

April 2017

KON PPS1988/02/2017(02536)

TTGmice

Asia-Pacific's intelligent business events resource

Malaysia's secondary cities on the hot list

Solomon Islands fires up MICE ambitions

Singapore sees evolution of hybrid events

Build & they will come

More destinations beyond the big cities of Asia-Pacific are getting their own world-class convention centres. But are these facilities enough to lure international business events and turn the destinations they reside in into hotspots for industry gatherings?

TTG Asia Luxury • TTGmice
TRAVEL JOURNALISM
BUSINESS ARTICLE
2016 • 2014, 2013, 2011 & 2009
PATA Gold Awards

TTGassociations
JOURNALISM EXCELLENCE
PRINT & ONLINE
2016
Anak Sarawak Award

TTG Asia
TRADE MEDIA
OF THE YEAR 2015
MPAS Awards

TTG Asia
MOBILE APP
OF THE YEAR 2015
(Mobile)
MPAS Awards



澳門特別行政區政府旅遊局
DIRECÇÃO DOS SERVIÇOS DE TURISMO
MACAO GOVERNMENT TOURISM OFFICE

PATA[®]
Pacific Asia Travel Association

PATA TRAVEL MART 2017

September 13-15
The Venetian® Macao Resort Hotel
Macao SAR

YOUR GATEWAY TO THE ASIA PACIFIC TRAVEL INDUSTRY

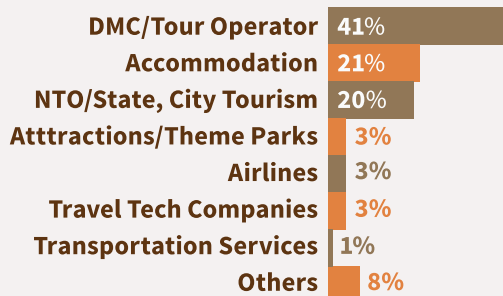
The PATA Travel Mart is Asia Pacific's premier and longest-running pan-regional trade show featuring unparalleled networking and contracting opportunities. Join us this year as we celebrate 40 years of connecting qualified buyers and experienced sellers from destinations worldwide. PTM2017 is generously hosted by the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO).



PTM2016 STATS

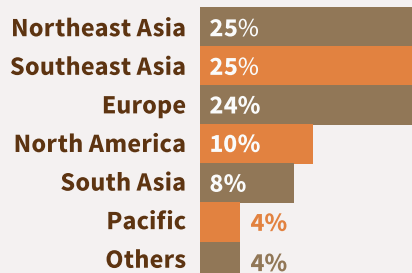
Seller Profiles

by business type



Hosted Buyers

by region



WHAT THEY SAY:

“

I have been attending PATA Travel Mart for the past six years....it has become a door for me to step out and introduce my country to fellow buyers whose clients are looking for a unique, mystical, and authentic experience.

”

Deepak Tamang, CEO Raven Tours and Trek, Bhutan (PTM2016 Seller)

www.PATA.org/PTM-2017

SELLER / BUYER / MEDIA REGISTRATIONS AVAILABLE

Official Publication

TTG
ASIA

EDITORIAL

Karen Yue
Group Editor (karen.yue@ttgasia.com)

Xinyi Liang-Pholsena
Editor, TTG Asia
(liang.xinyi@ttgasia.com)

S Puvaneswary
Editor, Malaysia/Brunei
(puvanes@ttgasia.com)

Mimi Hudoyo
Editor, Indonesia (idmfasia@cbn.net.id)

Rachel AJ Lee, Yixin Ng
Sub Editors
(rachel.lee@ttgasia.com, ng.yixin@ttgasia.com)

Barathi Narayan
Reporter, Singapore
barathi.narayan@ttgasia.com

Paige Lee Pei Qi
Assistant Editor, Special Projects
lee.peiqi@ttgasia.com

Rebecca Elliott Australia
(rebeccaelliott@hotmail.com)

Marissa Carruthers Cambodia
(maris.carruthers@gmail.com)

Caroline Boey China & Special Projects
(caroline.boey@ttgasia.com)

Prudence Lui Hong Kong/Greater China
(prului@yahoo.com)

Rohit Kaul India
(rohitkaul23@gmail.com)

Julian Ryall Japan
(jryall2@hotmail.com)

Feizal Samath Sri Lanka/Maldives
(feizalsam@gmail.com)

Chadamas Chinmaneevong Thailand
(chadamasc@gmail.com)

Rosa Ocampo
The Philippines (rosa.ocampo@gmail.com)

Redmond Sia, Goh Meng Yong
Creative Designers

Lina Tan Editorial Assistant

SALES & MARKETING

Michael Chow Group Publisher
(michael.chow@ttgasia.com)

Ar-lene Lee Senior Business Manager
(arlene.lee@ttgasia.com)

Pierre Quek Publisher, Online Section
(pierre.quek@ttgasia.com)

Hidy Lee Business Manager
(hidylee@ttgasia.com)

Cheryl Tan Corporate Marketing Manager
(cheryl.tan@ttgasia.com)

Kwek Wan Ling Marketing Executive
(kwek.wan.ling@ttgasia.com)

Cheryl Lim Advertisement Administration
manager (cheryl.lim@ttgasia.com)

Carol Cheng Asst Manager Administration
& Marketing (Hong Kong, carol.cheng@ttgasia.com)

PUBLISHING SERVICES

Tony Yeo Division Manager

Kun Swee Qi Publishing Services Executive

Lynn Lim Web Executive

Katherine Leong Circulation Executive

OFFICES

Singapore
TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd, 1 Science Park Road,
#04-07 The Capricorn, Singapore Science
Park II, Singapore 117528
Tel: +65 6395 7575, fax: +65 6536 0896,
email: traveltradesales@ttgasia.com

Hong Kong
TTG Asia Media Pte Ltd, 8/F, E168,
166-168 Des Voeux Road Central,
Sheung Wan, Hong Kong
Tel: +852 2237 7288, fax: +852 2237 7227

TTG ASIA MEDIA PTE LTD

Darren Ng Managing Director

Raini Hamdi Senior Editor
(raini.hamdi@ttgasia.com)

BPA TTGmice, endorsed by the Asian
Association of Convention and Visitors
Bureaus, is published by TTG Asia
Media Pte Ltd, and is mailed free-of-charge on written
request to readers Asia-wide who meet a set of
predetermined terms and conditions. Annual airmail
subscription charges are US\$70 (Asia) and US\$90
(elsewhere). All rights reserved. No part of this publi-
cation may be reproduced in whole or in part without
written permission of the publisher.

MCI (P) 165/08/2013, KDN
PPS1888/02/2017/025626, ISSN 0218-849X
Printed by Times Printers Pte Ltd
16 Tuas Avenue 5, Singapore 639340



Karen Yue
Group Editor

Workings of a convention centre

I'm writing this from my hotel room in Sydney, dizzy with excitement over the sneak peek I just had into the belly of the new International Convention Centre (ICC) Sydney.

I journeyed, along with a select few other journalists, from the point where deliveries of fresh produce and necessary consumables are dropped off daily at the ICC Sydney's massive kitchen, through the decanting room where ingredients are quickly sorted out into temperature-controlled rooms resembling walk-in refrigerators. Then it was off to various spacious, steel furnished areas where ingredients are peeled, diced or julienned and then steamed, broiled, baked or roasted in fascinating automated cookers and ovens to the exact second for consistent quality.

The rare tour of the venue's kitchen was led by executive chef Tony Panetta. He unreservedly showed us how the centre upholds its strict regard for food safety and quality with the use of a high-tech eWater system and Monika food temperature monitoring devices.

After getting to know the hard process, we were introduced to the softer side of operations through a brief video on how the centre builds a relationship with local farmers and fishermen to establish a direct trading line for the freshest harvest and catch of the sea while playing a direct role in sustaining local businesses.

That brought a tear to my eye, and was the perfect lead up to a lunch surprise with ICC Sydney's CEO Geoff Donaghy who said: "Now that you understand how we prepare our food, it is time to taste it."

The curtains on the stage in the cavernous Darling Harbour Theatre then retracted to reveal a beautifully set up banquet table and mobile kitchen with Panetta helming it. We went on to feast on exquisitely plated, restaurant-quality dishes paired with some of the region's finest wines.

The entire exercise was a memorable demonstration of ICC Sydney being far more than just a venue for events.

The varied roles a truly competitive convention and exhibition centre plays have been discussed extensively – it has to excel in space utility (and be creative about it too!), event technology, service, F&B, safety and security, human resource management, and even community sustainability, among many other aspects.

Success has a complex recipe and every ingredient is important. It is the same with the business events industry. Having a modern convention and exhibition centre alone cannot guarantee the city will attract a regular flow of global trade events. This issue's cover feature, *Build & they will come* (pages 12-18) discusses exactly that while highlighting venues in second- and third-tier cities that you should watch for. Happy reading!



Find us at www.facebook.com/TTGmice



Get your weekly news update at www.ttgsmice.com



Follow us at @TTGmice



Follow us at @ttgmice



COVER STORY

12 Build & they will come

More destinations beyond the big cities of Asia-Pacific are getting their own world-class convention centres. But are these facilities enough to lure international business events and turn the destinations they reside in into the latest hotspots for industry gatherings?

COUNTRY REPORTS

19 Malaysia // Pushing the boat out

Malaysia's secondary cities are working hand-in-hand with their local associations, hotels and venues to draw more events.

By S Puvaneswary

23 China // Revved up to go big

With government will strong after its G20 success, Hangzhou could rise to rival Shanghai as a preferred business events destination. By Caroline Boey

26 Solomon Islands // In the swim of things

Wheels are now in motion as Solomon Islands prepares for the 2023 Pacific Games – seen as a catalyst for future business events. By Julian Ryall

TTGmice

www.ttgmice.com

DEPARTMENTS

- 1 To our readers
- 3 Marketplace
- 7 Talk of the trade
- 11 In focus
- 28 Case studies
- 30 Over coffee with...
- 32 People

We
love



COURT MARTIAL BAR

• COCKTAIL BAR •



Not your usual bar

As expected of any fixture in the Philippe Starck-designed JW Marriott Singapore South Beach, Court Martial Bar tosses out the mould for what hotel spaces should look like, and the result is a specialty cocktail bar sporting the trendy urban-industrial aesthetic.

The venue has room for just 55 pax, but this makes sense as a non-competing offer to what's available at the nearby Suntec Singapore, one of the city's main convention facilities.

