



TMI!

AIME - so much information, so little time. Who knew that Achcha fruit were only available in Townsville? Check out the Townsville stand to do a taste test and find out more about this intriguing destination.



MEETINGS NZ 2015 has opened applications for Hosted Buyers - find out more and express interest at www.meetings.co.nz.

Brendan and Joey on the Club Med Stand tell us that the 52 beach and lagoon villas at Club Med Maldives, which only opened in February, has already secured a buyout by an electronics company and a 150 delegate Association conference.

"From there it's just a three minute boat shuttle to another Club Med property, Kani - so it's really two resorts for the price of one," said Brendon.

Feeling hungry? 100% Pure New Zealand have express packs of delicious Kiwi goodies for AIME delegates too busy to stop to eat.

MEANWHILE on the Gold Coast, Anna Case said the recent 1,500 delegate Pola Cosmetics incentive out of Japan (**BEN 11 Feb**), constructed a monster stage the size of an Olympic swimming pool.

"They chose the Gold Coast because of its natural beauty, the warm weather and the shopping but the key aspect of the incentive was the opportunity to cuddle a koala," she said. *Jill*

P&O: 20,000 delegates 2017

P&O Cruises Australia has officially launched its conferencing division at AIME (**BEN 28 Jan**), saying it projects bookings for 4,000 delegates this year.

P&O Cruises Australia senior sales manager and P&O Conferences division

head, Rebecca Mutanen, said the company had almost 12 groups booked for 2015, which had already exceeded last year's tally.

Enquiries for later in 2015 were increasing and had tripled year on year, Mutanen said.

P&O Conferences was targeting 12,000 meeting delegates in 2016 and 20,000 by 2017, which would be about 5% of the company's total capacity, director of sales Ryan Taibel said.

Forty percent of P&O's cruises were SeaBreaks, or sailings of less than five nights, with itineraries pre-set up to 18 months in advance, Mutanen said.

No other cruise line offered this sort of concentration, Taibel said, with P&O SeaBreaks "perfect" for corporate meetings.

Cruising offered value for money, with a three night conference in a four star hotel being about 15% cheaper per person on a cruise ship, for a deluxe room, Taibel said.

The conference push will leverage two new ships being



added to the P&O fleet this year, *Pacific Eden* and *Pacific Aria*, which have meeting spaces onboard for up to 200 people.

While the fledgling conferencing division would focus on Australia initially, there was a desire to expand into New Zealand in a few years, Taibel said.

An "Australian first" 48 page dedicated conference brochure has been launched by the cruise line, which has a MICE team including corporate groups exec Christopher Rich (**BEN 23 Jan**).

The division's tag line 'Leave Earth for your next conference' plays off the consumer marketing 'Like no place on Earth', while P&O itself had joined a number of associations, including the PCO Association, and would take part in six business events expos this year in order to build brand awareness, Mutanen said.

Virtual ICC Sydney



AEG Ogden has released an internal "fly-through" of the International Convention Centre Sydney, giving a virtual look inside the \$1.1 billion venue due to open in December next year.

Presenting at AIME, ICC Sydney ceo Geoff Donaghy (pictured above right with Tourism Australia managing director John O'Sullivan) said the Centre would start the process of confirming and contracting the first events in the national and exhibition markets in Australia in the next few months.

Twenty one international conventions had been secured for the ICC Sydney so far, Donaghy said, while up to 30 'test' events would be run in the two to three months prior to opening during which AEG Ogden had access to the building.

CLICK HERE to view the fly through.

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Star adds event space



SYDNEY'S The Star Event Centre has added a 700-delegate theatre-style plenary room, located on the level five balcony of the Centre which is now available as an event space thanks to the addition of a drape. As well as the new plenary room, the Centre is set to add a further five conference rooms by the end of this year, expanding the \$100m development's event space by more than 300 sqm.

Lizard Island first look



LIZARD Island has unveiled a 'first look' into its Anchor Bay suite (pictured). The Qld resort is slated to re-open in April with a soft launch next month, after a multi-million dollar rebuild following Cyclone Ita's devastation (**BEN** 26 Nov 14). **CLICK HERE** for more information.

BCEC gets appy

THE Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre (BCEC) has launched a free personalised conference app for clients. The app comes with the same wayfinding technology used for the G20 Leaders Summit, and comes preloaded with venue content and precinct information. Clients can choose from a selection of powerful event related content and design features to customise their version.

