



AIME-ing for success

WITH AIME 2015

upon us, a number of overseas destinations have visited Australia on pre AIME marketing preambles, such as Visit England, DMS with its Asia/Pacific, US, South African, South American, Indian and European clients at Doltone House on Friday, and Brand USA in conjunction with Visit USA.

Brand USA has an even bigger presence this year, sharing a stand with the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board, Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau, Fort Worth Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Marriott North East.

Macau has a large contingent of 10 exhibitors including the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute.

On the home front, Destination Sydney in the form of Business Events Sydney returns bigger than ever with 15 co-exhibitors by its side, and out to prove that it's the best place on earth to meet.

Tasmania continues to draw high delegate attendance with its seductive and disarming beauty.

No wonder 96% of delegates report they would recommend the state as a place to visit.

MEANWHILE the **BEN** team looks forward to catching up with industry colleagues and friends, to hear your stories and to discuss ways in which we can work together. *Jill*



Biz events worth \$23b

BUSINESS events were worth \$23.1b to the Australian economy in the 2013-14 financial year, according to the Business Events Council of Australia (BECA) "landmark" study released today at the start of AIME in Melbourne.

Funded under the T-QUAL Grants Program with a matching contribution from BECA, the

study was conducted by Ernst & Young and worked off data from 249 venues on events with at least 100 delegates.

The research found more than 37m people attended more than 412,000 business events in Australia over the study period.

International and interstate delegates clocked in \$14.5b in expenditure, compared with \$4.5b for local delegates.

Meetings and conventions formed the largest component of the industry in terms of expenditure, value add and numbers, and saw total direct expenditure of \$23.2b in 2013-14.

BECA chairman Matthew Hingerty said it was time for the business events sector to stop being the "little brother" of the tourism sector.

The report provided solid facts and figures with which to show how far the industry had come without government support; BECA's message to government would be to imagine what the sector could achieve with such support, Hingerty said.

BECA would be writing to Ministers and governments about the findings, with plans for three yearly updates for the research.

CLICK HERE to read the report.

MCEC expansion: take it as a given

MELBOURNE Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) ceo Peter King said it could be taken as a given that the expansion of the Centre will go ahead, "it's just a matter of when".

The current government has not given a confirmation as to whether it would proceed with the expansion.

King said the Centre should have a "pretty good indication" in the next few weeks about when the expansion would begin.

He reiterated E&Y research which found \$580m of economic contribution was generated from the MCEC, which was still turning away about 20% of biz opportunities (**BEN** 26 Mar 14).



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AIME launches new direction for 2015

AIME exhibition director Jacqui Timmins today unveiled the long-awaited details of the "re-imagined" event, saying the move is "set to transform the AIME experience and its engagement with the business events industry".

It's much more than a new logo and tag line (**BEN** 11 Feb 15), with the move underpinned by a new community strategy which will see AIME evolve from a two-day event to provide a year-round engagement with the sector.

Timmins said some of the changes would be immediately apparent at this year's show which kicks off tomorrow, including a new Community Hub in the centre of the show floor and a completely redesigned layout incorporating 'zones', allowing

attendees to more easily find the suppliers they want to connect with.

AIME 2015 will also run to a different timetable, with the traditional welcome function on the first night replaced with a gala dinner on Wednesday, to be held at Central Pier (**BEN** 20 Feb). Melbourne Convention Bureau ceo Karen Bolinger said the changes had been made "firmly with our customers in mind."

"It is about our brand remaining relevant and implementing new ways to continually increase the value to our exhibitors, buyers and visitors."

Timmins said the ongoing engagement was likely to include pop-up networking events during the year - and not just in Melbourne - while online education would also provide connections for the industry.

Three sub-brands for the show would highlight AIME's three pillars of Education, Networking and Business, she said.

Timmins and Bolinger are **pictured left** with MCEC ceo Peter King and Sallie Coventry, Reed Exhibitions.



MCEC AV makeover

THE Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) today unveiled the details of a \$3m technology upgrade, in response to the rise of "bring your own device" technology.

Claiming a regional first, the new MCEC system provides a "digital vision signal pathway" right across the venue, meaning customers can connect their own laptops, tablets or smartphones into the system to see "pixel perfect vision projected to MCEC's screens and recording devices," according to MCEC director of technology operations Michael Walsh.

Other technology upgrades include a simplified login page for MCEC's high density free WiFi, a tenfold increase in the venue's IP network to 10 gigahertz and new high definition "digital totem signs" which provide event branding and directional signage.

MCEC is also investing more than \$300,000 in three new ultra high definition 4K projectors.



