



New Year, new invites

YES, it's 2015 - sorry if that's a bit shocking to those of you who, like me, didn't really think that a date like 2015 would ever *actually* occur.

With the New Year comes new event invitations and the ingenious ways organisers think up to secure invitees' attention and attendance.

BEN's sister publication received an invitation to an event in the form of a chilli plant with the tag line 'Small things can pack a powerful punch, like this ghost pepper'.

The plant is adorning the **BEN** office, awaiting a home, and a soul brave enough to taste its fruits...

We're no strangers to inventive invites ourselves, with Jill in the past receiving a surfboard and talking shark asking her to come to Manly (**BEN** 14 Apr) and a message in a bottle from Townsville (**BEN** 02 Jul).

So here's to a new year, hopefully filled with peace, joy and more out-there invitations!
 Alex on behalf of Jill who is away



No rest for biz ev sector

THE business events sector needs to build on successes from last year, industry leaders have said.

Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) executive director Andrew Hiebl said while the sector had a few wins in 2014, there was a need to continue educating government about what benefit the sector played.

AACB was looking to get the 'Attracting Business Events to Australia' framework, launched by Minister for Trade and Investment Andrew Robb in November (**BEN** 28 Nov), rolled out to other Ministers, with a whole-of-government approach needed, Hiebl said.

The AACB would meet with other Ministers and distribute its Deloitte Access Economics report (**BEN** 21 Nov) over the next six months, he said.

Business Events Council of Australia (BECA) chairman Matt Hingerty said this year, from an international perspective, the industry needed to convert the good work done by the Federal government in negotiating various Free Trade Agreements.

In the domestic space, the sector needed to take advantage of the drop in the Australian dollar value, which made the country more attractive to business and might encourage domestic companies to hold events in the country, he said.

The drop in oil prices would help the sector build profitability, with travel costs decreased, Hingerty said.

BECA was on track to publish the findings from its national business events research project, partially funded by the government, at AIME, he said (**BEN** 20 Jun).

Australian Hotels Association



(AHA) ceo Stephen Ferguson said with state elections in Queensland and NSW in the next three months, event-related tourism should become mainstream issues.

"Both states have seen downturns in mining and other industries; whereas events and tourism have continued to surge."

What was needed were flexible working conditions to boost productivity, a strong international business events marketing program to make the most of the falling dollar and a commitment from government to boost infrastructure and recognise the employment and revenue generating value of the business events sector, he said.

Mantra Group director of MICE Paul Wilson said the business events community needed to be coaching and sharing good news stories about the benefits of conferencing this year.

"Culture is everything and spending time with other decision makers in your corporation or clients has extreme value."

Sampson to Qantas board

TODD Sampson fans, hold onto your hats.

A keynote speaker at last year's AIME and described by Jill as 'the thinking woman's crumpet', Leo Burnett Group national ceo Todd Sampson has been appointed as non-executive director to Qantas' board, effective from 25 Feb.

To read Jill's coverage of Sampson's AIME talk, [CLICK HERE](#).

McCracken to CBCR

BROOME'S Cable Beach Club Resort Spa (CBCR) has appointed Carol McCracken as its new conference and incentives sales executive.

McCracken has more than 20 years industry experience, spanning the UK, Spain and Australia.

Her past roles have included duty airport manager for Qantas at London Heathrow, airport manager with Hertz, travel agency manager and event manager.

McCracken's most recent roles have been with Pan Pacific and Globetrotter Corporate Travel in Western Australia.

Based in Perth, McCracken will be representing Cable Beach Club at AIME next month.



Venues cancel anti-vax events

FIVE conference venues have reportedly cancelled events at which US anti-vaccination campaigner Sherri Tenpenny was set to present.

This moves come after several venues, including the Como Melbourne Hotel, cancelled seminars by 'pick up' artist Julien Blanc last year (**BEN** 05 Nov).

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that five venues around Australia had cancelled anti-vaccination seminars.

A note on the Melbourne event's eventbrite page said the venue had cancelled the booking "due to bullying by vested interests who do not believe in informed consent, free speech and respect for other's rights".

A petition on Change.org with more than 6,440 signatures is calling for the denial of a visa for Tenpenny, saying she represents a danger to Australian children due to "extremist and uneducated views regarding vaccination".

[CLICK HERE](#) to read more.

Major India business mission

THE Australia Business Week in India will be Australia's largest ever business mission to India, with about 450 delegates attending from 09 to 16 Jan.

Led by Trade and Investment Minister Andrew Robb, tourism and business events would be represented (**BEN** 08 Sep).

