



HILTON SYDNEY'S NEW LOOK

HILTON Sydney this week unveiled a multi-million dollar refurbishment of its conference and meeting venues, hosting more than 300 corporate guests and industry identities at a showcase dinner.

The hotel's three levels of event spaces have been given a new look by specialist interior designer Joseph Pang, including new soft furnishings, panelling and artworks by 11 different Australian artists.

Facilities include new registration areas, specially designed carpets and the latest AV equipment and technology, with capacity for events of between 10 and 3,000 people.

The upgrade represents

the biggest change to Hilton Sydney's events facilities since the hotel's re-opening in 2005.

"I think a renovation is always important to stay on top of the market," said the hotel's general manager Ronald van Weezel.

"And to remain great – to be a surprising hotel where guests leave with a wow feeling and book again and again with us."

Mon's dinner involved performances by Opera Australia soprano Julia Lea Goodwin and tenor Simon Kim, along with a four-course dinner showcasing elements of new banquet menus created by executive chef Kruno Velican.

The event was hosted by singer and actor Rob Mills and

included pre-dinner cocktails mixed by the team from Hilton Sydney's Zeta Bar.

Pictured right are Hilton Sydney general manager Ronald van Weezel and exec chef Kruno Velican at Mon's event.



Events women 'bold for change'

BUSINESS events leaders marked International Women's Day yesterday at a breakfast hosted by the Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA).



Under the theme *#BeBoldForChange*, almost 100 women and men gathered at Sydney's Doltone House to hear guest speakers and panel discussions on finding the "superpower" of women in the workplace and creating an industry in which women flourish.

Pictured at the event are Penny Lion of Tourism Australia, Malu Barrios and Helen Mantellato of the International Convention Centre Sydney and Claudia De Carli from Business Chicks.

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news.

Get Global to offer new student program

THE upcoming Get Global MICE event will offer on-the-job training for 12 students as part of a three-year partnership with the International College of Management, Sydney.

The student's will gain first-hand knowledge from working on the Get Global trade show, to be held at the International Convention Centre Sydney on Fri 28 Jul.

Event director Donna Kessler said the students would assist with on-ground operations as well as project planning, management and marketing.

"It's essential for these students to get a host of applied learning industry activity," Kessler said.

"Our aim is to give back to the next generation coming through the industry and really involve them in Get Global."

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MICE FOREIGN POLICY

AUSTRALIA'S convention bureaux have mounted a campaign to put business events on the agenda at a diplomatic level.

The Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) today released details of a presentation to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in which it seeks recognition for the role of events in Australia's Foreign Policy White Paper.

Among its recommendations is a \$10 million bid fund for attracting conventions and exhibitions of national significance, and a free online

visa scheme for delegates.

It also proposes a travel bursary to bring academics, scientists and business leaders from the Indo-Pacific region to international conventions held in Australia.

"Business events are a crucial part of the Australian Government's foreign policy strategy," AACB ceo Andrew Hiebl said.

"The business events segment of the tourism industry can help build on the Government's economic diplomacy agenda with the assistance of these targeted policy measures."

Hong Kong rewards

MEETINGS and Exhibitions Hong Kong has enhanced its rewards program for events visitors, adding new privileges such as complimentary dinner at Hong Kong Disneyland, cocktail receptions at any of 50 hotels and a party at the Hong Kong Jockey Club. For details **CLICK HERE**.

A Taste of NZ in Aus

TOURISM New Zealand (TNZ) is preparing to host events across Australia to promote its cuisine & conference offerings. Events are planned for Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra and Brisbane from 28-31 Mar, with invitations now open for associations to attend.

Shows will offer a chance to meet with TNZ regional experts - for details **CLICK HERE**.



INTERCONTINENTAL

Sydney is marking its five-year partnership with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, involving a series of insider events this year.

Among the first is a one-of-a-kind experience with singer Kate Miller-Heidke who will perform with the orchestra at the Sydney Opera House on 25 Mar.

An exclusive "Through the Kaleidoscope" package is on offer from the hotel including two A-reserve tickets, accommodation, a backstage meet-and-greet with SSO musicians Fiona and Leone Ziegler, a signed souvenir from Kate Miller-Heidke, plus breakfasts and a cocktail, priced at \$695 for two, with just four available.

Confessions of a compulsive conference-goer

Andrew Klein, professional MC and presentation skills speaker and director of SPIKE Presentations, presents his front line observations on conferences in a regular feature in **BEN**.

Hello From The Other Side!

LIKE half of this country, I'm going to Adele's concert this week and my guess is she'll kick off with her hit 'Hello', the lyrics of which were on my mind last week as I sat alone in my office facing my computer delivering a webinar to several hundred people. "Hello from the other side" I thought to myself as I presented to a faceless, voiceless audience somewhere out there on the other side of my virtual conference.

As a conference speaker, for me it's all about engaging with my audience. A conference presentation provides a great opportunity to have a conversation with them, to ask them questions, to connect with them and deliver key messages through body language, voice and eye contact.

Because of this "live" opportunity to connect and converse with my audience simultaneously (in the same room), I tend to shy away from webinars. However, sometimes they are necessary due to remoteness of some audiences or simple issues of time and money.

But I confess I find webinars super-tough. Not being able to see or hear my audience makes me ill at ease, out of my comfort zone. Also I've been a webinar audience member enough times to know how common it is to mute your computer

and multitask – eat your lunch, check your emails, have a scroll through Facebook...come on, you've all done it, admit it.

So what can be done to make it more likely that your webinar audience will be engaged? For me, it's all about the Question tab and the Audience Polling functions, constantly encouraging questions and asking questions which require a reply. And then answering their questions immediately rather than leaving Q & A till the end. Its tricky talking whilst keeping an eye on the side bar for the questions, but it's worth persisting. I also always ask my webinar audience to include their name in the question so I can be continually referring to them by name, thereby making it as personalised as possible and minimising the likelihood of them multitasking or switching off. I also stand at the computer while talking, I find it gives my voice (my main webinar engagement tool) more energy. And of course – utilising engaging photos and videos on my slides as opposed to text heavy, yawn inducing, Facebook diverting slides.

Keen to hear any webinar tips and tricks feedback from Someone Like You (gratuitous and appalling Adele reference there). andrew@lunch.com.au

If you are looking for an MC for your next conference or a speaker/trainer on presentation skills or pitching skills, email andrew@lunch.com.au or visit his website at www.andrewklein.com.au.



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