Three new Darling venues

SYDNEY'S

Australian National Maritime Museum will see three new event venues within the \$11 million Warships Pavilion on Darling Harbour.

Construction on the Pavilion, due for completion in September, had already started, with hard hat tours slated for August, commercial and visitor services acting assistant director Deanna Varga said.

Business events comprised about one eighth of the Museum's self generated revenue, Varga said, and were "integral" to the organisation.

The Pavilion (artist's impression pictured) would sit between the *HMAS Vampire* and *Onslow*, with gangways that accommodated tidal change, Varga said.

Previously, it was a temporary tent facility.

The Pavilion would incorporate an open air rooftop terrace with capacity for 100 cocktail-style, a multi-use, naturally lit space with capacity for 200, and a "cinematic experience" space with capacity for 50.

It was being developed to mark the centenary of World War One and commemorate more than 100 years of Royal Australian Navy service, the Museum said.

The new venues would bring the Museum's total capacity to 2,000



people over 11 spaces, Varga said. Early bird bookings for the Pavilion can now be made for events from September onwards. **CLICK HERE** to enquire.

BEC targets Chinese incentives

BUSINESS Events Cairns has said at AIME it is looking to target medium to large incentive groups out of China, to fill its shoulder seasons.

The area generally saw groups of about 150 people, business events director Rosie Douglas told media, and it had already seen dividends paid from employing someone in market, in business development manager Suzy Lai, based in Shanghai.

MEANWHILE the Cairns Delegate Advantage Program had been relaunched in print, with a map and specials included in the document.

It had also been extended to Palm Cove and Port Douglas, and to include pre and post touring, Douglas said.

Brisbane's \$30m in leads post G20

THE Brisbane Marketing Convention Bureau has said it generated 29 leads which had the potential to produce \$30m in economic impact following the G20 Leaders Summit.

GM Rob Nelson said the G20 had been a "game-changer" for Brisbane as a business events destination.

Incentives had been put in place to make sure hotel room capacity catering for the G20 was available, and Brisbane believed it had the capacity and events to continue to fill this in the future, Nelson told media at AIME.

Three new hotel and conference offerings were due for completion in 2017, including the Howard Smith Wharves revitalisation project, he said (**BEN** 22 Oct 14).

Heritage adds New Plymouth property

HERITAGE Hotels in New Zealand has added its 20th property in the country with the Devon Hotel New Plymouth.



Boosting the Heritage portfolio to more than 16 locations, the property joined in December and features a recently opened conference centre with capacity for up to 750 people theatre style, a grand auditorium and eight smaller conference rooms, the company said.

AIME TV on BEN site

THE *Business Events News* website now features a number of videos produced over the last few days of AIME.

To view them click on 'videos' at businesseventsnews.com.au.



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All the AIME action

BUSINESS Events News walked the AIME floor yesterday snapping these pics of exhibitors and buyers. Lots more AIME photos are available on our website and at [facebook.com/BusEvNews](https://www.facebook.com/BusEvNews).



LEFT: Some of the team from Oman Tourism, including newly appointed PR manager Ben Alcock; Rochelle Uechtritz of Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre; and Oman Tourism Australia/NZ gm Mona Tannous.



RIGHT: I do like your hat! Dugal McIntyre from Akubra at the hat fitting station.

RIGHT: Alicia Ramsey, The Appointment Group; Joanne Sproule, Rydges Hotels & Resorts; and Michelle Fitzjohn of Atlantic Group.



LEFT: Ashlee Galea from Hawaii Tourism shows the rough end of a pineapple to Bernadette Wardle of Air New Zealand.

RIGHT: Anne Morris from GTI Tourism with AIME director Jacqui Timmins at the 'Movers & Shakers' party.

BELOW: Michelle Alice Thoo from the Singapore Tourism Board with her newly appointed boss, John Gregory Conceicao.



RIGHT: Representatives from the Japan National Tourism Organization served sushi.

BELOW: Cathy Wanny with Thushara Liyanarachchi of Taj Hotels Resorts & Palaces.



ABOVE: Andrea Werner and Melanie Leyn of Stamford Hotels & Resorts.