The Minister would attend Vibrant Gujarat, an economic and development summit with the Indian Prime Minister during the trip, Robb's office said.



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FIRST we brought you news that the King's planes, complete with a conferencing facility, were on sale (**BEN** 05 Jan), now we bring you news of the rock 'n' roll kind in the form of a fairly interesting event - the Parkes Elvis Festival, held this week from 07 to 11 Jan.

Sponsored by Destination NSW among others, the event is expected to see more than 18,000 attendees, set to celebrate the Elvis' 80th birthday.

There is, of course, karaoke on the list of events, as well as Elvis trivia, poetry, rock 'n' roll dancing and many a concert.

The NSW Deputy Premier Troy Grant with Acting Transport Minister Duncan Gay got in on the fun, **pictured** farewelling fans as they made their way to the festival aboard the dedicated NSW TrainLink Elvis Express, a service running from Central Station to Parkes Railway Station that sold out in September and featured onboard entertainers and tribute artists.



Photo courtesy of
@destinationnsw.

AYANA villa renovation complete

THE renovation of 24 villas at AYANA Resort is now complete.

Overall layout had been maintained but interiors had been refitted with increased living spaces, gm Clive Edwards said.

AFC Asian cup opportunities

HOSTING the AFC Asian Cup would reinforce Australia's reputation as a top destination for major events, Tourism Australia has said.

Business Events Australia said the boost to tourism was hoped to have an impact on business events, as the country would be shown to be a world class destination and an exceptional host for events of this size.

The 23 day event was expected to see 500,000 spectators attend, including 30,000 international fans, with 32 matches played in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra and Newcastle, Tourism Australia md John O'Sullivan said.

The GDP impact of hosting the event was estimated to be \$23m, it said.

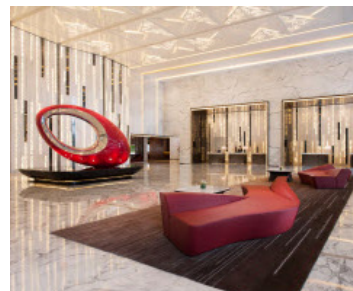
AFC Asian Cup Australia 2015

local organising committee ceo Michael Brown said it was hoped the tournament would open doors for business, tourism and trade and investment.

International sports business program Match Australia (**BEN** 27 Oct) would use the Asian Cup as a platform to promote Australian capabilities in international markets, particularly Asia, Brown said.

"Austrade is encouraging high level government and business delegations to visit Australia during the AFC Asian Cup to meet with Australian companies to do business and network."

Shanghai Marriott IT&CM venue



IT&CM China has confirmed that the Shanghai Marriott Hotel Parkview is to host its opening ceremony and welcome dinner on 14 Apr.

About 1,000 delegates would attend the event at the five star hotel located in Puxi, organisers said, with the Shanghai Marriott also confirmed as one of the event's official hotels for 2015.

Shanghai Marriott Hotel Parkview gm Ricky Lam said as a meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions-focussed hotel, the establishment was excited about partnering with an influential event.

Rail trail funding boost

THE NSW government has said it will provide up to \$50m in funding for rail trail pilot projects along sections of the Casino to Murwillumbah and Rosewood to Tumburumba lines to support more tourists visiting regional areas.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) are open and close on 31 Mar, the government said.

Communities in regional NSW had identified an opportunity to build infrastructure around unused rail lines, and these tourism projects were a "fantastic opportunity" to showcase local towns and regions, with funding provided from the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund, Minister for Regional Tourism John Barilaro said.

CLICK HERE to submit an EOI.

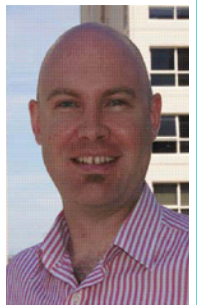
Ben on BEN



Each month Business Manager for inPlace Recruitment, Ben Carnegie, writes his observations from the recruiter's perspective to help job hunters find the perfect job.

Ben has over 15 years working in five star hotels and the MICE industry and has worked on some of Australia's biggest events.

2015 has well and truly started and it is traditionally this time of year that you'll see companies hiring new staff more often than



at any other time of the year.

Q3 brings with it the positivity of a fresh start when you look at it from a calendar year point of view and it's not just individuals that choose to review their lives and careers. Many companies take this time to do the same thing. The best thing you can do if you want to make a change in your career this year is firstly, get your resume up to date so you can pounce on any new job opportunities as they become available.

The MICE industry has not lost its appeal and remains a highly competitive market. So the faster you are able to get your application in front of a prospective employer, the better it is for you!

Happy hunting!

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

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