Delegates attending exhibitions and conventions at Suntec need only to cross a road to adjourn to smaller events at the hotel. Housed

with 15 meeting rooms in the hotel's Assembly tower, Court Martial Bar itself functions as a breakout space in the day.

At night, the bar can be booked for a variety of events, particularly if you're looking to impress your VIP guests with boozy after-parties and networking sessions.

The standard menu has three main cocktail categories. Court Martial Bar Signatures features potions that pay homage to Singapore such as the Heritage Classic, which mixes Tiger beer with the Singapore Sling. Re-Defined Classics include the Bloody Maria, where a savoury classic gets a touch of Dijon Mustard.

And from the Barrel-Aged Classics list, you'd find favourites like the Negroni and Rum Ol'Fashioned rested in American Oak Barrels for two to four weeks.

Refreshing retreat for top achievers

Zen Beach Retreat has opened on the Southern Great Barrier Reef, near Bundaberg, offering groups of up to 22 guests an opportunity to socialise, strengthen bonds and refresh their physical shells.

Personalised retreat programmes can be arranged, from eco-therapy experiences, integrated health and wellness sessions, and teambuilding fun.

Zen Beach Retreat offers four villas, accommodating up to four guests each, and one main house which can accommodate up to six guests.

Guests enjoy direct beach access mere steps away as well as close proximity to the airport.



Crowne Plaza sets up in Vientiane

InterContinental Hotels Group's first property in Laos, the 197-room Crowne Plaza Vientiane has opened along Samsenthai Road in the capital.

True to the Crowne Plaza brand, the property welcomes business travellers and corporate events, offering five meeting rooms spanning a combined floor space of 1,200m².

The largest venue, the Grand Ballroom, can take up to 1,012 guests in theatre-style and can be partitioned for smaller gatherings.

Meeting planners are supported by a Crowne Plaza Meetings Director and are provided with a daily meetings debrief. The hotel also promises a guaranteed response to RFPs within two hours.

Other facilities in the hotel include a spa, a 24-hour fitness centre, an outdoor infinity pool, complimentary Wi-Fi, a beer garden and two restaurants.



Brisbane's Baedeker Bar and Wine welcomes private events

Baedeker Bar and Wine, named after one of the forefathers of travel guides, Karl Baedeker, is a new dining destination in Brisbane that pays homage to the early days of travel. Located in a heritage-listed building, and decorated in vintage style reflecting the 19th century, many of the author's old guidebooks are displayed in the bar.

The venue's rustic look, complete with red brick walls, heavy wood tables and stately leather seats, provide a unique setting for dining events and networking cocktails.

Baedeker can accommodate up to 120 people for dinner or 200 for cocktail parties. A champagne garden and purpose-built function space can host dinner events for 100 people.



Finnish meetings concept lands in Singapore

Huone Event Hotels has launched Huone Singapore, in the heart of Clarke Quay, boasting creative meeting spaces coupled with on-site



event coordinator services, designed to inspire and evoke creativity. The 1,860m² space caters to event needs with customised solutions from 11 thematic meeting rooms including the Theatre room where guests can act out their concepts. Built around flexible spaces, with most rooms having an attached balcony and wheelchair friendly, Huone Singapore is suitable for events ranging from seminars to company retreats, press conferences, team-building and product launches. All rooms are soundproof and lit with natural daylight, with maximum capacity of 150 people in a single room. The space also houses an in-house kitchen catering International cuisine and a communal dining area, with the flexibility to request for private dining. Event planners can plan, book, pay and calculate ROI for the entire event online through Huone's online reservation platform, Eventsome.

In the pipeline



Mövenpick Asara Resort & Spa Hua Hin

Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts will make its Hua Hin debut this November with the rebranding and management of Asara Villa and Suite Resort. When relaunched as Mövenpick Asara Resort & Spa Hua Hin, it will feature 54 pool villas and 42 suites, a spa, a kids club, meeting facilities, a library, and multiple swimming pools.



Langham Place in Glenelg

A luxury Langham Place hotel is set to be built in the Adelaide seaside suburb of Glenelg. The 12-storey, 146-room five-star waterfront development is scheduled for completion in mid-2019.



Daydream Island Resort and Spa

Owners China Capital Investment Group has announced a more than A\$50 million (US\$38.2 million) redevelopment which will see significant infrastructure upgrades to the popular Whitsunday tropical island resort. The works will see the resort closing in early 2018 for a period of time.

Qantas, Jetstar Asia codeshare on more routes in the region

Qantas and Jetstar Asia have expanded their codeshare arrangements, offering travellers more choices and frequencies across the Qantas Group Network in Asia.

Since February, Qantas code has been made available on a further 142 services operated by Jetstar Asia, bringing the number of weekly codeshares between the two carriers to 349. These add to Qantas' 44 weekly flights between Australia and Singapore.

Under the expanded arrangement, Qantas codeshare passengers are entitled to benefits including through-check on Qantas international flights, accrual of Qantas Frequent Flyer points and status credits, access to Qantas Club Lounge in Singapore (for eligible passengers), access to Qantas International baggage allowance (as stated on their ticket); and a full or light meal onboard.





Learn and bond over golf

The new Laguna Golf Academy at the award-winning 18-hole Laguna Golf Phuket course has begun offering premium practice facilities including dedicated swing rooms as well as learning packages that make for fun teambuilding activities.

Packages include individual lessons to Day with the Pro experiences, led by experienced PGA golf instructors. For corporate teambuilding, group coaching is available for six to 24 participants.

Individual lessons are priced from 3,500 baht (US\$100) for 50-minute per person. Sessions of three hours and six hours are also available.

Group lessons can be customised to the organisers' needs.

With the golf course sitting within the sprawling Laguna Phuket Resort, corporate groups will enjoy accommodation support from seven hotels including Banyan Tree Phuket, Angsana Villas Resort Phuket and Dusit Thani Laguna Phuket.



Luxury hotel rises in Siem Reap

Standing next to Siem Reap's Royal Palace and a 15-minute drive from the Angkor Archaeological Park, the J7 Hotel boasts 90 lavishly furnished rooms and suites – all of which come with large en-suite bathrooms and bathtubs, Internet TV and complimentary Wi-Fi.

A range of facilities are available from seven F&B options, a meeting room in the basement, a children's play area, gym, spa, sauna and steam rooms, and an outdoor swimming pool complete with five Jacuzzis.

Rare Kristang cuisine to feature in Majestic Malacca's new restaurant

The luxury Majestic Malacca hotel has unveiled a new dining concept, one that celebrates authentic Malacca-Portuguese cuisine, known colloquially as Kristang cuisine.

Celebrity chef Melba Nunis lends both her name and her culinary skills to the new Melba at The Mansion restaurant, and will delight diners with a specially crafted menu featuring treasured family recipes such as ayam kari keluak (curry chicken with keluak black nuts), inchimintu karangezu (baked stuffed crab) and kek sugee (sugee cake).

Dining at the restaurant is also a feast for the senses, as chef Melba's personal collection of cultural memorabilia adorn the walls, highlighting the unique cuisine's past.

Melba at The Mansion is open daily for lunch between 12.00 and 15.00 and for dinner between 19.00 and 22.30.

Private event bookings are welcome.



Hot deals



The Langham, Hong Kong

The hotel has launched *Meaningful Meetings for the Senses* programme to deliver experiential environments for delegates inspired by colours.

Three themes are offered: Balanced Green which features green, healthy food menu and relaxing ambient sounds during break-out sessions; Trusted Blue which focuses on sustainably-sourced seafood, a unique Water Bar and soothing sounds of the sea during the

event; and Vibrant Orange which features an F&B menu using ingredients with the warm colour palette as well as uplifting contemporary music.

The full-day package (based on a minimum group size of 10 pax) is priced at HK\$980++ (US\$126.30++) per person, while the half-day package price is HK\$900++ with lunch and HK\$530++ without.

Email tlhkg.banquet@langhamhotels.com for more details.

Take an inside look into Melbourne



Localing Private Tours, run by two energetic young friends, Daniel Platt & Dean Hampel, prides itself in creating unique tours of Melbourne and regional Victoria that introduce visitors to little known parts of the destination while supporting small local businesses at the same time.

Tours can be themed around culture, history, gastronomy and more, and are best suited for a bus-load of 42 people. These tours are led by knowledgeable local guides who are passionate about the subject matter.

Localing has done rare back-of-house tours of the Melbourne Theatre Company, with participants getting a peek into a rehearsal and then sharing a meal with renowned actors, as well as gourmet programmes at local celebrity chef Shannon Bennett's private farm where participants get to hunt for truffles and then dig into a feast crafted by the star himself. More common tours cover visits to local boutique coffee roasters such as Aunty Peg's to learn about the business and Melbournians' love for coffee, or walking tours of Melbourne's vibrant alleyways and heritage buildings.

A fair, new face in Chengdu

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts has made its entry into Western China with the opening of 336-key Fairmont Chengdu.

Located at Tianfu Middle Avenue in Chengdu, the Sichuan capital's Hi-tech Zone, the hotel provides business travellers with quick access to Shuangliu International Airport and the fast developing South CBD zone.

The hotel lobby features a delicate handmade Shu embroidery that is a masterful blend of traditional landscape painting, handwoven tapestry, and modern photography, while its guestrooms and suites offer stunning views of Chengdu's skyline.

For events, the hotel offers 11 meeting rooms and function spaces.

Other facilities include four restaurants with seven different dining concepts, a fitness centre, an indoor pool, and the brand's signature Willow Stream Spa by Fairmont.



Vietnam Airlines launches Hanoi-Sydney route

Vietnam Airlines has begun a thrice-weekly service between Sydney and Hanoi from March 28.

Operated on a Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft, the flight departs Hanoi every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday at 23.55 and lands in Sydney at 13.15 the next day (12.15 for Sunday departures).

It then returns from Sydney at 15.15 (14.15 on Monday departures) and arrives in Hanoi at 20.50.



Never a dull moment at Donovans

Family-run Donovans restaurant on Melbourne's St Kilda Beach, close to Brooks Jetty, may have been in business for the past 21 years and is now a renowned dining institution in the city but co-owner Gail Donovan keeps things fresh by giving the interiors a new theme every six months and introducing innovative new dishes every two weeks.

The menu changes daily according to the freshest produce found in the local markets. However 10 signature dishes, such as the comforting old-fashioned chicken pie with a crisp pastry lid, stay fixed on the menu.

