



Are you being served?

THE reluctance of Australians to take advantage of the services of a butler attached to their hotel room has been previously discussed.



In the past month, I have been fortunate to have personal butlers in three separate hotels, and, other than to order the odd cup of tea, they have been totally under utilised.

At the St Regis Bangkok, where butlers are assigned to every hotel guestroom and suite, Holger Jokobs, director of sales and marketing, chided me for not making use of mine and told me of a business woman who was a regular guest.

"She was constantly on the go during her stay but wouldn't let the butler help her, saying she didn't feel comfortable with someone packing or unpacking her clothes.

"One day, in her usual rush to pack and get to the airport, I reminded her that the butler could do the packing and tidying up for her.

"Just give it a try, I urged. Take a shower and by the time you are dressed, it will all be done.

"It worked, she was delighted and now she is a convert."

In the name of research, I thought I should do the same.

On my last evening at the hotel, with a function that promised be a late one and with little time to pack in the morning, I put in the call and when I arrived back it was all expertly done.

Tissue paper on top, everything else neatly folded in place and my shoes encased in St Regis bags.

Well done, Jeeves! Jill



Biz event numbers down

THE latest National Visitors Survey (NVS) figures have seen a slight drop in the total number of business events visitors to Australia in the year to June, to 19.9m, from 20m year on year.

The unpublished data from Tourism Research Australia, compiled from the International and National Visitors Surveys June, found trip nights were also down for business events as a whole, to 44.3m, down from 44.5m year on year.

Expenditure, covering the entire trip, was down from \$12.8m to \$12.7m, the data found.

Business meetings as the trip's purpose made up the biggest sector of visitors at 15.4m, which was up from the prior year's 15.2m, followed by conferences or conventions at 4.4m, down from 4.97m visitors.

Domestic overnight visitors were down to 9.6m from

9.7m, including conferences or conventions, which were down to 2.5m from 2.6m, and domestic day trip visitors were down from 9.48m to 9.46m, where visitors for conventions or conferences were down from 2m to 1.6m.

Domestic overnight expenditure was down to \$9.10m from \$9.11m, with conference or convention spend dropping to \$2.5m from \$2.8m.

Domestic day trip expenditure was down to \$1.24m from \$1.25m, with conference and convention spend again seeing a drop from \$218,000 to \$164,000.

International visitors to Australia for business events saw a slight drop in the year to June (**BEN** 08 Sep).

Overall, the NVS reported national visitor overnight trips were up 5% to 79m, with expenditure up 4% to \$53.3m.

To access the NVS, **CLICK HERE**.

The Christmas Venue Guide

BUSINESS Events News has launched a Christmas Events guide and you can get in on the fun.

The events guide will promote venues perfect for holding Christmas events and festivities, whether it's a decorous cocktail party to farewell the year or a karaoke sing-off of 'Jingle Bells'.

To highlight your venue's unique features to the business events industry and **BEN**'s readers and social media channels, email

advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au.

Sell TNQ 2014

Apply now to join the Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef annual fam.

Sell TNQ provides an exclusive opportunity for qualified event and incentive planners to visit the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef region and experience first-hand our ability to host successful business events.

This year's program will be hosted 7 - 10 November in Cairns, followed by an optional post-touring program visiting Palm Cove and Port Douglas 10 - 12 November.

Don't miss this opportunity to visit one of Australia's leading conference and events destinations and meet with the region's premier business events operators!

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business events news

10th September 2014

GIBTM re-brand

REED Exhibitions has re-branded the Gulf Incentives, Business Travel and Meetings exhibition (GIBTM) to IBTM Arabia.

The exhibition will be held from 10 to 12 Feb at the St Regis Saadiyat Island, a new venue for the show.

Reed Exhibitions said the move came in response to customer feedback; however, the website's URL is still www.gibtm.com.

It would see 200 hosted buyers and 200 industry suppliers, with a layout of meeting pods complete with corporate branding, Reed Exhibitions said.

To find out more, [CLICK HERE](#).

Hawes for UK

DESTINATION NSW has appointed Paul Hawes as UK and Germany regional manager.

Ceo Sandra Chipchase said these were important markets for the state at 14.4% of international visitors and \$861m in visitor spend for the year to June.