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Barossa MICE makeover



NOVOTEL Barossa Valley Resort has just unveiled a \$2.5m refurbishment of its conference centre, with the facility aiming to meet increased demand for events in the SA wine region.

The upgrade allows the centre (**pictured**) to host up to 250 delegates, with the decor including custom-designed pendant lights made from the metal straps of wine barrels.

"On the back of the award winning 'Barossa Be Consumed' campaign by the South Australian Tourism Commission, there has been overwhelming interest in the Barossa as a business events destination," said hotel gm Sarah Henderson.

Last year, the resort also completed a refurbishment of its

140 guest rooms.

The property has nine function rooms and an on-site Endota Spa, while the 18-hole Tanunda Pines golf course is right next door, "making it an ideal venue for upmarket incentives and meetings," Henderson said.

A special day delegate package of \$69 per person is on offer, including complimentary post-conference drinks.

For details, call 08 8524 0045.

Launceston growth

THE Hotel Grand Chancellor in Launceston has expanded its purpose built convention centre to more than 1,000 sqm,

The expansion meant the hotel now had the largest facility of its type in northern Tasmania, the property said.

Eight meeting rooms and a new Lobby Bar complement a 300 sqm ballroom on a dedicated level, with gm Glenn Robertson saying the enhancements boosted the hotel's appeal to PCOs and event organisers.

For more information, see grandchancellorhotels.com.

Third night free

THE Sheraton Macao Hotel, Cotai Central, with a 4,891 sqm pillarless Kashgar grand ballroom for up to 5,000 guests theatre-style, is offering meeting groups an incentive of a 'Third Night Free or Dinner on Us'.

A minimum of 10 rooms and a maximum of 500 rooms for two consecutive nights, as well as a minimum HKD1600 spend in banquet food and beverage per room, per stay is required.

Some conditions apply.

For more information, email sales.macao@sheraton.com



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Viva Las Vegas business events!

THE Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) is set to purchase a

26-acre site as the cornerstone for the planned Las Vegas Global Business District.

Currently housing the historic Riviera Hotel and Casino, the project "marks an exciting new milestone in Las Vegas' long history of reinvention and evolution, and ensures Las Vegas' meeting and convention industry remains the envy of the world for decades to come," said LVCVA ceo Rossi Ralenkotter.

The US\$182.5m purchase will kick off the development of the \$2.3b Las Vegas Global Business District, which is forecast to bring 6,000 construction jobs



to Southern Nevada.

It is the largest economic development initiative undertaken by the LVCVA since

the Las Vegas Convention Center was created in the late 1950s.

The first phase will see 750,000 sqft of new exhibit space and 187,500 sqft of supporting meeting areas.

Subsequently the LVCVA plans to renovate and expand the existing convention center.

The Las Vegas Global Business District also includes plans for a centralised transportation hub.

Currently the Las Vegas Convention Centre hosts about 1.2m convention delegates annually.

For more information, see globalbusinessdistrict.com.

Gold Coast guide

DELEGATES attending AIME this week will be able to get a copy of the 2015 Gold Coast Business Events Guide, which will be hot off the presses to showcase the latest developments in the fast growing region.

Gold Coast venues have spent more than \$180m collectively on the development of conference and event facilities over the last 12 months, according to Gold Coast Tourism Corporation director business events, Anna Case.

RACT to engage

RECENT major investments by the Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania mean the organisation is now "ready to seriously engage with conference, meeting and event organisers".

Acquisitions include Strahan Village and Gordon River Cruises on the west coast, Freycinet Lodge and the Cradle Mountain Hotel, all of which are featured in a new 'Connect with Tasmania' brochure launched this week.

IHG meetings deals

INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels (IHG) has introduced new meeting packages offering a range of value adds for events held from February to September.

Valid for full day delegate packages for 20 or more guests, organisers can choose any two of a range of offers including a complimentary post conference cocktail reception, IHG meeting rewards double points and more.

MCEC catering guide

THE Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) will launch a retail catering guide at AIME.

The guide will explain the Centre's retail offering including its cafes and 10 pop up outlets, director of food and beverage Marc van der Meer said.

The guide is part of a five-year road map to enhance its food and beverage offering in response to trends, which would also included refurbishment of two on-site cafes to align with Melbourne's café scene, van der Meer said.

ATP tech upgrade

SYDNEY'S Australian Technology Park (ATP) will this week switch on an extensive wireless internet upgrade.

The enhanced system, which is being rolled out in partnership with Xirrus, will have the ability to handle more than 5,000 concurrent users across the site.

The system complements other technology innovations at the ATP including the latest video conferencing equipment and high speed optic fibre connectinos.