Donovans welcomes private events through two beautiful spaces – one facing the beach for 20 guests and another on the other side of the restaurant for 12 guests.

Full venue hire is not allowed.



Sold-out Hong Kong to get some relief with new Wan Chai venue

Hong Kong skyline



EP/royal/sutterstock

By Prudence Lui

The Hong Kong government has proposed a new convention and exhibition space to be developed in Wan Chai, following a consultancy study that has predicted a shortfall of about 130,000m² of event space during peak period in the destination by 2028.

Details shared in the Chief Executive's policy address indicated that the Wan Chai Sports Ground has been earmarked for "comprehensive development in 2019 at the earliest".

"Apart from convention and exhibition venues, the development proposal will comprise trendy and novel recreation and sports facilities as well as other necessary community facilities for the district, with a view to optimising land use. The Trade Development Council will conduct a feasibility study on this proposal. The government will consult the Wan Chai District Council and other stakeholders in a timely way," noted the statement.

Commenting on the government's decision, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibi-

tion Centre (Management)'s managing director, Monica Lee-Müller, told *TTGmice*: "We hope the government will continue to communicate and engage with existing and potential local and overseas exhibition organisers to ascertain the needs of the market for the sustainable development of the industries."

Destination Management Company, managing director, Jenny May also supports the government's plans and expressed excitement that the new venue would comprise recreation and sports facilities too.

Momentous Asia Travel & Events, general manager, Doris Lam, hopes that the new venue will be run by "an individual operator" and not be part of Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre's expansion.

Lam explained that the Centre has overflowing demand for major shows like toy and jewellery fairs, and the new venue might be used for them. With a different operator running the new Wan Chai venue, small and medium-sized event organisers will be given a chance to access the space.

MCEC unfazed by Sydney rival

The Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) sees the new opening of its Sydney counterpart as healthy competition, and expects to retain businesses won over recent years from the lack of a local big city rival.

"It's great to have Sydney back in the game because it is the gateway to Australia," said Peter King, CEO of MCEC. "But at the same time, our books have been as strong as it's ever been so I don't envisage that we're going to have a downturn in business as a result of International Convention Centre Sydney's opening."

King's comments on February 21 come as cranes arrive to install the first piece of structural steel into the construction site of MCEC's new wing. The development is part of an A\$205 million (US\$157 million) investment by the Victorian state government to expand the centre, with an opening aimed for July 2018.

MCEC is confident of returning that

investment quickly. "Independent research shows that operations of MCEC contributed A\$954 million back to the Victorian economy in the last financial year," said Michael Walsh, director of strategy and innovation. "This figure is predicted to surpass A\$1 billion annually when the expansion is completed."



King: ready for competition

The new 20,000m² structure features a flexible, multipurpose space that can transform from an exhibition hall to gala banquet venue, and to a keynote plenary hall in quick succession. With it, MCEC will be Australia's largest convention and exhibition venue, sporting an overall size of 70,000m².

"I think that over time, our businesses will be quite different. There are enormous infrastructure reasons for medical, research, education and defence sectors to congregate in Melbourne so I think Melbourne and Sydney will end up specialising in different areas," he remarked. – **Adelaine Ng**

MyCEB enhances Twin Deal offer

Malaysia is stepping up benefits for corporate meeting and incentive groups heading its way through its existing Twin Deal package that has now been enhanced with more local experiences.

The new Malaysia Twin Deal XP Program (MTDXP) – with XP denoting experiences – will offer groups with more than 30 delegates complimentary cultural performances, traditional welcome and a partial sponsorship for dinner supported by the Malaysian Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB). Also new are cumulative rewards – a minimum of 3,000 participants booked within a specified period, for instance, will see up to four corporate clients treated to a fam trip to Malaysia.

Meanwhile, Zulkefli Hj Sharif, CEO of MyCEB shared that the bureau had surpassed the government's 2016 target for business events by 26 per cent. It secured 654 events over the past five years. These events are expected to contribute an economic value of RM4.1 billion (US\$919.9 million) to the country.

Regional trips, hotel downgrades for Asian incentives observed



Cherry blossoms along Meguro Canal, Tokyo

By Karen Yue

Some Asian incentive buyers at AIME 2017 have reported a change in client product preferences shaped by cautious business sentiments.

A corporate travel manager with the Asian office of a global electronics firm, told *TTGmice* that business travel budget has been cut, with top level instructions given to replace trips with video conferencing whenever possible. Teambuilding programmes are halted this year while an incentive trip due to take place last year was postponed indefinitely.

The manager, who had requested anonymity, added that downgrading travel class for savings wasn't even an option, as the company had ceased use of business class for senior executives travelling on longhaul flights three years ago.

"Our Asia-Pacific units are performing, but when US markets are shaky, head-office gets nervous and overall budget cuts are implemented," she added.

Teresa Huang, vice manager for outbound travel with SETour Taiwan, said: "In theory, companies should invest more in incentives to motivate better performance during tough times. But in reality, bosses are afraid to spend when they cannot foresee money coming in."

Huang added that "the only companies maintaining their incentive activities and spend these days are those dealing in direct marketing and insurance".

"I'm sending a 2,500-pax insurance company incentive to Vancouver this year, and possibly Melbourne in 2018. But we are seeing budget cuts in other industries. Our MNC automobile clients in Taiwan, for instance, have stopped incentive programmes for a thousand plus people, preferring instead to have one small-scale longhaul trip for the highest achievers, and a midscale regional one for around 500 people from the next lower category," she said.

"If the client does head to Europe or the US, three- or four-star hotels will be used instead," shared Huang.

For Monas Tjahjono, managing director of Monas Tours & Travel Indonesia, reward trips to Japan, South Korea and Australia are favoured and still achievable even with clients' "tighter budgets".

"What we do is to tie the incentive trip with an interesting season or festival in the destination, such as sakura season in Japan or the Tulip Festival in the Netherlands, so that the programme is enhanced without having the client to spend more money on theming," said Tjahjono.

etouches projects massive growth

A new venue sourcing tool, expanding global footprint and rising demand for event technology are expected to result in a 70 per cent growth in revenue and customers this year for event management software specialist, etouches.

The company unveiled in February its new venue sourcing tool which enables event planners and organisers to search and compare more than 225,000 venues worldwide, issue RFPs, and compare and qualify responses based on set criteria.

Oni Chukwu, president & CEO, said the tool is "highly intelligent". He explained: "It shows you varying rates for different venues across different dates (and) figures out where your delegates are coming from and how much airfares (would be) should you pick a certain destination on a certain date."

The 70 per cent growth projection comes on top of the company's 50 per cent growth last year. "To support our continued growth, we are adding close to 100 people to our team this year, mostly in Asia-Pacific, who will handle sales, account management, data science and customer support," he said, adding that business forays are being made this year into China and Hong Kong.

Chukwu said the "extraordinary growth" is possible as the "market is under-penetrated". Only 10 per cent of Global 5000 Companies are using event management solutions, but that will change as Internet of Things applications seep into people's daily lives and more younger and tech-savvy people join the workforce. – **Karen Yue**

Cambodia shores up MICE hardware

Cambodia is stepping up its efforts to lure more foreign footfalls, especially from the meetings and incentives segment, in order to reach its 2020 target of 7.5 million arrivals.

Currently, the country is not seen as a destination for meetings and incentives, but Thoura Lor, director of the marketing & promotion department in Cambodia's Ministry of Tourism, hopes this perception will change in

the next few years.

He pointed out that there were numerous development projects well underway in Phnom Penh.



Thoura Lor: more investors needed

Two slated for opening this year are Olympia City, a mixed-use complex which can accommodate events for 5,000 pax; and Camko City, an urban development project with

"a lot of facilities for meetings and events", as well as residences.

Other projects in the pipe-

line include Koh Pich Riviera Building (2019/2020), another mixed used development, and Twin 133-storey Skyscrapers (2019), which will contain a luxury hotel, apartments, offices, shops, an exhibition hall, a theatre and restaurants.

Development focus will first be on Phnom Penh, then on Siem Reap.

Thoura said: "We are encouraging investors to build conference rooms, exhibition centres, etc. in order to accommodate more meetings and incentive business (in

Siem Reap)."

Thoura intends to work with travel agencies to create and promote corporate packages, and to identify a partner to supply corporate event groups to Cambodia.

The government's other efforts include developing infrastructure such as the National Highway 11, an expressway from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap, and the Kom Pot International Sea Port. They are also in talks with airlines for new city connections and chartered flights. – **Rachel AJ Lee**

Melbourne Convention Bureau paints the face of future meetings

By Karen Yue

Melbourne Convention Bureau's (MCB) new publication, *The Future of Business Meetings Industry Report*, has discovered that meetings will evolve in the next 25 years to become more interaction-focused, more tech-heavy and more personalised to satisfy individual attendee, see a greater element of voluntourism, and attract a broader range of attendees.

The study, commissioned by the MCB to celebrate the 25th anniversary of AIME, was conducted by McCrindle Research. It is the collation of qualitative data gained through 14 in-depth interviews with industry experts as well as quantitative data collected through a survey of the Bureau's industry contacts. The survey, conducted from December 15, 2016 to January 23 this year, yielded 206 commenced responses and 147 completed responses.

Karen Bolinger, MCB CEO, said: "(The findings are) very good for our meetings industry. Despite the plethora of online meetings taking place around the world, it has not disrupted the core desire of people to meet and interact face-to-face. Eighty-six per cent of (respondents) value face-to-face meetings, and see these as a very important part of their professional development."

Bolinger added that while meetings today are attended by top-tier professors and corporate executives, associations and companies will increasingly see the benefits of "up-skilling" a broad range of employees. "So delegates (in the future) will range from junior to mid-level and executive level," she said.

Some interesting figures to emerge from the study include:

- 89% of respondents believe that delegates will expect to acquire more knowledge from events
- 88% believe that delegates will want a more personalised event experience
- 76% believe that delegates will want events to be more socially responsible
- 64% believe that the length of networking time at events will become longer over the next 15 years
- 57% believe that the length of conferences as a whole will shorten over the next 15 years
- 43% believe that destination experience in promoting a conference/business event will be extremely important in the future
- 73% think that delegates' lack of time to travel and attend meetings will be the industry's biggest challenge in the next 15 years while 70 per cent believe that destination cost is the key obstacle

What's happening



April 24-27

Arabian Travel Mart
Dubai, UAE



April 22-14

China Xi'an Silk Road
International Tourism Expo
Xi'an, China



May 10-12

ITB China
Shanghai, China



May 16-18

IMEX
Frankfurt, Germany

ONE MINUTE with IT&CM Events

Exciting Networking Line-Up at IT&CM China 2017

Indulge in the sights and sounds of Shanghai with Pacific World

With 2 pre-show, half-day city tours for selected buyers and media. Discover the city, and perhaps choose Shanghai for your next MICE destination.

