to visit and spend more in Sydney and the state.

The campaign would offer rebates to UnionPay cardholders who purchased travel to NSW, with incentives for those who used the card to shop once in the country, Destination NSW said.

Lizard to re-open



FIRST there was One&Only's Hayman that reopened with a flourish recently after an extensive refurbishment.

Now another luxury island tailor-made for incentives, Lizard Island, is to re-open on 01 Mar after a 12 month rebuild following Cyclone Ita.

New additions are proposed to the accommodation including an exclusive private, stand-alone, two bedroom, two en-suite retreat, The Villa.

Additionally, Lizard's The Pavilion, with a private gazebo and plunge pool, has been expanded to include a separate lounge room, while a selection of the Sunset Point villas will have the added luxury of private plunge pools.

General manager Amanda Silk, appointed in April, said she was excited to be returning after being gm there some years ago.

40% first time EEAA entries

THE Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA) awards saw 40% of entries from first time entrants and new members.

EEAA ceo Joyce DiMascio said this reflected the changing profile of the industry and EEAA membership.

Held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, which won Best Venue Team (pictured) for the 20th International AIDS Conference, the awards saw the first Hall of Fame inductee for Best Green Initiative in Reed Exhibitions Australia.



Best Trade Show Over 10,000 sqm went to Fine Food Australia by Diversified Communications Australia while the Dog Lovers Show by Event Management International took out Best Australian Show.

iVvy won the Best New Product or Service award for its venue management solution with real time booking engine for events.



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crumbs!

LOOKING for an incentive or famil activity with a bit of bite?

How about shark cage diving, given the news Australia's industry is set to boom with extended licenses for operators at Port Lincoln?

SA Premier Jay Weatherill may not have sold the activity *that* well when he said Port Lincoln was the only place in the world where "year-round cage diving brought tourists face to face with iconic Great White sharks" - that's close enough, thanks!

It's obviously popular, though, with shark cage diving tagged as a "significant tourism drawcard" for the state, growing by 30% over the past three years and generating \$11m for the economy last year, he said.

Maybe this is because the majority of encounters go like this (courtesy of www.dailyhaha.com):



Meritus Bali to open

MERITUS Hotels and Resorts is set to open a new-build resort in Seminyak, Bali.

Set to open in 2016, the Meritus Bali Seminyak Resort and Spa would have 181 rooms and "comprehensive" conference and event spaces, as well as a business centre, Meritus said.

The company signed a management deal with developer PT.

IBTM meeting pods



IBTM america has released the design impression of its exhibitor meeting pods.

The pods would provide exhibitors with an "exclusive environment" for meetings during the event, due to be held from 09 to 11 Jun in McCormick Place West, event director Jaime Rosov said.

The pods allowed for corporate branding in advance of arrival, Rosov said.

Sydney to host accountants congress

THE International Convention Centre Sydney will host the World Congress of Accountants in 2018, with more than 5,000 delegates expected to attend.

The event was expected to boost the NSW economy by \$18m, Business Events Sydney said.

TNQ training

TOURISM Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) has launched the TNQ Customer Service Training program to increase participants' knowledge of the region.

Those who completed the five training modules will receive Destination Advocate Accreditation and Destination Advocate Membership.

The program costs \$35 or \$25 for TTNQ members.

CLICK HERE for more.

Starwood sells

Sheraton Sydney

STARWOOD Hotels and Resorts Worldwide has sold the Sheraton on the Park in Sydney for \$463m to Sunshine Insurance Group Corporation, as part of Starwood's "asset light" strategy, which was seeing strong investor interest, Starwood said.

The hotel would continue to operate as a Sheraton under a long term management contract.

Starry New Year

A '**NEW** Year's Eve Under the Stars' event is being hosted by the Trippas White Group.

The event package, which includes drinks together with DJ entertainment, takes place at Tarpeian Way, providing exclusive access into Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens - the ultimate vantage point for midnight fireworks.

Priced at \$395, book online at www.nyeunderthestars.com.au.



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How to make the most of video conferencing at your event

Video conferencing (VC) provides a cost effective way to enable a real-time conversation over limitless distances and multiple locations.

With the growth of VC technologies, such as Skype or Google Hangouts, video conferencing has become mainstream and we've seen an increase in use in the MICE industry.

By using a VC solution wisely, you can make your meeting, event or conference more accessible, memorable and effective.

Can face-to-face interaction be replicated?

Technically, this can be achieved through access to a high-speed internet connection, a microphone and a webcam, however whether this drives the same level of engagement is up for debate. For example, in a conference it can be difficult to interact with one person on the other end of a webcam.

If two-way interaction isn't imperative, then a video sharing solution such as YouTube may be a better option.

Which VC tools should you choose?

There are a number of VC tools available, from conference-room

hardware, to internet services that run via a web browser.

There are also emerging systems that allow you to instantly move video feeds from display screens onto your own handheld devices, such as tablets and smart phones. Your AV provider can help you identify which will be most suitable.

So, are we likely to see VC become a fixture at all events? Certainly, VC can help enhance your event, but it won't ever replace face-to-face events.

Be clever about how you incorporate VC technologies within your events and remember that in person interaction is still powerful.

Michael Clarke is the Sofitel Gold Coast partner at AVPartners, which creates integrated event experiences through combining state of the art audiovisual technology, unrivalled expertise and a highly tailored approach.

For more visit www.avpartners.com



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