



Melbourne LIVE

THE inaugural Melbourne LIVE tourism forum is set to be held at the RACV City Club next month.

Themed around leadership, innovation and visitor experience, Melbourne LIVE will host talks and workshops focussed on how to engage the next generation of travellers.

Presenters and keynote speakers include Holly Random, ceo of Emergent Solutions; Don Sekoch, chief marketing officer, Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board and food writer Jill Dupleix.

Melbourne LIVE will be held 16 Jun, [CLICK HERE](#) for tickets.

MICE marketplace

LUXPERIENCE has launched an all-new meetings area dubbed the MICE Marketplace.

The new offering promises more flexible exhibiting options to meetings and events suppliers, along with a more relaxed and strategic appointment program.

"We are calling for unique Australian MICE product offerings to join us at our 2016 event which is already surpassing last year's participant numbers," said Eric Lewanavanua, director of sales & partner alliances.

As an introductory offer, Luxperience is offering a half appointment diary with a maximum of 21 appointments over three days for AU\$2,999 including GST.

For more, call (02) 8584 1777.

Sydney trumps Melbourne

THE long-standing rivalry over which Australian east coast city is the more popular for meeting and events seemingly has a distinct winner.

US cloud-based enterprise event management firm Cvent Inc has announced its annual list of the top cities for the sector, including the Asia Pacific (APAC) region, with Singapore the number one city between 01 Jan and 31 Dec 2015.

Sydney was second in the list, followed by Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok and Hong Kong rounding out the top 5 APAC destinations.

Melbourne was further down the list, placing seventh.

Gold Coast was ahead of intrastate rival Brisbane, in 13th and 14th spots respectively, while Perth was 23rd.

Across the ditch, Auckland was positioned 17th in the list of Top 25 Asia Pacific Destinations.

In 2015, Cvent sourced US\$9.8 million in meetings and events around the world, rankings cities based on booking activity through the Cvent Supplier Network (CSN).

The network has over 230,000 hotels, resorts and special event venues in 175+ countries.

Rankings are based on proposal requests and total room nights, awarded requests for proposal & awarded room nights, percentage of qualified meeting venues and the number of profile views.

Based on CSN activity, Sydney had 288 Meeting Hotels in 2015,

with 31,843 "sleeping rooms" and 892 "committable sleeping rooms".

Those figures compare to the 237 Meeting Hotels in Singapore, where there were 53,126 sleeping rooms and 2,561 committable sleeping rooms.

Comparatively, Melbourne had 304 Meeting Hotels, accounting for 27,481 sleeping rooms and a significantly higher number of committable sleeping rooms to that of Sydney, with 1,604.

On a like-for-like basis, the Gold Coast had 119 Meeting Hotels, 13,136 rooms and 596 sleeping rooms versus Brisbane's 172 Meeting Hotels, 12,801 rooms and 438 sleeping rooms - the lowest tally in the APAC Top 25.

Perth had 90 Meeting Hotels, 9,161 sleeping rooms and 682 committable sleeping rooms.

China dominated the Asia Pacific region in terms of total sleeping rooms for meetings and events, both with a whopping 120,000+ apiece, and 45,000 rooms ahead of Bangkok in third.

In the United States, Orlando was the top city, with Chicago second, Las Vegas third, then Atlanta, San Diego and New York.

London was the top city in the EMEA (Europe, the Middle East & Africa) region, ahead of Barcelona, Amsterdam and Paris.

It's the first time Cvents has ranked the APAC region.

For more details, [CLICK HERE](#).

SPTE opened for biz

HOTELS, airlines and tour operators gathered on the Gold Coast last week for the South Pacific Tourism Exchange.

The two-day event, which was strategically aligned with the Australian Tourism Exchange, saw 60 buyers from Australia, NZ, China, UK, US and various EU countries attend.

South Pacific Tourism Organisation acting ceo Alisi Lutu heralded the event as a "huge success".

"Our buyers have said...that this year they can feel the Pacific atmosphere - it's more intimate."

Park Hotel Melaka

PARK Hotel Group is expanding into Malaysia, with its latest property Park Hotel Melaka slated to open in 2019.

The 245-key, 16-storey, newbuild is located 90 minutes from Kuala Lumpur airport and will comprise a bistro, rooftop bar, infinity pool and a business centre with meetings rooms.

