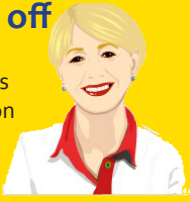




Scooting off

SINGAPORE bound today as **BEN** flies out on Scoot Airlines for an update on everything new, hip and happening in this high-octane city.



The opportunity for a Singapore stopover, courtesy of the STB, staying at the new Westin overlooking Marina Bay and dining high up in one of Garden's by the Bay SuperTrees was an irresistible lure prior to continuing on a Banyan Tree Bintan and Banyan Tree Lang Co, Vietnam famil.

I'll also be checking out Scootbiz, Scoot's business class offering for **BEN's** Sitting Pretty.

MEANWHILE: Tourism Australia reports that according to consulting firm Mercer's 2015 survey, which uses dozens of criteria including political stability, health care, education, crime, recreation and transport, Sydney has been named number 10 in a list of the world's most livable cities - apparently for having the best living standards.

It's an outcome, which isn't going to go down well with our Melbourne cousins who have consistently outranked Sydney of late and on this occasion, came in at a commendable 16. *Jill*

EEAA's industry calendar

THE Exhibition and Event Association of Australia has today released a "comprehensive calendar of events" organised and/or hosted by its members across Australia during 2015.

Aimed at assisting the industry as a business planning tool, EEAA ceo Joyce DiMascio said the new publication would complement the real-time online version on the organisation's website which is updated by members.

"Knowledge is power when you are trying to grow your business," she said, with the calendar also helping venues and suppliers identify what is on where so they can pitch their services.

"The calendar is also a compelling advocacy resource for the Association...we are sharing it with our stakeholders, especially with agencies like Austrade and Tourism Australia, as we continue our efforts to showcase the breadth of opportunity presented by the exhibition and event sector," DiMascio added.

The new calendar forms part of

Today's issue of **BEN**

Business Events News today has two pages of news plus a full page from **Novotel Wollongong Northbeach** ([click](#)).

the *Power of Exhibitions* toolkit, listing hundreds of trade and consumer shows held nationally.

MEANWHILE the EEAA chief also welcomed the recently released Business Events Council of Australia report (**BEN** 23 Feb) which showed the importance of exhibitions to the economy.

The total direct expenditure from exhibitions was \$3.1b in 2013-14, generating over 21,000 full time equivalent jobs - while more than 9.3 million visitors attended shows during the year.

Vic visitor review

THE Victorian government has announced a Visitor Economy Review, which will study events in Australian and international cities as well as reviewing the state's relevant government bodies.

The aim of the review is "to ensure Victoria retains its status as the events capital of Australia," according to premier Kevin Andrews - something which may be at stake given that NSW premier Mike Baird today announced a "bid team" to attempt to pinch the Formula 1 Grand Prix from the Vic capital.

NT hatches Chicks partnership

A NEW partnership agreement between Tourism NT and networking group Business Chicks is aimed to raise awareness of the NT among a "key target market responsible for purchasing leisure and business travel".

The 12 month agreement will see Tourism NT become the partner for eight Business Chicks events across Australia this year.

The first of these will feature Sir Bob Geldof as a speaker at events in Sydney and Adelaide.

"Through our involvement, we will be able to show Business Chicks' 35,000 members that they can do holidays they can do holidays and incentives, they can do luxury, they can 'Do the NT' in all sorts of ways," said Tourism

Wollongong wows

NOVOTEL Northbeach Wollongong is offering a \$185 per room rate for overnight accom, buffet breakfast and internet access - see **page three**.

New MyCEB directory

THE Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) has launched a new online venue directory, as a resource for event planners looking to organise meetings in Malaysia.

It provides an "essential guide to the large variety of venues available across Malaysia," according to MyCEB ceo Zulkefi Haji Sharif.

WW1 Flanders

BELGIUM was one of the destinations represented at the recent DMS Workshops in Sydney and Melbourne, as well as at AIME - here to attract tours out of Australia for the WW1 Visit Flanders commemorations.

As well as visiting the sombre battlefields, visitors can also explore the grandeur and sights of cities such as Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp and Bruges - see destinationmarketing.com.au.



Groups and Events Manager

Based in Melbourne, our dedicated in-house team of Group and Events professionals offer the best of both worlds. Not only are they experts in coordinating and booking all air and land travel arrangements, they are highly experienced in the organisation of local and international conferences and meetings, complete event management, exciting staff incentive trips, corporate team building, cultural, educational and sporting group tours.

Voyager have an exciting opportunity for a 12 month maternity leave replacement contract for our Groups and Events Manager. The ideal candidate will be an experienced corporate event professional at management level, with a proven record in driving and leading their team to success.

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Click here to register as a Hosted Buyer



business events news

13th March 2015



crumbs!