BELOW: Taiwan Tourism welcomes the Year of the Sheep at AIME.





business events news

25th February 2015



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AS CROWN Melbourne continues to develop its business events offerings, including exclusive culinary options from celebrity chefs such as Fat Duck's Heston Blumenthal, along comes Johnny Di Francesco, undisputed king of the pizza, with Gradi in a space that can take 330 diners.

The owner of the iconic Gradi 400 in Melbourne won the 2014 World Pizza Championships in Parma and not for Johnny are these your vin ordinaire, non-traditional, thin crusts, but a series of pizza and calzone Napolitano.

Such is his dedication to making world-class pizza, he was awarded Australasian Principal of V.P.N., an international association dedicated to protecting and promoting authentic Neapolitan pizza.

Check out the Margherita Pizza and Nutella Calzone while his egg and goats' cheese pizza for breakfast comes highly recommended by the whole *BEN* team.

ACB touring portal

THE Adelaide Convention Bureau (ACB) has launched a delegate pre and post touring booking portal.

Live as of yesterday, the portal features experiences such as wine tasting at Penfolds and swimming with wild dolphins.

Director of sales and marketing Martin Radcliffe said the Bureau took a 7% commission from portal sales to cover the costs of running it, with a "warm response" from PCOs, DMCs and clients so far.

CLICK HERE to access.

Internationalise existing events

THE business events industry, and organisations such as Austrade and Tourism Australia, should look at "internationalising" existing Australian events with the capacity to draw in more visitors and exhibitors, Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA) ceo Joyce DiMascio says.

Speaking at the AIME *What's Next?! Leaders Panel* discussion, DiMascio said Australia had a portfolio of events, such as Fine Food Australia, linking with key pillars of the country's economy that had the capacity to be internationalised when it came to better marketing and attracting more visitors.

Simple things such as adding events on the EEAA calendar to Tourism Australia's and leveraging the delegate boosting programs

Thailand connects

THE Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) has launched a CONNECT The World initiative at AIME, highlighting the country's "unrivalled destinations, business prospects and people".

Meeting organisers are being inspired to add value to their events with a range of fulfilling CSR activities such as releasing turtles, cultivating coral, beach clean-ups and planting sea grass.

The TCEB said it saw 37,947 Australian business events travellers from October 2013 to September 2014, up 137% year on year.

This pumped \$117m into the Thai economy, the Bureau said.



could help events in areas Australia wanted to be known for globally - such as agribusiness, games technology and oil and gas, attract more international exhibitors, buyers and visitors, DiMascio said.

The EEAA had recently met with Tourism Australia regarding this topic, so it was "on the agenda."

"If we internationalise some of these events that are already here, in these areas of the Australian economy where we are strong, we have the potential to attract more exhibitors and more visitors and that ultimately is good for the growth of that event."

Also on the panel, PCO Association president Barry Neame said event organisers would need to challenge clients in the future to enhance technology such as social media, otherwise people would develop their own online networks and educational experiences and not attend conferences.

ICCA ceo Martin Sirk said there was a "generation of people organising events who are bypassing traditional events structure".

Pictured above from left are Tourism Australia business events trade programs manager Kelly Maynard, Sirk, DiMascio, Neame and MC Darren Isenberg.

Glebe nos will be okay

AEG Ogden has said it is confident that in its second year, numbers for events held at the Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island will be "okay".

Director of convention centres Geoff Donaghy told *BEN SEC@ GI* was performing "exactly as it needed to" in providing an interim home for some of the exhibitions formerly held at the now defunct Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre (SCEC).

Some events had moved to other venues, some had moved to other cities, but a "fair proportion" of shows had moved to Glebe, he said.

In response to a query about reported difficulties in getting to the venue and dropping numbers of events, Donaghy said it was not a perfect location, but some shows were reporting increased attendance, particularly once the public had realised the ferry trip could be part of the experience

"So in the second year of events we're pretty confident that the numbers will be okay," he said.

MEANWHILE Australian National Maritime Museum commercial and visitor services acting assistant director Deanna Varga said the Museum had seen the effect of not having a convention centre in the Darling Harbour precinct through a drop in visitation numbers by roughly 10 to 15% since the closure of the SCEC in late 2013.

Event numbers had been strong, Varga said, but this was due to a number of different factors, including recruiting two new business events staff.

With the opening of ICC Sydney, the Museum hoped to see these visitation numbers increase, Varga said.

Business Events News is Australia's newest online publication dedicated to the vibrant meetings, incentives, conferences and events sector.

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