20 March: Puxi, Xintiandi, French Concession, Networking Cocktails by **Accor**
21 March: Zhujiqiao Water Village, Hosted Brunch

Feast at the Opening Ceremony and Welcome Reception at Shanghai Marriott Parkview

20 March: Returning as 3rd year sponsors, the venue will showcase its world-class gourmet menu, excellent hospitality, and facilities. Enjoy local and international performances, and rub shoulders with the movers and shakers of the MICE and Corporate Travel industry.

Lunch with Fiji, Argentina, and Fukuoka

22 & 23 March: Get to know these host destinations and connect with major industry stakeholders. Preview the venues, capabilities, products, and services of these first-time exhibitors. Discover what they can offer your next incentive trip or major event.

Wind down at JW Marriott Changfeng Park with an evening of cocktails

22 March: Clink glasses and exchange contacts with fellow industry practitioners. You're guaranteed a casual, captive night of networking with only the most influential decision-makers in the field.

Round off with a 3D/2N post-show FAM trip to Hangzhou

23 – 25 March: Come explore this picturesque city – the second in Asia to host the 11th G20 Summit in 2016. International buyers and media will visit the Hangzhou Olympic and International Expo Center, try their hand at seal engraving, experience silk culture at the largest silk museum in the World, and more. Courtesy of **Hangzhou Tourism Commission**.

IT&CM China 2017 will be held from **21 – 23 March** in Shanghai, China. To find out more about its Business, Education, and Networking showcase, visit www.itcmchina.com

IT&CM Asia
Exhibitors, Travel & Conventions, Meetings

IT&CM CHINA
Exhibitors, Travel & Conventions, Meetings

IT&CM India
Exhibitors, Travel & Conventions, Meetings

Shanghai expands team of ambassadors

By Caroline Boey

The Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administration (SMTA) has inducted six new members to its Conference Ambassador Programme in a bid to diversify the type of association meetings in the city.

Launched in 2006, the programme now has 104 ambassadors, and the newbies represent the medical, mathematical, pharmaceutical and cultural fields.

Patrick Chen, deputy director, SMTA, reported an increase in association meetings



Chen: 2016 was Shanghai's best year

in 2016 compared to the previous year, with a number of transport and research congresses, most with around 1,500 delegates, and HUAWEI CONNECT 2016, held in 3Q, with some 20,000 people.

"It was the best year in terms of international arrivals attending business events and corporate meetings, and of the 8.54 million total overseas visitor arrivals, about 50 per cent were business travellers, and about 10 per cent were in Shanghai for events," Chen added.

In 2017, Chen said SMTA will be represented at IT&CM China, IMEX in Frankfurt and ITBM China, and it will be updating its website, which is available in Mandarin, English, Japanese and Korean, to include German in the second half of the year.

Meanwhile, Shanghai is boosting its inventory of luxury hotels targeting business travellers and events this year and next. New properties to watch for this year include brands like Aman, Anantara, Bulgari, Canella, Hualuxe, St Regis and EDITION and W.

Crowne Plaza Manila casts eyes overseas

Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria in Ortigas is working with PCOs to grow its foreign-sourced business events currently comprising just 10 per cent of the pie, with the remainder dominated by local ones.

General manager Gaurav Rai is targeting to gradually increase the share of foreign business events to 15 per cent this year, 20 per cent in 2018 and 35 per cent in 2020.

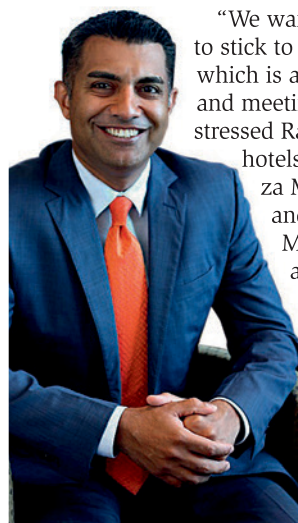
With Crowne Plaza's foreign business events mainly sourced from the US and Australia – both with very strong business process outsourcing in Ortigas – Rai is expanding the net to include Hong Kong, China, Singapore, India and the Australia sub-continent which are active in the PCO segment.

He explained that these five markets are "very doable" with short flight distances to Manila, good airport connectivity, and many flights coming in from these countries. They also have a "good base of corporate clients that the hotel can grow (and) deliver the experiences that they are looking for".

He emphasised the strategic location of Manila, with extension options to

Cebu, Clark and Boracay, is a draw.

Japan, while mainly a leisure source market at the moment, has also good potential. "With Japan's prime minister coming here recently, I think it will have a strong corporate impact and if that happened, we would want to be at the forefront," said Rai who recently sent his director of sales and marketing on a Japan visit.



"We want to continue to stick to our brand which is a conference and meetings hotel," stressed Rai, whose two hotels (Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria and Holiday Inn Manila Galleria) are undergoing extensive renovation. – **Rosa Ocampo**

Rai: wants more overseas business

Penang hosts 1,251 events in PCEB's first year

Penang hosted 1,251 events with an estimated economic impact of RM808 million (US\$182 million) in its CVB's first year of operations in 2016, according to a review released by the Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB).

Of these, 37 were supported by PCEB and they brought in an estimated 29,030 participants and 91,616 in room nights.

The majority of international business events in Penang last year originated from Singapore and South Asia.

For incentives, national groups formed the bulk at 82 per cent followed by groups from Singapore at 16 per cent.

The average number of participants per event was 97.9, an indication of Penang's suitability for small and medium-sized gatherings.

Of the 257 events that make up national congresses, most were centred on education, culture, ideas, medical sciences, government, social sciences, economics and industry, coinciding with Penang's status as a hub for these sectors.

In brief



IMPACT diversifies into leisure

IMPACT Exhibition Management has earmarked 5.6 billion baht (US\$159.4 million) over a three-year period to develop attractions and hotels at IMPACT Muang Thong Thani complex to diversify its offerings and attain a more balanced revenue stream that is currently focused on events.

The 587-room ibis Bangkok IMPACT hotel and The Portal, a four-storey retail building, opened in March, while IMPACT Speed Park, a go-kart circuit, was

launched late-2016. A seven-hectare water park will be completed by October 2018.

Euromic adds new Asian members

South Korea and Taiwan has joined global DMC network, Euromic. Taiwanlook Co. is the foremost destination management service provider in Taiwan while Channel K is a leading creative company in South Korea's business events industry. With these additions, Euromic's network now covers 46 countries worldwide.

The evolution of hybrid events

A new breed of meetings that blend format and content from different industries is emerging in Singapore. **Caroline Boey** finds out more about the phenomenon

Hybridisation and hybrid events were the buzz words when association leaders spoke at a panel discussion in November last year to mark the 10th anniversary of the Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau's (SECB) Conference Ambassador Programme (CAP), which recognises professionals and thought leaders who champion Singapore as a business events destination.

While hybrid events used to be defined as a live meeting plus remote audience participation via live streaming, webcasting or satellite broadcasting, they are no longer just about using different platforms and state-of-the-art meetings technology to scale up but now involve "content engineering with participants and the community in mind" and cut across industries.

According to Jeannie Lim, executive director, Conventions, Meetings and Incentive Travel with SECB, examples of hybrid events organised in Singapore include the joint conference of the Human Genome Meeting and the International Congress of Genetics in 2013, and the combined Royal Australasian College of Surgeons Annual Scientific Congress and the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and Faculty of Pain Medicine Annual Scientific Meeting Singapore in 2014.

Lim said: "This approach has worked for event organisers in focusing on the right audience as well as enabling an exchange of quality content and knowledge. It also allows time-strapped delegates to optimise their business trips and maximise opportunities across different events."

"In addition to these association events, several PCOs have themselves started themed conferences, recognising the benefits and synergies of such knowledge-exchange platforms in bringing together people from different industries."

"These include innovation and technology conferences that showcase disruptive solutions across various industries such as InnovFest unBound and Tech in Asia. Other examples are events that bring together professionals of differing fields to collaborate and discuss research ideas, such as the recent 4th International Teochew Doctoral Forum, which provided opportunities for Teochew technologists and entrepreneurs to collaborate in research, development and



IoT Asia 2016 is one of the hybrid trade events curated by the Singapore Expo team

commercialisation of smart applications."

Hybrid events are believed to be gaining traction in Singapore because the city-state is recognised as a knowledge hub and platform for experts to interact with the awareness that it will be potentially applicable, or perhaps be a game changer to a different field, opined Arun Madhok, CEO, Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre.

"Such interactions would highlight synergies, help connect the dots and inspire attendees to evolve beyond their current scope. The resulting opportunities could catalyse the growth of each sector."

"We believe the business events industry in Singapore is ready to support this progression (of hybrid events). To reach a wider audience or to instantaneously share information, organisers can also create an online platform or an accompanying virtual show, in addition to real-world interactions," Madhok said, adding that venues "characterised by flexibility, advanced technology and service excellence are prime to nurture such events".

Innovation in vertical and horizontal industries that marry healthcare and big data for example are taking place, said Ong Wee Min, executive director of expo sales, Marina Bay Sands Singapore. He added that AMCs and PCOs are spotting other trends.

Meanwhile, the exhibitions arm of Singapore Expo Convention & Exhibition Centre has "curated" hybrid events like the Asia International Conference & Exhibition for Retail, eCommerce, Logistics and Parcel Industries (Last Mile Fulfil-

ment Asia) and IoT (Internet of Things) Asia, addressing the interests of technology solution providers and enablers, end-user and potential IoT technology adopters across multiple industries.

Aloysius Arnaldo, Singapore Expo CEO, said: "We call ourselves event architects. It is important to understand the trends and how to blend different disciplines, bring together experts from different disciplines such as financial technology and cyber security, or green urban spaces, architecture and urban farming."

Arlando says the curation process can take between nine and 14 months to "think it through", research-proof the concept, evaluate it and find the right partners who see the value too.

The model, he noted, must make the event a success and not bank on funding. Creativity and old rules – like a festival within a trade show – can co-exist to seek new opportunities.

For Oscar Cerezales, COO, Asia-Pacific, MCI Group, cross-pollination of events works on paper, but the reality is more complicated.

