



## Grace & favour

**SCRATCH** the surface of any of the older buildings in Sydney and you are bound to find a good story.



Take The Grace Hotel with a story of thwarted plans, a stock market crash, hidden tunnels and ultimate redemption.

It was built by the Grace Bros. retail empire and begins in 1926 when the two Grace brothers purchased a block of land on the corner of York, Clarence and King streets, to build the 'Grace Building,' a retail edifice perfectly positioned to take advantage of the planned public transport routes and the coming Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Unfortunately, the opening was followed shortly afterwards by the Wall Street Crash with the ensuing market collapse in Australia severely affecting Grace Bros.

With Australia at war in 1942, the Grace Building was requisitioned for use as headquarters by the Supreme Commander of allied forces in the south-west Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur.

It is thought that the series of tunnels that run beneath York Street to Circular Quay, now used by Telstra, were connected to the basement of the Grace Building, housing secret emergency telephone equipment.

In 1945 The Commonwealth of Australia compulsorily acquired the building and in 1953 a legal battle to reacquire it was won allowing Grace Bros' retailing chain to further expand into Sydney's suburbs.

In 1995 the Grace Building was purchased by Kuala Lumpur based Low Yat Group and was reopened to the public as a hotel on 1 June, 1997.

Today it operates as The Grace Hotel Sydney and remains one of Sydney's best-known examples of pre-war architecture with an historic foundation like no other.

## Tassie events bandwagon

**THE** Tasmanian State Government will dish out an additional \$400,000 over four years to increase Tasmania's share of the business events market.

Following the announcement in last week's state Budget, Business Events Tasmania (BET) chief executive officer, Stuart Nettlefold, said the significant investment shows the Government has great confidence in the business events sector with a significant boost representing close to a 19% increase to the core funding provided annually to BET.

### MEA strikes back

**MEETINGS** and Events Australia (MEA) says its upcoming Event Show Sydney will become the "pre-eminent events show to be held out of Sydney on an annual basis".

Responding to claims by rival show Luxperience that it will offer "better return on investment" (**BEN Mon**), MEA ceo Linda Gaunt said "this show will not be a one hit wonder...[it] has been established as an answer to market demand and will most definitely focus on ensuring that it attracts corporate buyers".

Gaunt said focus groups are currently in place to ensure buyers have input into the program and will support by attending.

"The Event Show is not an after-thought nor is it tacked onto an existing show, it will provide sellers Australia-wide with the opportunity to enter the Sydney market," she said.

Gaunt said it would ensure it keeps both customised and "off the shelf" booth prices at a fair and reasonable rate.

"The event is about growing the MEA offering to its members as well as encouraging others to join and be part of our growing network of business professionals with a common goal to build their business," she concluded.

"It's great to see that the potential of our sector is being recognised at this level and it demonstrates the current strength of the industry in Tasmania, where we continue to see momentum building.

"The business event delegate is the highest spending in the visitor economy, a fact that hasn't been lost on the State Government in their push to see the Tasmanian tourism boom continue.

"The additional funding will be used to increase BET's sales resource, broaden our capacities in international markets, further develop our digital strategy and progress our important Ambassador Program," he said.

### Today's issue of BEN

**Business Events News** today has two pages of news plus a full page from (**click**)

- Travel Industry Expo

### Starwood Cvent deal

**STARWOOD** Hotels & Resorts Worldwide has today announced a new partnership with Cvent which will see planners who book meetings at Starwood properties worldwide offered a customisable app for their event.

Technology service provider PSAV is also part of the deal, having worked with Cvent since 2013 to offer CrowdCompass mobile apps which can feature agendas, speaker bios, property info and presentations.

## Sydney's hidden rooftop gem

**WHEN** the heritage listed Holiday Inn Old Sydney, which recently underwent an upgrade to its Lobby Bar and a soft furnishing refresh to their Level 1 restaurant, invited some of the Sydney's top conference and event organisers to a Vivid function last Thursday evening, they were surprised to find themselves on the hotel's rooftop.

Hailed as a real find, this hidden



gem in the heart of The Rocks, complete with a swimming pool and spa and available for medium size events,

provided a spectacular viewing platform for Vivid that took in the Harbour Bridge, the Opera House and Circular Quay.