APPLE'S new iWatch, launched earlier this week, is promising to revolutionise many parts of life - including hotel stays.

Starwood Preferred Guest has confirmed that the gadget will allow guests to check in and open their room door, meaning users can just arrive and go straight to their room - no check-in, no paperwork and no card encoding.

It's an extension of existing smartphone-based technology already available at selected Aloft, Element and W hotels, with Starwood saying the Apple Watch will also allow guests to receive a notification of the hotel address upon arrival to the city.

That's not all - other Starwood Dick Tracy-esque options will allow users to contact hotels for requests, obtain transportation and parking options and see their Starpoints balance.

The iWatch will go on sale in Australia on 10 Apr, with deliveries starting two weeks later and prices from \$349 for the basic Apple Sport Watch.

Of course you can spend a lot more too - the Apple Watch Edition with an 18-carat gold case (right) can be yours for about \$24,000.



€44m French centre

AUTHORITIES in the northeastern French city of Metz have announced plans for a €44m Centre de Congres with capacity for up to 1,200 delegates.

To be opened in 2018, the facility will also include 14 meeting rooms and exhibition space for 200 stands.

Egypt convention fire

A LARGE fire at the Cairo International Convention Centre last week saw at least 40 people injured, with most affected by smoke inhalation.

According to a report on the *Al-Ahram* website the fire was caused by an electrical short circuit in one of the centre's administration buildings.

The blaze spread to the main conference hall before it could be contained by firefighters.

Free Ellerslie wi-fi

ELLERSLIE Event Centre in Auckland is offering free wi-fi with any new bookings for events to be held during Apr, May and Jun 2015.

The venue's high speed fibre connection has a 30MB bandwidth, but to access the deal bookers must request the free wi-fi offer when they enquire.

Email functions@ellerslie.co.nz.

GEMS certified

SYDNEY-BASED GEMS Event Management has achieved accreditation as a Certified Event Company through the PCO Association's Accreditation Program.

Staging at Sea World

STAGING Connections has been appointed as the sole in-house audio visual and event services provider for the new Sea World Resort Conference Centre on the Gold Coast.

Set to open in Jun, the centre will have 750 sqm of space with capacity for up to 1,000 delegates, divisible into three separate sections as required.

Staging has worked with Sea World for more than 20 years.

GENERating Change

Director of Conference Focus, Max Turpin is sharing his insights on a range of topics with a regular column in *BEN*.

Topics will include new generation events and making events effective and valuable.



Rinse and Repeat

BEFORE I get started on this article, I'd like to pay tribute to another regular *BEN* contributor, Mr Peter Gray. In his last article, Peter highlighted some of the deficiencies of AIME recently held in Melbourne. I believe he was only scratching the surface. Editorial space does not allow me to elaborate but I will say this: I believe the owners and organisers of AIME need to shift their thinking big style.

They need to organise the event from the outside in and for the benefit of exhibitors and visitors. Using innovation and inspiration as pillars, AIME should be designed as a showcase for the MICE industry. Right now, it's nothing more than a large travel expo dominated by destinations, hotel groups and those that can afford to exhibit. Enough said.

TALKING of lack of innovation and inspiration, here comes your annual sales conference or distributor/channel partner conference. A few members of senior management decide on the theme and content. The event is handed over to the 'event manager' to manage the logistics, whether they be internal or external. The event manager is not asked for any input on the design of the event or the content. Nor are the attendees.

Last year's program is used as a template to design this year's event, a copy going back to 2009. As it always does, the conference starts with a 30 minute overview of how the company is performing and where it wants to go. Figures, graphs and charts dominate the visuals along with other information readily available in the annual report.

Delegates listen to a few speeches, then eat. They listen to a few more speeches, then eat. They are then split into breakout

sessions in the afternoon where more specific information is delivered. The evening rolls around and alcohol becomes available over dinner. Most look forward to that, particularly the youngsters, bored with the back-to-back lectures. Adhering to the template, the process is repeated the next day and includes the obligatory "team building" event before the big final dinner, which, of course, everyone looks forward to - alcohol + entertainment + dancing!

For many organisations, this is how it goes, year after year. It might sound very similar to your own company event or the event you're currently working on. Rinse and repeat....going back to 2009. The event is predictable, boring, unimaginative and, most likely, unproductive. There's no ROI. And here's the disturbing thing: most event owners - senior managers who control the event budget and dictate the event design and content - don't attend AIME nor read a single MICE industry publication.

Their experience of events is limited only to attending them. And yet they control the entire show. Is it just me or is there something seriously wrong with this? To prove my point, I dare one single event owner to email me after reading this.

If you'd like to learn more about how to make your events fresh, innovative and effective, please contact Max



Turpin at Conference Focus on 02 9700 7740 or visit the website at conferencefocus.com.au.

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

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