"A lot of test events work though but the majority fail when it comes to scale-up processes. One of the issues is sponsorship. This is a new format and sponsors don't see clear cohesive audiences," he explained.

Cerezales believes that "for Singapore and hybrid events to succeed, SECB must be one of the key stakeholders" to market content and the destination while "keeping an eye on the value chain of hybrid events".

Build & they will come

More destinations beyond the big cities of Asia-Pacific are getting their own world-class convention centres. But are these facilities enough to lure international business events and turn the destinations they reside in into the latest hotspots for industry gatherings?

The 1989 movie *Field of Dreams* may have made famous the phrase, "If you build it, he will come" – particularly among businessmen who hold dear a similar version, "build and they will come".

But does this phrase apply to Asia-Pacific's ongoing construction boom in convention and exhibition centres that is taking place across second- and third-tier cities that are often not the first destination of choice among organisers of international business meetings and tradeshows?

When this question was posed to industry veterans Geoff Donaghy, president of AIPC, a global association that counts 175 leading convention and exhibition centres as well as more than 900 management-level professionals among its members, and Mark Cochrane, Asia-Pacific regional manager of UFI, the global association of the exhibitions industry, the short answer from both was "no".

Donaghy said: "A centre is a critical element, but it must be complemented by all the other attributes a destination needs to be able to offer in order to attract business in today's highly competitive market,

Today's planner community is a relatively small and well connected one, which means that reputation (of the convention centre) is a huge factor (in the selection of venues).

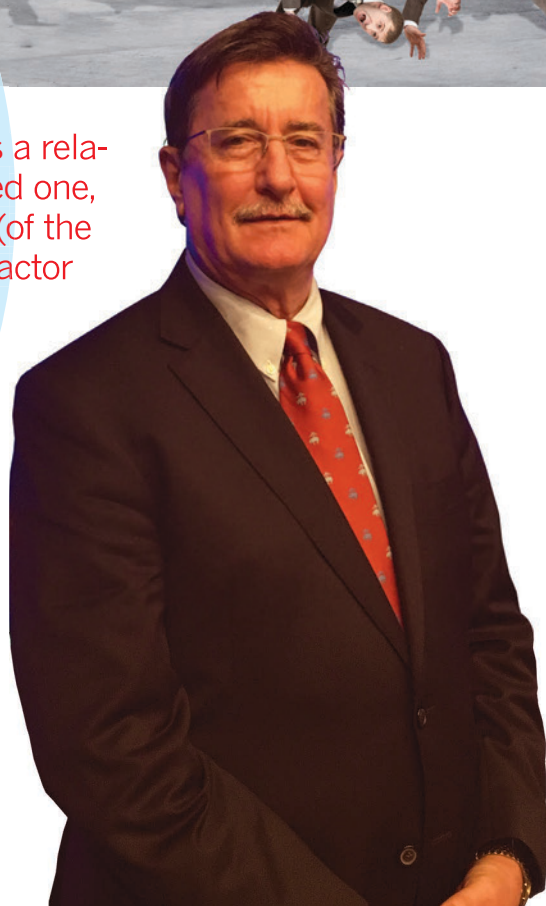
Geoff Donaghy
President, AIPC

including such factors as accommodation, air access, convention services and relevant destination attractions.

"Having said that, there are also destinations that have great potential in many other respects to attract business (events) but are being held back by the absence of good facilities. The key is to ensure all required components are in balance or to identify what is missing or in short supply and deal with that."

Cochrane agrees that while "strong, world-class infrastructure is a key piece of the puzzle", that alone "is never enough".

Cochrane opined that second- and third-tier cities could build a convention portfolio if they possessed most of these



key elements: a quality venue, a supportive national or local government, a dynamic group of PCOs and DMCs, good and convenient air links, safety and security, and an overall destination attractiveness.

Furthermore, tradeshow generally go where the trade opportunities are, he added.

Donaghy has seen destinations turning its business tourism fortunes around as a result of a new convention and exhibition centre, although he has refrained from naming specific examples. He noted that the centre is an important investment in destinations where seasonality is an issue, as it can better distribute travel demand throughout the year.

The benefits extend beyond the destination's tourism industry. "Many elements of economic and community development (can) benefit from the (destination's) ability to host events that attract knowledge, investment, new business and talent while also helping it to attract attention to its economic priorities and accomplishments from a global audience," said Donaghy.

Cochrane disagrees that a venue could have a metamorphical effect on a destination, but admits that "we have seen time after time when an investment in a venue unlocks growth in a market and drives interest in a variety of MICE segments".

He explained: "AsiaWorld-Expo unlocked growth in Hong Kong starting in 2006 and if the Hong Kong government goes ahead with plans to build a new venue in Wanchai near (Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre), that will also certainly boost the city's MICE stats. Destinations such as Kuching, Bali and Jeju have done reasonably well building their portfolio of events on the back of venues – and other supporting factors."

On the other hand, there are cases of new-built venues sitting empty.

Cochrane said: "There are many good examples in China in which second- and third-tier cities build (sometimes massive) convention and exhibition centres without giving much consideration to who would use the venue. To give a sense of scale, we have over 100 Chinese exhibition centres in our database. In Japan, there are just 13. This is solid proof that a venue alone can't generate a sustainable MICE industry."

So if all key factors were in place to ensure a destination's success in attracting business events, what would be the hallmarks of a successful convention centre?

Donaghy, who is also CEO of the new International Convention Centre Sydney which opened officially on December 20 last year, offered these views: "A high quality of facilities, services and technology are obviously critical. However, the ability of a centre to respond to a growing need for flexibility and creativity in event delivery



"It is difficult to build a business events portfolio without quality venues and the necessary supporting infrastructure. However, infrastructure alone is never enough."

Mark Cochrane

Regional manager, UFI Asia-Pacific

– often driven by the rapidly changing expectations of their own delegates – has become a big distinguishing factor among competing centres."

"Affiliations are also important, particularly when they offer credentials. AIPC members all subscribe to the principle of Excellence in Centre Management, and can access a range of programmes to support this. At the same time, AIPC also maintains a Quality Standards programme that awards a designation based on an external audit of a wide range of centre features and management policies, and this can help planners ensure they will get what they need," he said.

Cochrane also urged convention and exhibition centres in second- and third-tier cities to invest in human resources (HR) in order to compete well, saying that the HR strain "will be a central issue for venue operators for the foreseeable future".

To help UFI members in this aspect, the organisation has made education a core focus in its programmes. Later this year, UFI will launch a venue management degree.

Penang – a case study

Business events are not new to Penang, but it was only in 2016 that the Malaysian state formed its own CVB and in March 2017 that it got its first large-scale dedicated business event venue, Setia SPICE Convention Centre.

In December 2016, ahead of its opening, Setia SPICE Convention Centre has already a stream of event bookings including two large international conferences, one of

which is for over 8,000 people in May, said senior manager, Yeoh Kheng Ho.

With this centre complemented by 2,000 rooms within a 10km radius, Penang Convention and Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) will finally be able to bid for large conventions, said CEO, Ashwin Gunasekaran.

The evolution of Penang's tourism appeal, from a much loved heritage city and food paradise for holidaymakers to a new generation business events city, is not solely the result of the new centre.

Before the bureau was formed, Ashwin noted that local industry players had to work independently "to their best capacity" to attract business events to Penang.

"Now with the bureau in the picture, there is a point of contact for the industry. Through the bureau, there is concerted marketing efforts which engage every segment of the business events industry, and we are all growing together," he said.

Penang's infrastructure growth will continue into 2022 when the Light Waterfront Convention Centre opens. But when the novelty of brand new convention and exhibition venues wears off, Ashwin said sustained interest in Penang as a business events destination would require continuous improvement in other areas.

"We understand the need (for) constant refurbishment of facilities to support the growing needs of the business events community. Connectivity is another aspect; Penang is getting increasingly connected with new markets so we believe Penang will always be a fresh destination for newer source markets," he said. – **Karen Yue**



Successes beyond the big cities

The Third Preparatory Committee Meeting for Habitat III

The Third Preparatory Committee Meeting for Habitat III was a United Nations event in Surabaya, hosted by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing Astri Diana.

The Indonesian city was chosen because its mayor had expressed interest in doing so and had highlighted Surabaya's successful urban planning experience.

To support the event, which comprised a conference, meetings and an exhibition for 2,000 to 2,500 delegates, every inch of Grand City Convention & Exhibition Surabaya was used.

"It was probably the biggest event the convention centre has hosted so far," said the project manager with Pacto Convex.

For a convention and exhibition centre located outside of the primary destination for business events, Grand City Convention & Exhibition Surabaya is massive, opined the project manager.

The Exhibition Hall measures 4,100m² and comes with an 880m² pre-function area. The Convention Hall spans 3,320m² and is joined by 10 meeting rooms. On the fourth floor sit the 1,800m² Grand City Ballroom and a 3,000m² column-free multifunction convention centre. These spaces are supported by VIP rooms and four business centres, each with small meeting rooms. – **Mimi Hudoyo**

HOMEDec Johor Bahru

HOMEDec Johor Bahru is one of the most popular B2C home decoration exhibitions in the state capital of Johor, Malaysia. Last July, the three-day event at Persada Johor International Convention Centre attracted 23,100 visitors from Johor Bahru and the surrounding areas.

Vincent Lim, president of C.I.S Network, the show organiser, said the venue was chosen because of its capacity.

"The exhibition occupied an area of 6,000m² in gross space, catering to more than 400 booths. The convention centre is also in a good location, being in the heart of the city centre, which makes it very accessible to the public." – **S Puvaneswary**

SEMICON South-east Asia

Held annually in Singapore, SEMICON South-east Asia shifted to the Subterranean Penang International Convention and Exhibition Centre (SPICE) Arena last year.

Ng Kai Fai, president of SEMI South-east Asia, explained: "The shift from Singapore to Penang was mainly fuelled by our strategic intention to revamp SEMI Singapore to SEMI Southeast Asia as we positioned the exhibition to represent a regional electronics supply chain. Penang's strong development in the electronics and electrical engineering sector over the past five years and its location as the Silicon Valley of the east naturally made the choice easier.

"SPICE Arena was chosen because it is the only venue in Penang large enough (for our show) which required a gross area of approximately 7,300m²."

The event suffered Wi-Fi instability and loss of visitor tracking due to too many entrances and exits. Despite that, Ng described the event as a success because of its relevant content and strong support from the Malaysian government. – **S Puvaneswary**

Xi'an Silk Road International Tourism Expo

The 3rd Xi'an Silk Road International Tourism Expo 2016 from August 26 to 28 turned away from the usual gateway cities in China in favour of Xi'an.