**Pictured** above from left enjoying the view are David Dymott, CC Conferences; Dee Prendergast of IHG; and Danny Schroder from BCD M&I.

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# business events news

3rd June 2015

## Wood-fired star



**MURRAY** River Paddle Steamers at Echuca in Victoria run three steamers – the *Pride of the Murray*, the *PS Canberra* and the *PS Emmylou* for memorable short cruises, dinners and events.

The *Emmylou* at 30m long and 10m wide, steel hulled and timber decked is something of a star on the Murray River since appearing as the fictional paddle steamer *PS Providence* in the Australian television mini-series "All the Rivers Run".

She is also available for one, two or three night group charters.

*Emmylou* is kitted out with a dining and licensed bar area, a galley and a front lounge.

She accommodates 18 people in eight twin share cabins plus one double bed cabin.

Prices for a truly Australian adventure start from \$230pp on the main deck for a one night cruise and \$485pp for a three-night cruise.

Private charters start from \$9,000 - call 03 5482 5244.

## MEETINGS next week

**CONVENTIONS** and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) will next week welcome more than 600 event organisers for the annual MEETINGS 2015 trade show.

They'll interact with 190 exhibitors from 18 regions across NZ, with the event taking place 10-11 Jun at Auckland's ASB showgrounds - see **BEN** next week for all the details.

## Brisbane biz events boom

**BUSINESS** events are set to form a key part of Brisbane's plan for future growth.

The Brisbane 2022 New World City Action Plan, launched last week by the Lord Mayor's Economic Development Steering Committee, recommends that the city target an average 50,000 delegate days per month by 2022.

That could be achieved by the Queensland capital consistently hosting 40 international conferences per year.

The aim would be for Brisbane to consistently earn a top 50 International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) global ranking.

The recommendation is the result of consultation with more than 1000 stakeholders including executives, entrepreneurs, students, government agencies, analysts and academics in addition to a number of leaders from the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

Lord Mayor Graham Quirk said business events boosted a major part of the city's economic landscape with 37 international conferences staged last year and the city achieving an ICCA ranking of 67 worldwide.

"My aim is to ensure Brisbane's influence as a serious player in the Asia Pacific region.

"It continues to grow and we are recognised globally as a new world city full of opportunity," Quirk said.

Brisbane Marketing's Convention Bureau general manager, Conventions and Business Events, Rob Nelson said the report identified accommodation and the visitor economy as a significant growth sector.

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**ORGANISERS** of this event didn't expect things to get so hot.

Revellers at last Sat's Burning Man festival in Israel - famous for its pyrotechnic spectacles - unfortunately torched some rare archaeological artefacts.

The Israeli Antiques Authority lamented at the burning of a temple scattered with flint tools from the Paleolithic, Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods.



## What is image blending?

**THE** use of super-wide panoramic screens is fast becoming the norm for large-scale events in Australia.

To project onto these panoramic screens we use a special technique known as "image blending". This involves the use of two or more projectors, each portraying a section of an image, blended or overlapped seamlessly together to create a single, wider image on screen in an abnormal aspect ratio.

When done correctly, it is almost impossible for the guests in the room to notice with the naked eye where the image has been blended.

In terms of panoramic or "Megascreens" at AVPartners at Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre we own 2 custom made 16M x 3.4M Megascreens but we also project onto our large 22M x 9M cycloramas which allows us to do full floor-to-ceiling blended projection!

Most high powered projectors these days also have internal software to aid in the blending process. The "corner correction" function allows our technicians to

drag any corner of the projectors up, down, left or right which makes the process far more efficient than attempting the blend with conventional keystone.

At AVPartners, we like to use the SpyderX20 with full HD projectors for our blending. The SpyderX20 is the world's most powerful video processor and presentation switcher, combining a versatile hardware-based video processor with the flexibility of a multiple video source matrix switcher.

Speak to your AV provider to find out more about how image blending can impress at your next event.

Ryan Taylor is the partner at Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre with AVPartners, which creates integrated event experiences

through combining state of the art audiovisual technology, unrivalled expertise and a highly tailored approach.



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