



Game of blarney

IT'S a known fact that the Irish can be economical with the



truth, never letting the facts get in the way of a good story.

So when the Belfast Zoological Gardens (BZG) announced the arrival of a critically endangered dragon at the Zoo this week, the red flag went up.

Steadfastly this august establishment went on with their claim that the dragon, considered all but extinct, is to be housed in a specially designed enclosure and where possible his prey will be sourced from outside the zoo's own collection.

Could it be— had all this talk of Game of Thrones, The Hunger Games and of Vikings spawned this infant male which we learn currently has a wing-span of 10ft, but when fully grown his skull alone will measure up to 23ft.

"We're thrilled to have such an exceptionally rare creature here at Belfast Zoo," said Mark Challis Belfast Zoo manager. "This dragon is an important addition not only for us but for Northern Ireland as a whole.

"Despite their fearsome reputation and fabled ability to burn entire cities to ashes, we'd like to reassure the residents of Belfast that our keepers have received expert training, and we're looking forward to seeing him thrive in his new environment."

Now comes the spoiler! It's an animatronic dragon and marks the culmination of a campaign by Tourism Ireland in partnership with HBO to promote Northern Ireland as the home of Game of Thrones, and capitalise on the rise of screen tourism.

So if you are taking your incentive across the sea to Ireland, check out the Zoo and make sure to go at 'dragon feeding time', and watch the chief vet give him a checkup.

Curious? Check out the official release by [CLICKING HERE](#).

Fiji convention progress

TOURISM

Fiji has soft launched the new Fiji Convention Bureau (**BEN**

31 Oct 14) with the aim of significantly increasing the country's already strong MICE market presence.

The organisation is headed up by Sally Cooper, who told **BEN** this morning the government-funded body will provide "neutral representation" of the facilities available across the country so that the requirements of PCOs and meeting planners can be matched with venue offerings.

This week Fiji is hosting its largest conference since elections were held in Sep, with more than 500 delegates attending the second annual Fijian Tourism Expo on Denarau Island.

Cooper said because the Fiji Convention Bureau is not member-based it can provide unbiased, transparent advice.

And the move is likely to provide more incentive business for smaller properties which don't have the resources to chase



clients in the MICE arena. The bureau

is in the process of creating a dedicated C&I website as part of the Tourism Fiji site, collating existing content with MICE-specific additional info.

The bureau will also be able to facilitate bidding for larger events across multiple properties, Cooper said.

Recent bids submitted include one for the International Stand-Up Paddleboard Championships, while the International Triathlon held in Fiji annually has seen 400% growth since 2011.

Later this year Fiji will also host its first PGA-sanctioned golf tournament, the Fiji International.

Sport has been a key focus, Cooper said, because Fiji's balmy climate allows it to host groups at any time of the year meaning MICE events can be targeted to the off-season.

Currently the FCB has three staff with a fourth to be added by the end of the year, and leads for MICE business are passed to the bureau from Tourism Fiji's offices across the globe with a presence in Australia, NZ, the US, UK, Europe, India, Korea and China.

The expansion of the bureau is also likely to see weddings incorporated into its remit, Cooper added.

Action stations for Maritime Museum

THE Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney's Darling Harbour has appointed creative agency Spinifex Group to develop a "dramatic immersive cinematic experience" to bring to life the museum's ex-navy submarine and destroyer.

The \$12 million project will transport visitors back to 1973 into the world of *HMAS Vampire* and *HMAS Onslow*, via an eight minute film projected on a custom-built walk-through theatre space.

The extension of the museum is expected to become a major tourist drawcard as well as provide exciting new options for corporate meetings and events.

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has three pages of news plus full pages from: ([click](#))

- Pullman events bonuses
- Travel Industry Expo

New TA business events support guide

TOURISM Australia and Austrade have released a new edition of *Attracting Business Events to Australia* - a guide which outlines federal assistance to industry during the event bidding and marketing process.

TA md John O'Sullivan said the guide provides a clear pathway to industry support, noting that business events are "an important contributor to the Australian economy, generating income, fostering trade and investment and lifting our reputation as a world-class destination".

