



Today's issue of BEN

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

Uluru special

VOYAGES Ayers Rock Resort is offering an Uluru Business Events Special, with three nights at the Sails in the Desert hotel priced at \$240 per room per night.

The offer is valid for a minimum of 10 rooms for travel through until 31 Mar 2021, and includes free wi-fi, guest activities and Ayers Rock Airport return transfers.

For more details see **page three** of today's **BEN**.

Italy + IBTM

THE Italian National Tourist Board has announced an exclusive 12-month partnership with IBTM events, with the pact including IBTM World Virtual 2020, IBTM Asia Pacific 2021, IBTM Americas 2021 and IBTM World 2021.

The agreement will launch at IBTM World Virtual from 08-10 Dec, with the online gathering to be infused with a "strong spirit of Italy".

As well as an increase profile at the various IBTM events, the partnership will include a webinar series and a themed blog dedicated to Italy's Cities of Art.

RESTRICTIONS EASING

THE business events sector across the country is beginning to breathe more easily, as Australia's success in combating COVID-19 has finally allowed the lifting of official restrictions.

The biggest breakthrough in the last week came yesterday in NSW, where the State Government has abolished capacity limits on corporate events, which are now simply determined by the "one person per two square metres" rule.

In NSW dancing is now allowed indoors, while the same capacity restrictions apply to hospitality venues, weddings and funerals effective immediately.

Previously there was a limit of 300 people per event, which Business Events Sydney noted was "not economically viable for the majority of businesses".

The ACT has also moved to a more relaxed stage, with food

now allowed to be consumed standing up, and venues using online check-in now able to accommodate a maximum of 500 people in each space.

Meeting planners holding an event in Canberra are being offered wearable Smart Badges at no charge through the Canberra Convention Bureau.

There was more good news yesterday when WA Premier Mark McGowan confirmed that residents of NSW and Vic would be able to enter the state without quarantine, leaving South Australia as the only jurisdiction still requiring two weeks of isolation when entering Western Australia.

And Victorian restrictions have been lifted to remove the cap on weddings and funerals, subject to the one person per two square metre limit, and standing service is once again allowed in hospitality venues.

NZ industry reconnects in AKL

MORE than 420 event organisers and suppliers from across New Zealand gathered in Auckland last week for the BE Reconnected showcase convened by Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA), formerly known as CINZ.

The strong attendance highlighted the pent-up demand to gather in person, according to BEIA CEO Lisa Hopkins, who noted that more than 290 buyers walked the show floor to connect with

120 suppliers, which will go towards supporting NZ's domestic recovery.

"We are thrilled with the enthusiasm this event created, and how much was accomplished in one day."

Hopkins noted that by 2023 NZ would be opening three new international convention centres, creating over 1,000 direct jobs while supporting other sectors such as accommodation, hospitality, providers and airlines.

MEA Awards to go ahead

MEETINGS & Events

Australia (MEA) has opened submissions for the 37th annual MEA National Awards Program, which will go ahead "despite the event industry's toughest year," according to MEA Chair Nigel Collins.

"The industry has been hit very hard since Mar 2020 with COVID-19 but some events did go ahead earlier in the year and more will do so by the end of Dec," he said.

"So with that in mind, MEA's National Awards program will continue, to ensure we recognise the exceptional achievements, creativity and outcomes that businesses and event professionals in Australia have delivered."

A review by 18 industry professionals from across the industry has seen a total of 40 awards up for grabs, with key changes including the eligibility of virtual hybrid events for events of the year, event management, venues and products categories.


The word count has been significantly reduced to make the awards less onerous to enter, and a new award for "Event Freelancer of the Year" has been created.

Applications are open until 01 Mar 2021, with a video explaining the changes and how to enter now live on MEATV by **CLICKING HERE**.

Meeting space?

Let's talk about how our space can help fill your space.

SPECIAL PACKAGES AVAILABLE

 business events news



COVID-19 venue capacity restrictions have slammed the business events sector across the globe, and the owner of a restaurant in Frankfurt, Germany clearly just can't bear it any more.

Guiseppe Fichera has staged a one-man protest by filling his Pino eatery with stuffed pandas (pictured).

"They are Panda-Mic pandas," he said, with the toys propped up at the bar with beers as well as seated at tables in the restaurant.

The creative demonstration is attracting so much attention that it appears he has managed to get some sponsorship for the stunt, with some of the pandas wearing T-shirts bearing the logo of online jobs site Indeed, while Corona beer is clearly the pandemic beverage of choice for the cuddly stand-ins.

