



## AACB PUSHES VISA OVERHAUL

AUSTRALIA'S business events industry is calling for an overhaul of visa arrangements as part of reforms being considered by the Federal Govt.

On behalf of the sector, the Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) has highlighted the significant contribution international business delegates make to the national economy, pointing out that typical conference attendees spend 9% more than leisure tourists.

It has lodged a submission with the Govt calling for a simpler system that benefits low-risk, high-yield visitors.

New AACB president and ceo of the Melbourne Convention Bureau Karen Bolinger said the current costly visa system meant Australia was losing out in the race to attract and host large business events.

"The price-sensitive incentive travel market is even worse affected, with Australia often written off as a destination, due to our visa costs," she said.



Bolinger said NZ's visa system allowed for greater flexibility where fees could be waived or offset for event delegations.

"Australia needs a visa system that is easier to understand... and flexible enough for Australia to remain a competitive destination".

AACB ceo Andrew Hiebl said besides delegates being high yielding, they were also far more likely to be low-risk visitors.

"International convention delegates are far less likely

to overstay a visa and have a higher visa grant rate than leisure travellers," he said.

Hiebl said AACB's proposal would streamline the process for delegates and encourage more attendance from Asia.

**CLICK HERE** to view the visa overhaul submission.

### Today's issue of BEN

*Business Events News* today has three pages of news.

## Ritz-Carlton on track to open

**CONSTRUCTION** of The Ritz-Carlton, Perth, is progressing ahead of schedule and is on track for opening in mid-2019.

The 205-room hotel will have 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of conference space including a 572m<sup>2</sup> ballroom fitted with the latest AV tech.

The Ritz-Carlton will have an open-roof courtyard and garden.

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## Sell TNQ final

**APPLICATIONS** to attend the annual educational event Sell TNQ 2017 close on Fri.

Organised by Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef, the exhibition will provide opportunities for MICE planners to get a taste and feel of the region.

It will be held 17-20 Nov - **CLICK** for more.

## Rottneest Island glamping

**ROTTNEEST** Island will permit glamping on the island from the summer of 2018-19 as part of a development project approved by the West Australian Government.

Located off the coast of Perth, the announcement is part of plans to build a beachfront eco-resort at the site known for its famous quokkas.

The accommodation will be supported by a beach club comprising of a licenced bar, cafe, restaurant and function area that will have views over the ocean to Perth.

Rottneest Island's proposed eco-resort will comprise of 86 eco-accommodation tents with ensuites.





Find out how Dubai is getting ready for Expo2020 in the October issue of *travelBulletin*.

**CLICK to read**  
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## FIJI SHOWCASES MARRIOTT INT'L



**MARRIOTT** says it plans to hold an annual trade event to showcase its Fiji and South Pacific offering to capitalise on increasing demand from the group and conference sector.

Last week the group held its inaugural Destination Fiji by Marriott International event at Sheraton on the Park in Sydney, bringing together its five Fiji-based properties, enabling conference organisers and PCOs to learn more about what each hotel offers the MICE market.

Representatives included executives from Sheraton Fiji Resort, Sheraton Denarau Villas, The Westin Denarau, Sheraton Resort & Spa, Tokoriki Island and the Fiji Marriott Resort Momi Bay which debuted in Apr.

A number of trade partners were also present, including Fiji Airways, Virgin Australia, South Sea Cruises, Rosie Holidays, Pacific Destinations, Captain Cook Cruises and Tourism Fiji.

Collectively, Marriott Int'l currently has just over 1,000 keys in Fiji, making it the largest hotelier in the island nation.

That number will increase to about 1,200 by early 2019 with the addition of the planned Four Points by Sheraton, Lautoka, owned by the Meghji family who also own other Marriott operated hotels in Fiji.

Regional director global sales

South Asia Avril Northridge said the Australian MICE market was "massive for Fiji".

She told **BEN** Marriott Int'l's five big hotels in Fiji were going exceptionally well in terms of incentives, groups, conferencing and leisure and that the show gave local sellers a chance to meet face-to-face with property executives to get their questions answered in person.

Northridge said the Fiji Marriott Resort Momi Bay was performing "phenomenally" and has proven popular for groups or around 100-150 delegates.

"We've got some fabulous bookings down the line, with interest very high because it's new," she explained.

Denarau-based properties will continue to cater for Marriott International's larger events.

Australia remains the core inbound market for Marriott's Fiji portfolio (about eight out of 10 queries), but the Americas market has overtaken New Zealand as the number two source, while demand is also up for China and Hong Kong.

Northridge told **BEN** the MICE space out of Australia was "very competitive", with Fiji up against the likes of Thailand, Bali and Hawaii, the latter of which had "great airfares and airlift".

Last week's event also provided a platform for Marriott

to reiterate its commitment to Fiji, with the appointment of Leon Thomson to the newly created role of executive assistant - sales & marketing for Marriott Int'l's Fiji Complex.

Thomson said events such as Destination Fiji by Marriott Int'l will be "vital" in keeping industry and trade partners abreast on the latest news and developments in the region.