He said the first point of contact for stakeholders seeking assistance is Tourism Australia, which will then liaise with other government agencies including Austrade to assess requests and provide guidance.

The new guide explains the process, lists priority industry sectors and details minimum requirements for support.

Austrade ceo Bruce Gosper said the organisation's network of over 80 offices in 48 markets can help realise the value of the dynamic business events sector - see australia.com/businessevents.





business events news

17th June 2015

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Alice Springs kicks goals



A BONUS surprise was in store for the 40 delegates who participated in the AFL's Melbourne Football Club's (MFC) inaugural Commercial Partner Conference held in Alice Springs late last month.

They took part in an exclusive training session with Melbourne Football Club coach, Paul Roos.

The two-day event began with a golf day welcome, business workshops and sessions at the Alice Springs Convention Centre.

It also included an exclusive dinner at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station and front row seats at the Melbourne versus Port Adelaide game played at the Alice Springs Traeger Park ground.

The group (pictured) included senior management and a number of the Club's corporate partners, while speakers included MFC ceo Peter Jackson and

Tourism NT CEO, Tony Mayell.

The conference also enabled interaction with the local Alice Springs business community and provided insights into the capacity of Alice Springs as a business events destination.

Symposium proposals

THE Australian Event Symposium, to be hosted in conjunction with the 2015 Australian Event Awards, is seeking submissions for presenters to explore the theme *Events, Tourism and Destination Branding*.

The second day of the Symposium will be split into four themes focusing on sports, culture, event and business tourism, with presenters to offer suggestions such as case studies, and panel sessions for the day - see eventsymposium.com.au.

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.



GREAT EXPECTATIONS

IN my last two columns I've dealt with the professional standards expected of incentive practitioners and meeting managers/PCOs. The public has a right to expect that both of these provide their services efficiently, honestly and ethically. In my dictionary, ethically is defined as morally good or correct. And yet what about our clients? Are they ethical in their dealings with professionals in the meetings and incentives industries? I would like to think so, but strong evidence suggests they're not always as squeaky clean as we would like to think!

Take the case of an incentive practitioner whose proposal was sent, by the client, to another practitioner to re-price? Was that ethical, and should the second practitioner have declined to quote knowing that they were merely re-quoting another practitioner's work? In my book the answers are 'no' in the first case and 'yes' in the second. That his happened at all is, unfortunately, all too typical of what's happening more and more often these days.

Had the client sent the second practitioner a briefing document and asked then to quote from scratch that would have been acceptable, not good practice since the original practitioner had quoted some time previously, but acceptable. This made things difficult for the original practitioner who was faced with a client who was convinced, having received a cheaper quote for the same itinerary from the second practitioner, that they were being overcharged.

It had to be pointed out that the second practitioner had done none of the research; had not recommended and costed other destinations as required by the original brief and had not provided copy and graphics for a brochure

that the client had had printed. The original practitioner retained the business but nevertheless the second practitioner apparently had no qualms about quoting in this manner.

This isn't a made-up story; it actually happened to an Incentive Association member who reported it to the association. But who was more at fault? The client who wanted to 'test the water' but did so in a way that was very unfair and unethical or the second practitioner who, I think, should have refused to quote on something that was clearly someone else's work?

But profit is a cruel mistress and some people, some companies, would rather throw ethics out of the window if it meant earning an extra buck!

In another instance I heard on a recent famil one delegate tell another that they weren't going to appoint a PCO to run a conference (for between 300 and 500 delegates) because between the delegate and her boss they could 'probably' do the job between them! This isn't economy it's sheer madness. The money they would almost certainly save by using a PCO who would buy at the best rates, use meetings management software which would provide on-line registration, speaker requirements, AV details and a host of other facilities and take care of everything needed to bring the event to a successful conclusion is considerable. The PCO would also make the client look good. When are our associations going to start educating our potential clients?

Peter Gray is an independent Incentive Consultant and Motivational Strategist. He can be contacted on peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net



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business events news

17th June 2015

PCOA appointment

PETA Moore has been appointed as Program Director for the upcoming PCOA Conference and Exhibition which is taking place in Adelaide 29 Nov-01 Dec.