AVPartners appoints

ERIKSON Nygaard has been promoted to the role of technical event coordinator at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre (PCEC).

Nygaard has been with the company for three years, with AVPartners re-appointed as PCEC's in-house audiovisual service provider in July last year.



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crumbs!



COLOUR me beautiful.

With the reveal of AIME's new look today (**page two**) also came the news of 'sub logos' to symbolise the three pillars of the new brand: education, networking and business.

For those adept at marketing (and InDesign), Melbourne Convention Bureau ceo Karen Bolinger told the gathered media apparently the 'official' names for the sub-logo colours are 'burnt orange', 'aqua blue' and 'charcoal teal' - the more you know!



CAUSING a stir.

Change seems to be the word of the day at the kick off of Business Events Week today, with Bolinger outlining a new-look AIME that apparently might have ruffled some feathers.

"We do believe we've caused a bit of a stir in the industry."

Yes, she said, AIME did change the welcome reception to a gala dinner, based on feedback from new buyers that no one talked to them at the welcome event.

Having an event after two days of business would provide more connection and exchange, Bolinger said.

SWEET business.

MCEC ceo Peter King gave out some fun facts and figures that will be used in digital signage around the Centre, including that 2,800 cookies were eaten last month, and 4,000 sandwiches - by different people, we assume.

ACC wins Dreamtime 2015

THE Adelaide Convention Centre (ACC) has won the bid to host Dreamtime 2015, announced today at AIME.

Tourism Australia md John O'Sullivan (**pictured**) confirmed Adelaide will host the event from 06 to 12 Dec, which will see more than 100 global travel buyers attend, and which O'Sullivan said was "integral" to Tourism 2020 targets to grow the business events sector to \$16b annually.

"One of the great stories in domestic tourism recently in terms of investment in infrastructure and also alignment with our food and wine strategy through Restaurant Australia has been South Australia, in particular Adelaide."

Tourism Australia would also host targeted famils throughout other parts of Australia during Dreamtime, O'Sullivan said.

SA Minister for Tourism Leon Bignell said the state had done "quite a bit of building", with South Australia set to host the Corroboree Europe as well.

About \$550m had been spent on the Adelaide Oval, which was a "great convention space", and investment in the ACC was up around \$400m, with a \$40m footbridge linking the Oval with the Centre and the casino, itself undergoing a \$300m upgrade with a new hotel slated, Bignell said.

Stage one of the Centre's expansion was due to open in a few weeks, he said.

Adelaide Convention Bureau ceo Damien Kitto said the event fit perfectly with the positioning of Adelaide on a global scale for major conventions, meetings and incentives, leveraging the city's



infrastructure capacity.

CLICK HERE to view a video of O'Sullivan and Bignell speaking about Business Events Week and the Dreamtime win for South Australia.

Tourism Oz to pursue biz ev 'vigorously'

TOURISM Australia will pursue business events "vigorously" in pursuit of its Tourism 2020 goals, md John O'Sullivan has said.

Business Events Australia's program for this year would be about increasing conversion, building the brand of Australia and encouraging people to arrive, he said.

This would be achieved by modifying the 'one voice' concept used in the leisure sector to apply across the business events sector, O'Sullivan said.

The appointment of Business Events Australia gm Penny Lion and identification of the 2020 targets being about high yielding visitors had "turbocharged" the sector, O'Sullivan said.

It was important Tourism Australia did not duplicate the work of convention bureaus and centres, and work had been done to look at other areas the organisation could bring to the table, to enhance overnight visitor expenditure, he said.



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Events Calendar

This week's **BEN** events calendar is brought to you by **Gold Coast Business Events**.



24 FEB

International Marketing workshop; Newcastle Airport; for more visit: www.portstephentourism.com.au

24-25 FEB

AIME 2015 Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre; for more visit www.aime.com.au

4 MAR

NT Muster; Ivy Ballroom, Sydney; enquiries email: trade.tourismnt@nt.gov.au

5 MAR

NT Muster; Park Hyatt Melbourne Ballroom; enquiries email: trade.tourismnt@nt.gov.au

8-11 MAR

The Emergence Creative Festival; Margaret River; details at: www.emergencecreative.com

16 MAR

Ni hao WA 2015; Aravina Estate, Yallingup; for more visit: www.tourism.wa.gov.au

18 MAR

Gold Coast Connect Sydney, InterContinental Sydney; for details: www.visitgoldcoast.com

24-26 MAY

MEA Conference 2015; Hamilton Island; for more visit www.meetingsevents.com.au

18-20 JUN

This Is Gold Coast Business Exchange 2015; for details: www.visitgoldcoast.com

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@businessesnews.com.au.

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