"It is a silent protest, an offer to our guests," Fichera said, pledging to keep the lights in the restaurant on 24/7 throughout a newly imposed lockdown to allow passers-by to enjoy the display.



Asia alliance mooted

THE Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) has put forward the idea of an Asia Convention Alliance to revive international conventions across the region.

The proposed founding members of the alliance would comprise China, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Taiwan, with the group aiming to restore Asia's convention industry, strengthen relations between member countries and to facilitate the exchange of knowledge.

Potential initiatives include introducing the concept of joint conventions where member countries take turns in hosting an event, as well as creating an Asian or regional edition of a global event.

TCEB Senior VP Nichapa Yoswee said the idea for the Alliance is based on forecasts that the Asian market will recover before long-haul destinations, with delegates more likely to attend regional conferences and meetings.

AACB strong

ALL 17 members of the Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) have stuck with the organisation through the pandemic, a retention level not seen for almost 10 years.

The recent AACB AGM named Brett Fraser of the Brisbane Economic Development Agency as Vice President, while Melbourne Convention Bureau CEO Julia Swanson is AACB Treasurer.

Travel Daily



Catch up on the news of the week

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN](#)

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.

I TOLD YOU SO!

Way back, at the start of the pandemic, when everyone and their dog was predicting that business events were dead and that we'd all better look to the world of electronic communication, I said that this was rubbish.

My experience over many years and several major upsets to our industry (though none quite as bad as COVID-19, thankfully) and not just in Australia, suggested that while IT companies may be knocking on the door, face-to-face meetings (even in masks) would never be replaced entirely by video conferencing.

Over the many months of this pandemic, while Australia and New Zealand both took what was initially considered the drastic step of community lockdowns, the science of video communication has developed significantly. Hybrid conferencing has evolved and a number of AV companies have invested in the technology necessary to present remote conferencing in a very professional manner.

However, I still maintain that as soon as virus-free travel - within Australia or an international 'bubble' - is reestablished we shall see face-to-face conferencing resume at a pace.

Social interaction is a building block of modern society; it promotes a sense of security and belonging. While there are many forms of interaction most require

a physical presence not merely viewing another person on a screen. Indeed, the lack of ability to react or cooperate in real time can often produce stresses which act against the purpose or the outcome of a meeting or conference.

We communicate in a variety of ways. Talking and listening are just two of these. The other senses also have a part to play if the message is to be delivered effectively. Conference communication has been compared to a radio broadcast where the speaker is tuned to one wavelength, but individual members of the audience are tuned not to the same wavelength but one slightly out of sync. This results in a proportion of the audience not fully understanding or even receiving the message being delivered.

Subsequent social interaction - almost impossible within an audio-visual environment - between delegates allows those who have received and understood the message to relay this to others who may not have fully comprehended what was being said. This is one very important aspect of meetings or conferencing that is frequently overlooked.

Video conferencing will always have a place in the business events mix, just not the foremost one that many IT companies envisage.

Peter Gray is an independent motivation consultant, an Accredited Incentive Practitioner, author and speaker. He can be contacted at: peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net





ULURU BUSINESS EVENTS SPECIAL



Sails in the Desert Superior Room

3 NIGHT SPECIAL

SAILS IN THE DESERT ★★★★★

per room/per night
twin share

\$240*

Combine business and pleasure with Voyages Ayers Rock Resort and experience spectacular Uluru and Kata Tjuta.

Ideal for an event to thank and recognise your colleagues and valued clients or to motivate your team, Ayers Rock Resort is an inspiring destination.

Includes

- Superior Room only
- Free Wi-Fi
- Non-exclusive Ayers Rock Airport return transfers
- Free guest activities

Travel until 31 March 2021 / Minimum 10 Rooms

VOYAGES BUSINESS EVENTS

P + 61 2 8296 8067
 E conferences@voyages.com.au
 W ulurumeetingplace.com.au

* Conditions apply. All rates are accommodation only. Based on single, twin or double occupancy, per night as indicated above. Rates include room only and non-exclusive transfers from Ayers Rock Airport. All prices are quoted in Australian Dollars and are inclusive of 10% GST. The above rates are applicable for groups only, requiring conference or exclusive function spaces and requiring a minimum 3 night stay and a minimum of 10 accommodation rooms per night. Strictly subject to availability at time of booking.



VOYAGES
**AYERS
 ROCK
 RESORT**
 TOUCH THE SILENCE