Organiser CEMS' group managing director, Edward Liu, said the city was chosen for its rich history as the capital of

the ancient Western Han Dynasty.

With the extravagant size of the exhibition – drawing 600 exhibitors, 4,000 trade visitors, 56,000 public visitors – Liu said the Xi'an Qujiang International Exhibition & Convention Center was chosen as it could accommodate all the exhibits, covering 28,000m² of gross space.

However, Liu added that the number of conference rooms in the venue was rather limited, which constrained the organisation of a large-scale convention. – **Paige Lee Pei Qi**

MTA Hanoi

MTA HANOI was organised at the International Centre for Exhibition (I.C.E), in the center of Hanoi, Vietnam.

Explaining how the destination and venue benefitted them, Joey Tran, PR & conference executive of Vietnam Exhibitions Services said: "I.C.E is conveniently located in the city centre while Hanoi is an effective hub for manufacturing industries in Northern Vietnam and beyond."

However, she remarked that the venue's infrastructure would limit future growth of the show. "The hall capacity is quite small compared to the growth and expansion of the show and it may be challenging if the show continues to grow steadily in the next editions," she said. – **Paige Lee Pei Qi**

Gem & Jewellery India International Exhibition

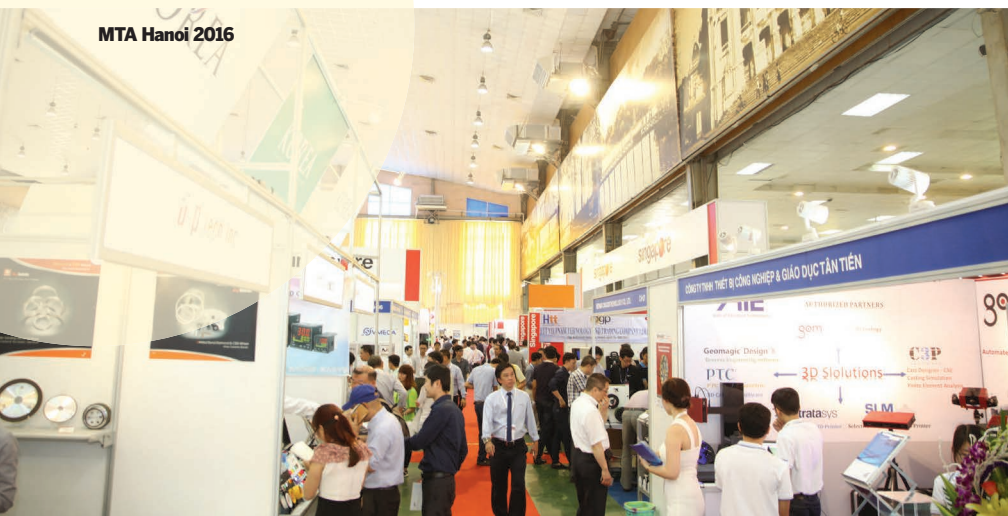
The three-day Gem & Jewellery India International Exhibition (GJIIE) is South India's largest international B2B jewellery show by MJDMA and UBM India. It held its 12th edition last year at the Chennai Trade Centre (CTC), a venue it has used since inception.

UBM Asia, executive vice president, Michael Duck said CTC was chosen over other venues because of the absence of good alternatives in the area. "There are hotels but they are not sufficient for large-scale exhibitions like ours. In addition to the exhibition, side events like seminars and conferences were run simultaneously," he said.

But with CTC's limited space, Duck is worried that show expansion in the future will be limited.

Also, he expressed concerns over the "professionalism of venue management, stand contractors and freight forwarders as security is key for jewellery shows". – **Prudence Lui**

MTA Hanoi 2016



Convention centres to watch

AUSTRALIA

ADELAIDE CONVENTION CENTRE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Sitting on the banks of River Torrens and surrounded by lush greenery, the Adelaide Convention Centre is a refreshing venue for business events in the heart of Adelaide's city centre.

Opened in 1987, the centre is undergoing an extensive phased redevelopment to ensure it answers event needs today and into the future.

The first phase – West Building – started operations in March 2015, just as the original plenary building was demolished to make way for the East Building, slated for completion in 2017, in time for the International Astronautical Congress in September.

Extending westwards over the railway lines to link with Morphett Street Bridge and with its own entrance, the West Building houses the Panorama Ballroom which can sit 1,000 pax for a conference and be divided into three smaller spaces; a multi-functional hall that can be subdivided into six configurations, thanks to the use of large retractable lighting grids that allow even ceiling heights to be adjusted; and a mobile plenary facility for up to 3,500 people.

What's new Phase two expansion – the construction of East Building – is proceeding as planned. It celebrated its 'topping out' milestone in January last year, and its bronze-colour, zinc façade has been unveiled. It will have capacity for 3,500 people.

Website www.adelaidecc.com.au

BRISBANE CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE, QUEENSLAND

The successful host venue for the 2014 G20 Leaders Summit, the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre (BCEC) is located on Brisbane's South Bank, also home to the Gallery of Modern Art and Queensland Museum, among many other major attractions.

Operated by AEG Ogden, BCEC features 44 meeting rooms, with capacity for eight to 8,000 delegates and an ability to support five concurrent conferences. In addition, there are three stand-alone auditoria and 20,000m² of exhibition space.

What's new BCEC unveiled its Great Hall's A\$1.5 million (US\$1.15 million) makeover in February 2016, which features new tiered seating, carpets and lighting, and a fresh colour palette in

Adelaide Convention Centre



hues of purple. Also in February, the Centre launched a new brand with 'Next Level' as the focus of its messaging as well as a mobile friendly website for conference organisers on the go.

Website www.bcec.com.au

CHINA

SHENYANG NEW WORLD EXPO, LIAONING

The Shenyang New World EXPO offers 24,000m² of exhibition space in the form of two halls, and 4,000m² of meeting and conference space in the form of a convention hall and 17 meeting rooms.

It has a Venue Services & Safety Department that tackles front line relations, venue safety, crowd management and security.

It is also directly connected to an underground train station, two hotels and a 260,000m² shopping mall.

What's new Officially opened in March 2017, the Shenyang New World EXPO is the newest venue to in northeast China. Being new has its benefits – it boasts modern technology of world standards.

Months ahead of its official opening, a special arrangement was made for the venue to host the 2016 Annual National Planning Conference in September, the annual meeting of the Urban Planning Society of China.

Website www.shenyangnwexpo.com

ZHENGZHOU INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE, HENAN

There are six levels of multi-purpose function space at the Zhengzhou International Convention and Exhibition Centre (ZZICEC), offering 60,800m² of space. In its inventory is the Grand Hall, which can seat 3,160 people theatre-style, the International Theatre for 1,090 people, two theatres for 400 people each, 17 meeting rooms of varied sizes, VIP reception rooms, a Chinese restaurant, a Western restaurant and a cafe.

ZZICEC is able to provide simultaneous interpretation for up to eight languages.

What's new The signage system that supports event information and commercial advertisements was upgraded to LED.

Website www.zzicec.com

INDIA

LAVASA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, MAHARASHTRA

Lavasa International Convention Centre (LICC) is a convention facility at the planned cosmopolitan city of Lavasa, near Pune. It is spread over 6,070m² of land, with 3,300m² available for conventions. Event spaces are pillar-less and boast vibrant interiors to break the monotony of long conferences. The lakeside foyer adds to the leisurely ambience of the centre.

Cover story

LICC is able to support exotic themes and has its own hospitality specialists to help clients execute events of varied nature.

What's new LICC now offers a steadfast Cisco tele-presence facility, eight language simulcast interpretation console, ceiling mounted high definition cameras for live web-casting, video conferencing facility, a wide network of floor points for video projection, telephone, Internet and sound outputs, ceiling mounted dropdown screen and a network of ceiling mounted speaker system.

Website www.licc.in

INDONESIA

NOVOTEL MANADO GOLF RESORT AND CONVENTION CENTRE, NORTH SULAWESI

Novotel Manado Golf Resort and Convention Centre, part of the Grand Kawanua International City in Manado, is a modern architecture with state-of-the-art conference facilities. The 2,226m² Grand Kawanua Ballroom can accommodate up to 2,500 people and be divided into three smaller spaces, while the 555m² Junior Ballroom is suitable for 400 people and be divided into four meetings rooms.

What's new It now offers high-speed wired and wireless Internet connectivity in the lobby and ballrooms, as well as LCD projectors and sound systems.

Website www.novotelmanado.com/
www.accorhotels.com/7342

SKA CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTER, SUMATRA

Recognised by its shorter name, ska Co Ex sits in a business district in Pekanbaru and is managed by Swiss-Belhotel

International. It houses a 2,119m² multi-functional ballroom that can be converted into four smaller function rooms, five mid-sized function rooms for 100 to 200 guests, and luxurious facilities for VIP guests such as a suite, a separate VIP elevator and butler services.

What's new A Chinese restaurant will open soon.

Website skaconvention.swiss-belhotel.com

JAPAN

SENDAI INTERNATIONAL CENTER, TOHOKU

The Sendai International Center offers two halls and 12 conference rooms across three floors as well as outdoor facilities that can be used by both event delegates and the general public. All feature modern events equipment.

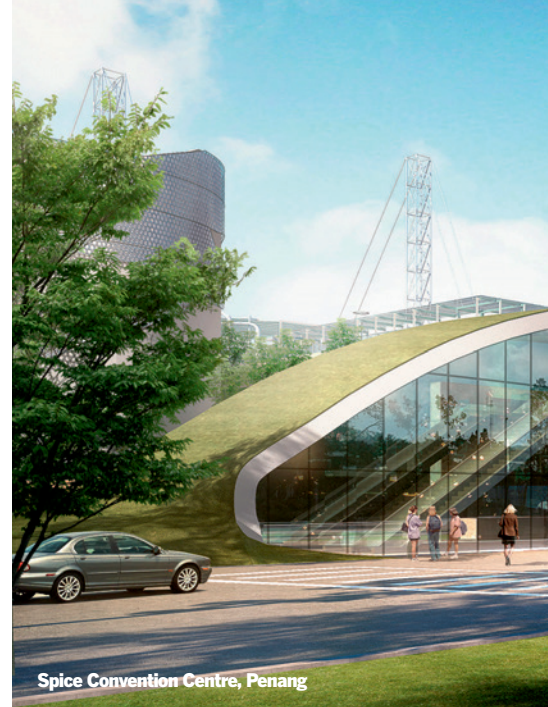
The main halls span 1,150m² and can seat 1,000 people. They also provide simultaneous interpretation facility for up to six languages.

