



## Today's issue of BEN

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

## Happy holidays!

**BUSINESS Events News** will not be published next week because of the Christmas holidays.

The team will be back in the new year on 08 Jan.

Have a merry Christmas and a happy new year!

## Wellington green light

**WELLINGTON** City Council has approved plans for a new Conference and Exhibition Centre (CEC), with construction set to begin in the new year.

The 18,000m<sup>2</sup> CEC will feature 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of convention space spread across its top two floors and a 1,650m<sup>2</sup> ground-floor exhibition gallery to accommodate touring exhibitions.

"[The CEC] will enable the city to not only retain its current share of conferences but also put in bids for larger international conferences that would simply have been too big for existing venues," said Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency's David Perks.

"It will put us on an equal footing with Auckland and Christchurch who both have conference venues under construction, and the Australian market where all major cities have purpose-built convention facilities."

# MELBOURNE GEARS UP FOR 2019

**MELBOURNE** Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) has secured 30% more bookings for 2019 compared to the same time last year, with top industry sectors including education, medical, public services, arts and recreation accounting for more than half of next year's bookings.

MCEC Chief Executive Peter King said next year's focus would be on growth.

"Growing our impact, growing our revenue and growing the economic benefits we drive as a business," he said, adding "with new spaces to sell, we continue to be committed to creating excellent experiences, for our customers, visitors and employees."

The first conference for 2019



held at MCEC will be the Tennis Australia Grand Slam Coaches Conference on 11-13 Jan.

Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) CEO Karen Bolinger said, "In 2019 we want to demonstrate the deep impact business events have in the wider community, therefore we have identified opportunities to diversify our partnerships

outside of the industry to help us showcase this impact."

MCB is also focusing on future projects in the sustainability sector and will work with City of Melbourne to develop a toolkit for event planners in Melbourne to provide them with resources to host a sustainable event.

**Pictured** is this year's Vidcon conference held at the MCEC.

## Tennis pop-up for Rockpool

**ROCKPOOL** Bar & Grill will create a pop-up venue for 190 tennis fans at the Australian Open next month.

The initiative is the latest catering foray by the Rockpool Dining Group and its Culinary Director Neil Perry, and will be located on the city side of Margaret Court Arena from 14-27 Jan.

Its a-la-carte menu will involve sustainably sourced produce and some of the restaurant's signature dishes, with entrees such as roasted macadamias with Aleppo pepper and grilled asparagus with spanner grab, and mains including Cape Grimm steak and yellowfin tuna.

Rockpool's casual eatery Burger Project will also operate at the Australian Open, offering a burger bar at the Grand Slam Oval.

## AIME crash: bus driver jailed

**A DRIVER** who crashed a bus carrying AIME delegates into a Melbourne bridge in 2016 has been jailed for five years.

The man had attempted to drive beneath the city's Montague Street railway bridge, but failed to account for its 3m clearance.

Six people were injured when the 3.8m bus struck the bridge while travelling between the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre and a St Kilda Road hotel.

Jack Aston, 55, was sentenced to jail yesterday after being found guilty of six charges of negligently causing serious injury.

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## PCOA EYES CHANGE

**THE** 11th annual PCOA Conference and Exhibition held last week at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre welcomed more than 420 delegates and 60 exhibitors.

Over three days the attendees came together to take part in workshops, keynote addresses and plenary sessions built around the conference theme of embracing change and agility.

PCOA Program Director Peta Moore said that “more than ever, conference and meeting planners are learning to live with the uncertainty of constant change.” “I see the

conference theme as a proactive call to all meeting planners to seek out fresh perspectives and to try something new,” she said.

The 2019 PCOA conference will take place at the International Convention Centre Sydney from 07 to 09 Dec.

**Pictured** at the PCOA conference are Cindy Axisa, PCOA; Jesse Taylor, EventsAIR; Viet Nguyen, EventsAIR; and Maxine Tod, PCOA.



**IT'S** no surprise that even the man of the hour wants to see the Great Barrier Reef.

Santa traded his big red attire last week for something a bit more suitable, a festive spandex diving suit (**pictured**).

Together with the Sunlover Reef Cruises crew, Santa boarded a catamaran and cruised to Arlington Reef pontoon for a Sunlover Funlover event charter.



## Toronto record

**TOURISM** Toronto and its meetings, conferences and events unit Business Events Toronto hosted 26 city-wide conventions in 2018 - a new record for the number of city-wide conventions held in a single year.

The total tops the 2017 record of 18 events.

“Business events are a thriving and vital part of our tourism industry that contributes \$33b in direct spending in Canada, directly employs 229,000 people and C\$19b of GDP,” said Heidi Welker, Chair of Meetings Means Business Canada.

## Partner Up

The low down on tech in the events world



## Five things to consider before you plan your next conference

**AS BUSINESSES** and brands strive to cut through the noise of the digital age to reach their ideal customer or client, it's more important than ever before to offer a unique conference experience that engages customers or clients, and leaves them with a positive and lasting impression.

So, before you begin planning your next conference, consider the following:

### The vision and theme

Your vision should incorporate the ‘why’ behind your event. Why are you holding a conference, what is its purpose and why is it worthwhile for people to attend? Your theme should be a unifying factor, it can be as broad or narrow as you like, but will help guests understand and be aligned with your event's purpose.

### The target audience

Who are you trying to target? Think about your overall event outcome and what you would like to achieve from the event. Are you inviting or attracting the right people to help you reach that event goal?

### The venue

Choosing the right venue for your conference is crucial to its overall success. Once you know how many guests you intend to attract, you will have an idea of the type of venue you'll need. Your venue should

also be able to assist you with catering and accessibility options. Be sure to also consider the style of the event, and make sure that the venue reflects this along with the guests' expectations.

### The speakers

Speakers at a conference offer an ideal way for relevant and influential people to share their advice, stories, and expertise to the event attendees. Plan to book these people in early, as they can be a major drawcard to attracting people to your conference.

### The audiovisual technology

Choosing the right AV and event staging provider is critical to ensuring your event is a success. Not only do they take the stress out of event planning, they bring exceptional expertise and creativity to make sure your event stands out. Whether you want to use lighting elements to create atmosphere in the room, or require a stage to be set up with microphones and speakers, a good AV team will have you covered. Your ideal venue should have a preferred or in-house AV and event staging provider, such as AVPartners.

With all this in mind, you'll be well on your way to planning an engaging and successful conference.

**Mitch Tucker** is the Partner at Sofitel Gold Coast for AVPartners, which creates integrated event experiences through combining state-of-the-art audiovisual technology, unrivalled expertise and a highly tailored approach. [www.avpartners.com](http://www.avpartners.com)