**MEANWHILE**, PCOs who confirm an event at Fiji Marriott Resort Momi Bay before 30 Nov for a minimum of 50 rooms for three consecutive nights and a minimum catering spend of FJ\$40,000 will receive a free site inspection stay, 30min cocktail reception, Fijian Tribal 'Lali' drumming welcome and an over-water bure upgrade per 25 rooms - for enquiries, email [momibay.sales@marriott.com](mailto:momibay.sales@marriott.com).

## Anaheim opens

**THE** Anaheim Convention Center (ACC) has opened the doors on the venue's new US\$190 million North Hall.

The upgrade provides 18,580m<sup>2</sup> of extra meeting space, including a pre-function area and a 930m<sup>2</sup> outdoor balcony.

ACC's North Hall can fit 6,000 people in banquet style.

## Celebrity Edge meeting space

**CELEBRITY** Cruises has revealed a meeting venue for its new *Celebrity Edge* ship to debut in 2018.

The Meeting Place will be 183m<sup>2</sup> in size and will be placed in "a central location".

The space will have soundproof dividers, AV capabilities, varied seating options, private office space for event planners and a mobile bar.

*Edge's* meeting space can be configured into theatre-style, classroom, U-shaped, or circular layouts.

**Pictured** is a rendered image of the meeting place.



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# business events news

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## LARGE PERTH SCREEN

**THE** Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre (PCEC) has introduced the largest screen of any venue in Western Australia.

Constructed by AVPartners, the panoramic screen measures 42 metres wide.

AVPartners partner Ryan Taylor said the upgrade opened up many new creative options for events held at the centre.

"We can't wait to unlock its potential at client events.

"The introduction of the screen demonstrates our commitment to partner with PCEC to deliver the best event experience possible," he said.

The screen requires five projectors to blend a single image, and is so large that it

spans an entire wall of the BelleVue Ballroom at PCEC.

It can also be set up in a curved configuration, which creates a seamless viewing experience for all audience members, allowing for an increase in engagement.

The addition of the screen is the latest in a series of technical enhancements to take place at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre.

St John's Ambulance Western Australia was the first client to utilise the screen at its recent annual conference.

AVPartners began operating in 2007 with its first venue in Hamilton Island, and has since grown to 13 venues.

## ITB China buyer relaunch

ITB China will increase its buyer program for 2018 to meet demand for the large travel trade event.

Organisers will invite 850 buyers to the exhibition, including a number of outbound business groups.

All potential buyers will undergo an assessment process and will be evaluated based on their experience and quality.

Over 10,000 delegates and 600 exhibitors attended the event in 2017 for inaugural ITB China.

ITB China will be held in Shanghai from 16 to 18 May.



**A HOTEL** in San Diego is using its marquee board to display funny messages rather than traditional messages you might see.

The Town and Country Hotel in Mission Valley has displayed some classics such as "There's no way everyone was Kung Fu fighting" from the popular Carl Douglas hit.

Conferences haven't escaped the fun, with messages including "Procrastinators conference postponed" or "Hokey Pokey Convention.. Come in and turn yourself around".

## 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.

## Incentive return on investment

**HOW** is return on investment (ROI) measured in relation to incentive programs? It's a question I'm asked fairly frequently and I wish there was a simple answer, but it depends very much on what the questioner regards as the investment; how the outcome is defined and whether the measurement is objective or subjective. There are often other conditions to be taken into consideration but those are the main ones.

Return on Investment (ROI) is easier to measure for incentive programs because the results are generally in advance of the measurement unlike conferences where the ROI is usually based on a results obtained after the event. However it is too easy to be over-simplistic.

The predominantly accepted definition of ROI is the ratio of a profit or loss made in a fiscal year expressed in terms of an investment and shown as a percentage of increase or decrease in the value of the investment during the year in question. The basic formula is:  $ROI = \text{Net Profit} \div \text{total investment} \times 100$ .

Simple! Or is it? As I mentioned earlier it depends upon whether the measurement is quantitative (i.e. based on cash values) or qualitative (based on psychological or perceived values).

For incentives the quantitative calculation may be relatively straightforward. A UK client some years ago

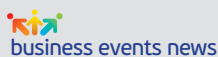
would 'invest' - i.e. what it cost to design, administer, promote, measure, communicate with the participants, provide the reward and analyse the program results - £1million each year in incentive programs. By doing so the expected (and achieved) incremental sales resulted in an additional profit over each previous year of £6million - an overall net profit of £5million - an ROI of 500%. Now that's not bad in anyone's books and as the sales force in this case were all self-employed there were few, if any, other costs.

But incentive programs also have a psychological effect on the participants, creating a momentum which will see an improvement in behaviour even of those who did not achieve any reward. This is driven by the realisation that a reward could have been achieved with extra effort. This is harder to measure unless a list of overall objectives is established beforehand.

The example above of a 500% ROI was achieved in the finance sector where production costs are minimal, margins are generally constant and where discounting is almost unheard of. A sales incentive in almost any other industry has to take all these into consideration, particularly when setting targets.

Incentive rewards are earned, not won. They are not gifts. Therefore, a base must first be established that outlines objectives to be met and how those objectives will affect the rest of the company.

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