Other facilities include an information centre and a cafe on the ground level.

A key advantage of the Sendai International Center is its convenient location. It is four minutes by subway from Sendai Station, which itself is 90 minutes from Tokyo by bullet train.

What's new The centre was substantially upgraded in the aftermath of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, although Sendai was largely spared from the disaster. The largest addition to the centre is the year-old exhibition hall while the newly opened Tozai Subway line, which puts a station adjacent to the centre, has helped to improve the venue's access.

Website www.aobayama.jp/english/



Spice Convention Centre, Penang

MALAYSIA

BORNEO CONVENTION CENTRE KUCHING, SARAWAK

Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCKK) on the Kuching Isthmus can host major international conventions for up to 5,000 delegates, exhibitions of up to 787 booths and smaller events. The pillar-free Great Hall is complemented by 14 meeting rooms, extensive registration and foyer space, and a world-class restaurant, The Raintree, which can customise menus and offers catering services.

What's new Since early 2016, BCKK has complemented its traditional event venues with a catamaran that is perfect for social gatherings. Named *Sayang Sarawak*, the vessel can accommodate up to 40 people in theatre-style on the lower deck and 30 people in cocktail fashion on the upper deck. Event packages and catering services can be customised.

Organisers hiring *Sayang Sarawak* have a choice of two routes, from Kuching Waterfront to BCKK and from the Isthmus jetty up to the mouth of the Sarawak River.

Website www.bckk.com.my

SPICE CONVENTION CENTRE, PENANG

SPICE Convention Centre is one of five key components making up the Subterranean Penang International Convention and Exhibition Centre (SPICE), an integrated development by local developer, S P Setia Group.

Its 4,546m² Grand Ballroom on the subterranean floor is suitable for large events, and can be divided into four smaller spaces via operable wall partition. The ballroom can seat 8,000 people theatre-style, and is supported by two VIP serviced rooms and 13 smaller function rooms, both on the lower and ground



Sendai International Center, Tohoku



floors. Atop SPICE Convention Centre is a rooftop park, a 2.8-hectare 'green lung' that can be used for outdoor events, weather permitting.

What's new Opened in March 2017, centre is Penang's first dedicated business event space of this scale.

Website www.setiaspice.com/convention-centre.aspx

PHILIPPINES

HENANN ALONA BEACH RESORT CONVENTION CENTER, BOHOL

The three-storey convention centre is the first venue of its kind in Bohol province, offering conference capacity for up to 1,000 pax or cocktail parties for 1,500 guests. It also has 13 breakout rooms and

meeting rooms for 30 to 90 people each.

Unlike most convention centres, Henann Alona Beach Resort Convention Center adopts a resort setting on the beachfront. It will become more accessible once Panglao's international airport begins operations within the next few years.

What's new It opened in 2015 as part of the 400-room luxury Henann Resort in Panglao, Bohol.

Website henann.com/bohol/henannalona-beach/explore/convention-center

TAIWAN

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER KAOHSIUNG

Located in a downtown area with many five-star hotels and local restaurants, the International Convention Center Kaohsiung welcomes events of all sizes, from meetings for 20 people to conferences for 1,800 people. It can also house 460 exhibition booths.

The centre's exhibition hall allows for multi-level booths and elaborate displays, while conference halls has movable partitions.



Spring Meeting Choice @ DoubleTree by Hilton Jiaxing

Hotel has flexible space of meeting rooms, including a 9 meters high luxurious ballroom without pillar and 9 multi-functional conference halls, suitable for all kinds of meetings, events and activities.

We provide spring meeting choice for guests, booking before 30th April 2017 you can get:

- * Free Wi-Fi
- * Booking above 10 persons meeting package and 10 rooms can get 10% discount
- * Upgrade coffee break

Booking before 31st March 2017 can get double points of HHonors.
(Terms & Conditions please contact hotel)

For more information or reservations please call: (86 573) 8266 6666 ext.8307, 8314.

688 Juxion Road Xiuzhou District,
Jiaxing, Zhejiang, 314000, China
T+86 (573) 8266 6666
F+86 (573) 8260 3333



HGHJI.CB@hilton.com

Cover story

What's new It upgraded its air-conditioning system this year, and brought in new safety features such as the addition of a wall between escalators on the first and third floors for enhanced fire prevention.

Website www.icck.com.tw

KAHSIUNG EXHIBITION CENTER

The waterfront Kaohsiung Exhibition Center features 25,000m² of indoor and outdoor event spaces. These comprise two 9,000m² halls, a conference venue for up to 4,000 people, VIP rooms and a press centre. Simultaneous interpretation services and free Wi-Fi are available.

What's new Kaohsiung Exhibition Center implemented the Event Sustainability Management System (ISO 20121) in April 2016. To successfully obtain this certification by the end of 2016, the venue contributed to three dimensions of sustainability – economic, environmental and social.

Recent hardware enhancements include lighting and air-conditioning upgrades in the conference hall, and a landscaping project.

Website www.kecc.com.tw



Avani Khon Kaen Convention Centre Theatre

THAILAND

AVANI KHON KAEN HOTEL AND CONVENTION CENTRE

A four-star, 196-room hotel located in the heart of the growing Khon Kaen city, Khon Kaen province, Avani Khon Kaen Hotel and Convention Centre offers a range of flexible spaces for meetings of up to 2,000 people. The main convention centre houses eight function rooms across 4,000m², and opens up to a pre-

function area, gardens and pool. These spaces can be further split into smaller rooms to suit the event.

What's new The biggest change recently has been ownership. As of July 1 last year, the hotel and convention centre previously operated by Centara became part of Minor Hotels Group and was rebranded as an Avani property.

Website www.minorhotels.com/en/avani/khon-kaen



Find
**PERSONALISABLE
GIFT IDEAS**
That Work
For Your Brand

FREE ADMISSION
Register With
Your Business Card



12 - 14 July 2017
Suntec Singapore, Hall 401-402
11am - 6.30pm



singaporegiftsshow.com

Tel: +65 6395 7517

Email: singaporegiftsshow@ttgasia.com

A MUST-ATTEND FOR PROFESSIONALS INVOLVED IN

- ✓ Brand Management
- ✓ Corporate Gifts Distribution
- ✓ Human Resource
- ✓ Sales and Marketing

- ✓ Communication / Public Relations
- ✓ E-Commerce
- ✓ Media / Advertising / Publishing
- ✓ Office Supplies Procurement

- ✓ Customer Relations Management
- ✓ Events Management
- ✓ Purchasing
- ✓ Wholesale

Organised By:



Supported By:



Media Partners:



Pushing the boat out

Malaysia's secondary cities are working hand-in-hand with their local associations, hotels and venues to draw more events. By **S Puvaneswary**



shanghaizhu/shutterstock



Clockwise from above: Sunset falling over Kuching city in Sarawak; sunrise at Putra Mosque in Putrajaya; Chew Jetty is a UNESCO World Heritage site in Penang



FaiyazArmed/Sand/Shutterstock

Kuala Lumpur is not the only MICE-ready city in Malaysia anymore. Secondary destinations – Penang, Kuching and Putrajaya – are also devising new ways to court business events, association meetings and corporate groups.

Kuching

Since 2016, the Sarawak Convention Bureau (SCB) has been focusing on the research and business development of business events in key industries such as agriculture, infrastructure development, urban planning, women

and children, and education.

Amelia Roziman, SCB's general manager – marketing and sales, said: "Despite the slowdown of the oil and gas sector in the economy, for us, it is business as usual. We also believe that there are plenty of opportunities out there to mine still."

SCB will continue laying the groundwork to grow the business events industry through education programmes which contributes to preparing the industry and associations when they bid for major international and regional conferences.

"Sometimes there is a conference

which Sarawak and its related local association has the potential to win. Our challenge is building the confidence and motivating the association to bid. Education is what fills that gap," stressed Chew Chang Guan, SCB's general manager, government & industry relations.

For local associations keen on bidding for an international conference, the bureau will provide sponsorships that can bring the latest research and trade opportunities in sectors the state is keen on developing further. Once the bid is won, marketing support is provided for delegate boosting purposes in order to maximise attendance.

An important win for Sarawak last year was the the 55th ICCA Congress in November as it provided recognition to the state for its ability to provide international standards, value and services. Sarawak was the first, second-tier city in Asia to host the ICCA Congress.

Place Borneo's director/principal consultant Gracie Geikie, who was a member of the bid team, said: "Not many destinations can sell you both culture and nature like Sarawak's cities of Kuching and Miri. I believe it is this very essence that conference organisers should choose Sarawak, not just to meet and share knowledge, but to add experiential value to their organisations and delegates."

Penang

Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau (PCEB) was formed in early 2016. Last November, PCEB diversified into the major events sector and organised the George Town Literary Festival 2016 with Penang Institute. This year, PCEB will be the sole producer of the 2017 festival which celebrates the literary world.

Aside from the festival, PCEB will tap the Chinese and India business events segment for the first time. In March 2017, they organised roadshows with MyCEB in Beijing, Shanghai and Chengdu. PCEB will also be organising its own sales calls to the metro cities in India later in the year.

Both India and China are impor-



A modern bridge leading to the Putrajaya International Convention Centre

Destination: Malaysia

TTGmice April 2017 • 20

{ Talking numbers }

5,000

The number of delegates who attended the biennial Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management 2016 conference in August 2016. It was held at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre

8,000

The maximum seating capacity of the grand ballroom at Setia Subterranean Penang International Convention and Exhibition Centre. It is the largest dedicated convention venue in Penang which opened in March 2017

83

The number of business events brought in by Sarawak Convention Bureau in 2016, which brought more than 35,000 delegates and contributed to approximately RM56.4 million (US\$12.7 million) in direct delegate expenditure

tant markets for Penang as there are direct connections to Guangzhou, Sanya and Wuhan, and Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru.

PCEB's CEO, Ashwin Gunasekaran, shared: "We will focus on attracting association meetings and incentives from both markets. Penang has the hardware and the software to cater to big groups of up to 15,000 delegates."

PCEB will intensify efforts to attract international conferences and meetings related to areas such as medical, electronics and science. The state of Penang is home to 400 multinational companies in the electronics sector and it is also the top destination in Malaysia for medical tourism. Approximately 60 per cent of the nation's medical tourism receipts are derived from Penang.

