



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news plus a full page from **Fairmont Resort**.

MEA winners

THE 2017 Meetings & Events Australia (MEA) awards were announced last night at the organisation's national conference at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

In total, 35 awards were presented, with industry stalwart and former chief executive of the Adelaide Convention Centre Alec Gilbert taking home the major award for 'Outstanding Contribution' for his work in the events industry both in Australia and overseas.

Other big winners on the night were Crowne Plaza Terrigal, which took home the award for 'Meeting, Exhibition or Event Venue – capacity less than 500', Darwin Convention Centre, which was awarded the 'Meeting, Exhibition or Event Venue – capacity more than 500' title, and The Star Entertainment Centre, which nabbed the award for 'Event Management Team – Corporate'.

'Exhibition of the Year' was won by Tourism Portfolio/World Corporate Travel for Get Global, while Belle Laide Events was awarded the honour for 'Corporate Event of the Year'.

ICC SYDNEY DREAMS BIG FUTURE

FRESH from successfully hosting the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit in Mar, ICC Sydney says it is now sizing up the prospect of hosting more prestigious, large-scale events in the future.

ICC Sydney chief executive Geoff Donaghy told **BEN** the venue had a busy year ahead when it came to catering for bigger conferences.

"We will soon be hosting Sibos, the world's largest fintech conference here in Oct, we also have the 2018 World Congress of Accountants coming up in Nov this year which will bring in about 4,000 delegates," Donaghy said.

ICC Sydney's ability to lure larger events such as ASEAN could be attributed to both the unique features of the facility and the allure of Sydney itself, Donaghy believes.

"First of all we have one of the most flexible venues that exists anywhere in the world... for ASEAN we had to construct special purpose-built rooms



for the event inside our own meeting rooms," he said.

"Secondly, Sydney is virtually unmatched anywhere in the world... ICC Sydney is so close to a vibrant business district and, of course, one of the world's most beautiful harbours."

Technology also forms an important pillar of the venue's success according to its chief.

"We are starting to attract a number of major Asia Pacific technology conferences that have traditionally been held in South East Asia - Salesforce and Amazon are just a couple of examples. Now, each of these brands are for the very first time

entrusting our team with all of their IT needs," Donaghy said.

"That's why we recently committed \$1 million more in AV equipment, it's such a rapidly changing area and is so critical to keep up to date with the enhancements."

Despite ICC Sydney's recent success in the large-scale space, Donaghy was quick to qualify that these were just the "tip of the pyramid".

"Our ability to run three simultaneous events... is equally important to our business model than just the large mega events," he said.

Pictured: ASEAN Summit 2018.

More wine please

THE Australian Tourism Export Council has announced a \$35,000 grant has been approved to deliver a Wine Tourism Conference in mid-2019.

The event will allow wine businesses to take advantage of growing int'l interest in local wine.



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SYD CLAIMS TOP SPOT

SYDNEY has claimed the highest ranking in Australia when it comes to hosting international events according to the latest annual *International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) Country and City Rankings* report.

Sydney was home to 76 int'l meetings in 2017, a 25% bump on the 61 recorded in 2016.

The harbour city has also made up ground globally, moving from 41st to 26th position in the report's list, and also improved from 10th to 7th place in the Asia Pacific region.

One factor fueling the spike has been the city's significant investment in infrastructure, the NSW Government believes.



"Having topped the list for Australia in 2016, when the city didn't have a convention centre, Sydney has built on that success in 2017," said New South Wales Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Adam Marshall.

"Sydney is Australia's business and innovation capital...these events fuel the country's global business," he added.

Australia hosted 258 international events in 2017.

Euromic Exec steps down

THE association representing Events and Destination Management Companies (DMC), Euromic, has announced its exec director Christophe Verstraete has resigned.

The long-standing executive has been with the association for 18 years.

"While thanking the Board for their support over the years, I am now ready to start a new professional chapter and wish Euromic and its members the very best for the future."

The organisation has yet to name a replacement.



EVENT organisers may soon be able to find out exactly what their attendees are thinking at all times thanks to cutting-edge facial recognition (FR) technology.

The new tech coming out of Silicon Valley is able to read a person's emotional state by interpreting things like facial expressions and muscle movement, with that data fed back to planners in the form of valuable insights and market research.

FR can even read the emotion on your face reading this Crumbs right now - #shockandawe noted.

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*.

Praise brothers and sisters to conference baristas:

A RECENT report on the Conference and Events industry from Ernst and Young estimated that 430,000 business events were held in Australia in 2015-16. It also found that in that same year 40 million people attended a business event in Australia.

It got me thinking. Given that staggering number of events and attendees, I wonder how many cups of barista coffee were made by the wonderful community of baristas located in the exhibition areas of convention centres and the pre-function areas outside hotel ballrooms at conferences.

The answer? I have no idea. Maths was never my strong suit and I wouldn't even know where to start measuring this figure.

The best answer I could come up with was "a lot" (Hey, I am fully aware no one is reading my column for scientific data or well-researched demographic stats - you want that, read my mate Bernard Salt's columns. If it's random, non-research-based observations based on nothing but gut feel, read on).

But there they are at most conferences. The hard-working barista, often sponsored by a savvy sponsor who has realised their stand will always be the most central, best attended stand at every event, with a captive, queued-up audience.

The baristas start early, dolling out tasty caffeinated treats to weary delegates on day one,

many of whom have woken up at 4am to get the early morning flight from Adelaide to Brisbane to Cairns, desperately in need of a coffee hit to get them through to the final keynote session. Or the hordes of slightly hung over delegates the morning after the gala dinner, in need of a coffee hit to keep them awake during the day two industry updates panel. And the queue only lengthens as the day goes on.

On their feet all day, taking your order ("What can I get you mate?"), asking your name, pointing out the sugar table and tap-tap-tapping the beans in their porta-filters like a metronome (OK, I did do some research, I googled "part of coffee machine that baristas tap". It's a porta-filter!). They smile politely as one delegate requests her favoured triple half sweet, non-fat decaf soy macchiato.

You may take them for granted, but you hate it when they are not there. Anyone who has to drink old-style hotel coffee knows how important the barista is to the overall experience.

So next time you walk zombie-like into the plenary room, carefully carrying your cappuccino or lovingly lapping-up your latte, spare a thought for that vital cog in the conference wheel, the hard-working barista brothers and sisters, keeping us awake and focussed in conference rooms around the nation.

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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