The hotel will be part of a mix-use development, which will also include retail outlets, shop offices and serviced apartments.



The world class Darwin Convention Centre is recruiting two exciting senior positions:

- **Client Services Manager** – responsible for the management of the food and beverage, events and audio visual departments ensuring first class customer service
- **Business Development Manager** – responsible for generating national convention sales through a range of sales initiatives



To view the position description and apply, please visit <http://www.darwinconvention.com.au/careers.html>

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ICC Sydney to host '17 ATE



THE Australian Tourism Exchange will next year be held at the brand new International Convention Centre in Sydney.

Making the announcement at ATE on the Gold Coast last week, Destination NSW ceo Sandra Chipchase remarked: "Our wonderful State never fails to impress and I am excited by the tourism opportunities that ATE 2017 will bring to Sydney and Regional NSW".

Tourism Australia managing director, John O'Sullivan said while ATE has previously been held in Sydney, international delegates attending next year's event could expect to experience a city that continues to be transformed by continued investment in tourism infrastructure.

"The Australian Tourism Exchange is singularly the most

significant business to business tourism trade event that Tourism Australia delivers each year, attracting more than 2,300 delegates from more than 30 countries including Australia, to meet and do business to grow international visitation to our country," he said.

"A highlight of course will be the hosting of ATE for the first time at the new ICC Sydney, which is due to open later this year and will bring to the city a new integrated convention, exhibition and entertainment precinct in Sydney's Darling Harbour for delegates to experience first-hand."

Pictured above in front of the Destination NSW stand at ATE '16 is Sandra Chipchase, ceo, Destination NSW and John O'Sullivan, managing director, Tourism Australia.

Regional Vic on show

MORE than 170 event buyers from across the country will descend on Melbourne to attend Business Events Victoria's regional Victoria showcase.

Held at the Grand Hyatt, the event will feature exhibitors from Geelong and the Bellarine, Yarra Ranges, Mornington Peninsula, Ballarat, Bendigo, Southern Grampians and the Murray.

"The Regional Showcase is a great way for destinations and venues to build relationships with event buyers and industry stakeholders," said executive officer of Business Events Victoria, Chris Porter.

"We have 33 exhibitors this year, up from 25 in 2015, and a 50% increase in attendance numbers which is a fantastic result," remarked Porter.

The Business Events Victoria Regional showcase will take place in Melbourne on 26 May from 5:30pm through to 8:30pm, before heading to Sydney on 18 Aug - call (03) 8662 5428 for more information.


Aqua-Aston opens 24-hour call centre

AQUA Aston Hospitality has launched a 24-hour call centre based in Hawaii.

The group has expanded its team of contact agents by nearly 40% to cope with the increased demand.

Travellers and event organisers who call the central reservations office will be given exclusive access to lesser-known penthouse accommodations at select hotels in Waikiki including Lotus Honolulu, Aston Waikiki Beach Tower, Aqua Bamboo, Ewa Hotel and more.

More info at aqua-aston.com.



crumbs!

GUNS welcome, knives are not.

That was the message given to attendees heading to the National Rifle Association's gun expo in Kentucky last week.


Thousands attended the expo, where Republican presidential nomination Donald Trump spoke.

"For whatever reason the Secret Service doesn't want knives in and we're happy to help," said Knife Rights chairman, Doug Ritter to *Stuff*.

By the end of the day, nearly 3,000 knives had been checked in.

Veteran NRA member Don Huskey praised the precautions.

"People forget knives and almost every good ol' boy and girl still have knives. I forgot I had it on me. It happens to be an NRA knife. So it's kind of sentimental. So I didn't want to let it go," he said.



Swissotel high tea

A BUFFET style high-tea will be available on weekends at the Swissotel Sydney.

Executive chef, Joshua Askew, designed the selection around local and sustainable produce.

A wide variety of morsels are available, such as mini brioches, wagyu pastrami tarts, smoked salmon tartare and more.

For those more interested in sweet treats, head pastry chef Tracy Allesina has created exquisite pastries and cakes such as stone fruit macaroons and raspberry chocolate mousse slices - to book email crossroads.sydney@swissotel.com.

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

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