Moore has worked on "both sides of the fence" as an in-house event manager and contract event producer - for more info see conference.pco.asn.au.

Reed expansion

REED Travel Exhibitions' WTM Portfolio has announced the launch of two 'WTM connect' events in 2016 which will see it launch into China and Asia.

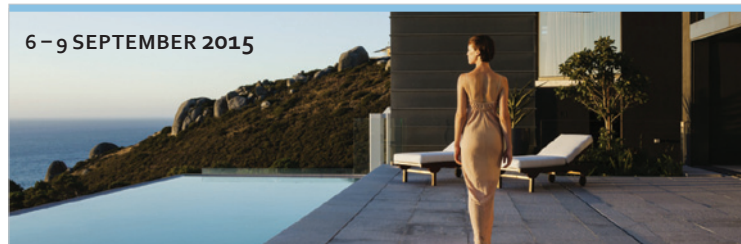
WTM connect Asia will take place in Penang on 18-20 May while WTM connect China is scheduled for 23-25 May 2016 on Hainan Island.

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ENRICHMENT: REDEFINING VALUE FOR THE MODERN BUSINESS TRAVELLER

With a global MICE travel market worth more than US\$1.18 trillion in 2014, there's an incredible amount of money being spent on business travel. But with increased spending comes the need for a comparable increase in value. No matter what the budget, every traveller – both business and leisure – wants to feel that they have achieved the maximum result from their investment.

In a recent study on the habits of the modern business traveller, Chekitan Dev, Associate Professor of Service Marketing at the Cornell School of Hospitality, said "in prior decades, business travellers were of a generation where they learned to spend time but save money. Now they are prepared to spend money but save time." This represents an important shift in the understanding of the business traveller's psyche. Traditionally, value has been thought of in largely financial terms, but the modern traveller looks at it in a different way placing greater emphasis on factors that create personal and organisational enrichment. For the sophisticated, worldly and well travelled person, added value can come in a different form, through an authentic experience or insider knowledge that gives them a one of a kind encounter. Additionally service; personal connections and expertise also play an important part which enhance commercial value perceptions.

This is where Luxperience comes into its own. As the only event of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, it is a unique blend of the best of business and leisure travel, giving attendees the opportunity to identify new offerings that may sit outside their traditional remit. In the high end experiential travel market there is an ever increasing cross over between the business and leisure markets as corporate travellers look for new avenues to expand their travel potential. The event is also an opportunity to build personal relationships within the industry, giving attendees the chance to mix with the most influential players in the market. It's that kind of value that can't be measured in dollars and cents.

EVENTS BY
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New CHC Town Hall

AFTER years of conjecture and a number of options tendered for the future of the earthquake damaged Christchurch Town Hall, a decision has been reached to fully restore the iconic building by June 2018, at a cost of \$127.5m.

A number of options were considered, including partial restoration or building a new facility. However, a business case carried out by Deloitte identified restoration was the most financially viable option that would also provide fit-for-purpose civic, cultural and performing arts facilities a city the size of Christchurch needs.

The cost of the restoration is to be partially funded by a \$68.9 million insurance contribution, with ratepayers contributing the balance of \$58.6 million.

Venue custodian Vbase general manager Darren Burden said the restoration would make the Town Hall a magnet for entertainment, cultural and community events.

"We are very excited about this announcement. Restoring such an iconic venue is another step forward in returning something back to the city that holds a special place in many Cantabrian's hearts."



AN exciting new space has been launched by Dreamworld Events on the Gold Coast, just for those with a love of the 'sweet' life!

Described as unlike anything that you've seen or experienced, it is located in the cheerful and colourfully themed Dreamworld Candy Nut and Fudge Store, which in the evening can be transformed into a venue for a seated dinner or cocktail party.

Seating up to 70 and 150 cocktail style, guests are surrounded by an extravaganza of luscious lollies and chocolates.

"Its perfect for event organisers looking for a real-life Willy Wonka style experience," says Katie Tinetti, national sales manager events Dreamworld, WhiteWater World and SkyPoint.

The venue comes complete with the Store's very own Candy Man and Roller Candy Girls (below).



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