Hawes most recently was marketing manager for the Canadian Tourism Commission and had experience across destination marketing and tourism development, Destination NSW said.

Effective as of 22 Sep, Hawes would be based in the Destination NSW office in London, the organisation said.

Book a corporate event and your delegates will each receive a \$100 gift voucher to use at Spicers Hidden Vale

[Click here to find out more](#)



SPICERS
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Sunshine for biz ev nos

FURTHER to the release of the National Visitors Survey by Tourism Research Australia (see **page one**), the Sunshine Coast has seen its business related journeys, including corporate and business events, grow by 40%, compared with 2012-13.

Overall visitation to the Coast grew by 4.6% in the year to 30 Jun, to 2.8m visitors.

Overnight visitors to Queensland were up 1% year on year to 18.1m but expenditure was down 2% to \$13.8m, compared with NSW which saw a 6% increase to 26.5m overnight visitors and a 6% increase in expenditure to \$15.3m, and Victoria which saw a 9% increase to 19.6m overnights and a 6% increase in expenditure to \$11m.

Sunshine Coast Destination Limited (SCDL) ceo Simon Ambrose said the diversity, quality and convenience of the location had "rejuvenated" the business events sector, seeing the region attract more conferences, incentives and special events in 2013-14 than in the prior year.



He said the Coast could build on these results when it held the Destination Q tourism trade event next week, with more than 300 delegates attending.

SCDL and Tourism Noosa have partnered to host a joint function to welcome the delegates.

Pictured from left are Tourism Noosa gm Damien Massingham, Queensland Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and Commonwealth Games Jann Stuckey and Ambrose.

Thailand's boost



ACCORDING to Nopparat Maythaveekulchai, president of the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB), an anticipated 157,000 business events travellers will reach Thailand by the last quarter of this year.

The figure reinforces a renewed confidence in Thailand as a business events hub, with Unicity holding its 2014 Unicity Global Convention in Bangkok in October.

The event is expected to generate revenue of more than THB1,780m (A\$59.9m) for the Thai economy.

Describing it as a major boost to Thailand's business events industry, Nopparat said one of the Bureau's strategies was to win mega events through promotion campaigns and support.

Biz ev drives benefits

MINISTER for Trade and Investment Andrew Robb said at the Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) staff conference that in his experience in business globally, business events provided sustained benefits to the economy

AACB executive director Andrew Hiebl said the organisation would continue to ensure the Federal Government supported international business event bids.

Robb said convention bureaux played a "vital role" in promoting cities and regions to overseas and domestic audiences and the AACB played an "important leadership role" by providing a "strong and unified voice" for the sector.

"The business events sector runs deeply across my portfolio.

"It is a significant driver of tourism, trade and investment in Australia."



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Sales Manager, Corporate Travel (Sydney)

In this new role, you will be formally managing our new business development process, strategically targeting new clients and securing business leads. Experience in a similar previous role is required as you will be taking the lead in conducting client meetings, submitting client proposals and responding to tenders. Good communication skills are essential and individuals should also have a sound understanding of the travel industry.

Manager, Events (Sydney)

This sales-focussed role requires a lot of experience and understanding of the events industry. Essentially, you will become the face of our highly respected events division – The Events Authority and will manage the sales process, as well as the day-to-day operations of the team, being solely responsible for the growth and profitability of The Events Authority. As a leader, you must focus on solutions and manage the whole range of relationships from clients to suppliers to co-workers. But, of course, you knew that. This role also requires an individual who is prepared to travel, targeting new clients and conducting client meetings – but you knew that too.

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business events news

10th September 2014

Gray's Say

Peter Gray, an independent Motivation Consultant, presents a regular *Business Events News* feature on current issues in the Conference and Incentive industries.



GREED IS NOT ALWAYS GOOD

ACCORDING to an article from *Associated Press* recently, American hotels are becoming as greedy as some airlines as the list of 'surcharges' gets longer by the day. Specific requirements such as two queen-size beds in a room, a safe and other 'extras' could cost you dear.

The article quotes Bjorn Hanson, a professor at New York University's hospitality school, as saying "The airlines have done a really nice job of making hotel fees and surcharges seem reasonable".

This year, American hotels will take in a record US\$2.25 billion in revenue from such add-ons, six percent more than in 2013 and nearly double that of a decade ago, according to a recanter study.

Thankfully in Australia, New Zealand and much of Asia, we haven't gone down this route... yet! But there are signs that it could happen here. Certain airlines already charge for booking a specific seat on a flight, check-in luggage, or checking in more than one item of hold luggage, even though the total weight allowance is not exceeded. Food and entertainment on a flight are already part of the extras culture for low-cost airlines and even some not-so-low-cost airlines.

Hotels used to charge like the proverbial wounded bull for telephone calls made from guest rooms (and may still do, I haven't made a call from a hotel telephone for a very long time).

That was stymied, first by calling cards and later by mobile phones. Now that a lot of us use mobile phones, tablets and laptops to send and receive emails, surf the web and many other services, some hotels still insist on charging for a service that is now more of a necessity. Others are more enlightened and realise that this is a good way of attracting customers and keeping them happy.

Australia and New Zealand hotels have nothing to learn from the USA but, still, everything to learn from Asia where their main product, first and foremost, is still the provision of hotel rooms and other services to the best of their ability at the advertised price with all the 'extras' provided as standard. Long may it remain that way.

Peter Gray can be contacted at peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net.



BECA urges study

BUSINESS Events Council of Australia (BECA) chair Matt Hingerty has re-iterated BECA's call to industry to take part in a study of the sector it is undertaking with consulting firm EY (*BEN* 20 Jun).

It's the first major study of the sector to be undertaken in almost a decade, with Hingerty this week writing to stakeholders saying that "for too long the business events sector has been the quiet achiever of the broader visitor economy."

While BECA acknowledged that responding to surveys could be onerous, Hingerty said it was vital that the industry participated to maintain its momentum.

EY will be contacting the industry this week regarding the research.

87 enquiries for Tas parks EOIs

TASMANIAN Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage Matthew Groom said the government had received 87 enquiries and requests for additional information regarding its Expressions of Interest (EOIs) invitation for "sensible and appropriate" tourism developments in the state's national parks and World Heritage Area.

Groom said there had been "significant interest" from investors and tourism operators and the government was confident the enquiries would translate into a "strong number" of EOIs.

"Everything we have heard from the industry indicates that there is genuine excitement around this opportunity from Tasmanian, Australian and international investors."

ATE faml EOIs

DESTINATION NSW has called on businesses to submit expressions of interest to host international buyers as part of the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) 2015.

Travel itineraries would be developed highlighting NSW experiences on offer before and after ATE, Destination NSW said.

Minister for Tourism and Major Events Andrew Stoner said all export-ready NSW tourism businesses engaged in international markets should register.

For more information, **CLICK HERE**.



NETWORKING at meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions often occurs over drinks, but would a ban on alcohol drive you to avoid any of these?

Apparently, Kerala may just be facing such a conundrum, if the *Economic Times* is correct.

The publication reports that the Kerala government's prohibition could drive conference business to Sri Lanka or even further afield, with one pundit expecting a dip of nearly 40% in business from October to March.

The prohibition targeted businesses with a full bar license which weren't five star hotels, the publication reported.

The argument about whether removing alcohol from business events would be beneficial has one point against it, in the form of *Sherlock* star Benedict Cumberbatch's GQ award acceptance speech, which is one of the better drunken ramblings *BEN* has heard.

You can watch it **HERE** and read the full article regarding Kerala's prohibition **HERE**.

STB to trial radio tags for tourists

THE Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is hoping to gather "behavioural insights" into its tourists, to improve the visitor experience and boost spending.

The STB has released a tender document soliciting bids for a system which would trial 20 readers and up to 1,000 Radio Frequency Identification tags at two unspecified locations - one being a tourist attraction and the other a major MICE venue.

According to the STB, a similar system implemented at a Disney resort in the US was able to help boost spending by 8% in just 90 days, with the technology to be investigated for applications in events and attractions, food and retail payments and social media.

It's suggested that the system would utilise social profiles of users to suggest purchases.

The Resorts World Sentosa integrated resort has also flagged the introduction of wearable RFID tags at its Adventure Cove Waterpark which would facilitate cashless transactions and also hopefully boost spending.

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