"Once we have sourced for leads, we will engage relevant parties who can be the local hosts and encourage them to bid for international and regional conferences," said Ashwin.

Moreover, the second edition of the state's Meetings Planners Guide will be published in 1H2017 and distributed to meeting planners and business events organisers. It will

include new sections such as listings of business events suppliers and restaurants, in addition to existing sections on hotels, unique spaces and convention centres.

Putrajaya

Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC) is the main driver for attracting international business events to Putrajaya. The centre has numerous meeting spaces which can hold up to 6,000 delegates, is supported by 1,500 rooms of four- and five-star properties in the vicinity.

Oh Kin Tat, general manager, sales operation at Putrajaya International Convention Centre, said: "We will form a committee – made up of four- and five-star hotels with meeting facilities – by 1H2017. These hotels will support PICC and the local association, by providing complimentary rooms and hosted meals, to the organiser when there are site inspections."

Last year, steps were taken to further expand the business.

Oh said: "Since May 2016, we had our own in-house research team to look for potential leads from the ICCA database, and these were shared with local associations."

.....

The centre has also invested in having its own culinary team of 41 chefs who can tailor-make meals according to clients' preferences.

Arokia Das, senior manager at Luxury Tours Malaysia, said: "Putrajaya is an upcoming MICE destination. Its location makes it convenient for MICE organisers to move equipment to and from the airport. Putrajaya also has a lot of off-site venues for holding dinners such as on a cruise, on a bridge or in the wetlands."

.....

{ Developments to watch }

1

As an initiative to catalyse the economic impact of the creative industry in Penang, an arts district is being developed by the Penang State Government.

Scheduled for completion in 2019, the Penang Arts District will be located at Macallum Street Ghaut and comprise a 7,432m² container city and 1.2ha park. It is envisioned that the district will house the single largest collection of art galleries, cultural museums, creative boutiques, and art schools in Malaysia.

2

The Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau is developing a conference ambassador programme that champions Penang's business events industry. The programme will be modelled on similar programmes operating internationally where leaders of key industry sectors – who have previously hosted large scale international events – voluntarily assist in identifying and encouraging other local hosts to bid for and stage international conventions.

3

Borneo Samariang Resort City in Sarawak is a 202ha integrated resort located a 25-minute drive from Kuching's city centre and 35 minutes from Kuching International Airport.

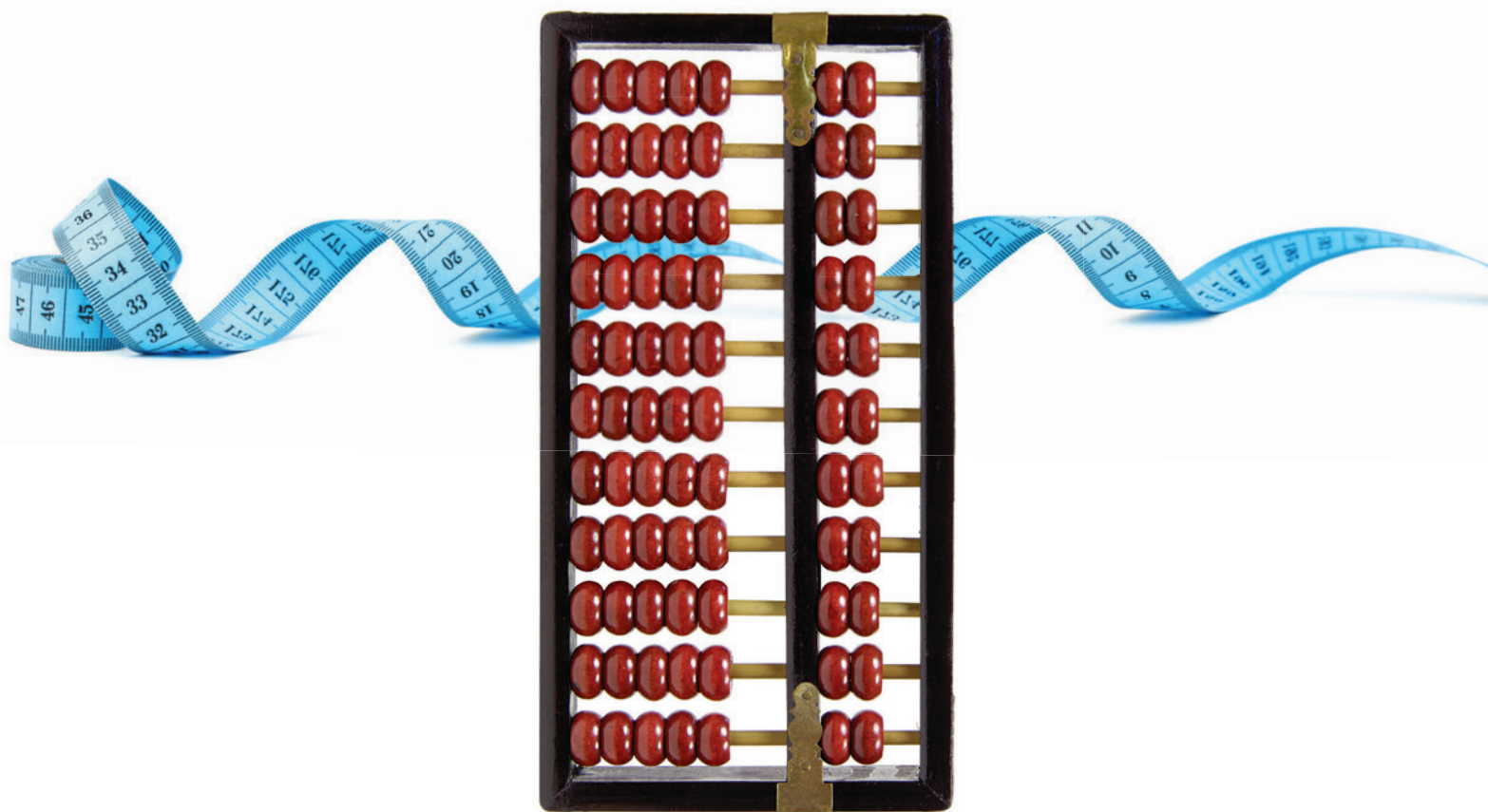
Scheduled to open in 1Q2018, facilities include a 12ha water theme park, a convention centre that can seat up to 2,000 delegates banquet-style, and a hotel with 1,000 rooms.



Personalised & Value-driven

partnerships to satisfy

of availability
affordability



From intimate meetings to extra large conventions,
we will **fit your bill** with tailor-made packages.
Come portray your best in a quality-assured Centre.



Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre
Kuala Lumpur City Centre
50088 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
T 603 2333 2888 F 603 2333 2800
E info@klccconventioncentre.com
www.klccconventioncentre.com



WHERE COMMERCE, CULTURE, COLOUR CONVERGE

{ Review central }

Le Méridien Putrajaya By S Puvaneswary

Opened in August 2016, this is the third Le Méridien property in Malaysia.

Conveniently located 25 minutes from Kuala Lumpur International Airport, attractions within walking distance include the 18-hole Palm Garden golf course and IOI City Mall, the largest shopping mall in the Southern Klang Valley.

Rooms There are 353 rooms in total. I stayed in the spacious club room on the 17th floor which offered a panoramic view of the golf course. The room furnishings and décor was modern and tastefully appointed with a warm shade of beige, and brown being the dominant colour.

I enjoyed the experience of working at night as the lights were bright and conducive. Getting my laptop connected to the Internet was a breeze.

Sleep came easily that night as the softness of the mattress and the pillows were to my liking.

MICE facilities The hotel features 15 meeting spaces including a 9,742m² pillarless ballroom with mood lighting

and smaller spaces between 206m² and 1,485m² in size. All the meeting spaces, spread across three levels, offer natural light and most have stunning views of the well-manicured golf course. As well, the spacious foyer can easily accommodate 10 booths of 3m² each.

The kitchen stations on the meeting floors provide a free flow of snacks, coffee and tea for meeting delegates, making it very convenient for them to grab a drink or a snack when they feel hungry.

The hotel can also create teambuilding packages and spousal programmes utilising facilities within the mall and on the golf course. The mall itself boasts facilities such as an Olympic-sized ice-skating rink, a bowling alley and an indoor adventure park.

Other facilities There are two restaurants onsite – Le Mei, a contemporary Chinese fine dining restaurant, and Lat-est Recipe, an all-day dining establishment.

Leisure facilities include a 24-hour gym and swimming pool. For club guests, the Club Lounge on Level 20



provides a bird's-eye view of Putrajaya. In the far distance, you can also see landmark buildings in Kuala Lumpur such as the Petronas Twin Towers.

Room count 353 rooms

Star rating 5

Contact

Address: Lebuhraya IRC, IOI Resort City, Sepang, Putrajaya, Malaysia

Email: reservation.putrajaya@

lemeridien.com

Website lemeridien.com

District 21 By S Puvaneswary

Spanning more than 6,500m², District 21 is the largest indoor adventure park in Malaysia. It is fully air-conditioned and located within IOI City Mall in Putrajaya.

Concept The year is 2066. The world has been almost destroyed by war. The décor is rust coloured and props are made up of old tyres and oil drums to symbolise the after effects of war. District 21 is the boot camp of the future where teams go through obstacles that has them climbing, jumping, riding and sliding.

MICE application Teambuilding activities usually take three to four hours, revealed

the park's manager Kent Siew, and is suitable for group sizes from 20 to 120. The team is divided into groups, where each group has a maximum of 15 people. There is a briefing session followed by 10 minutes of warm up-exercises, before starting on the activities.

Activities include free falling from a 9.1m-high platform; having a go on the roller glider which is a hybrid of a zip-line and coaster; as well as an interactive climbing area – where many of the walls require problem solving as part of the climbing challenge.

There are also eight meeting rooms spread over two floors. Planners can book these rooms to hold private events

or for participants to have their lunch break. Food from the F&B retailers within the mall can be delivered to District 21.

The entire place can be booked at a rate of RM8,000 (US\$1,802) an hour. Group packages costs RM53 and RM58 per pax on weekdays and weekends respectively. Moreover, having an indoor event in an air-conditioned setting means organisers do not have to worry about bad weather.

Service I was lucky because on the day I went, a corporate company was holding their teambuilding activity. The participants were happy with the guidance and encouragement shown by the trainers when the going got tough. They also appreciated that safety was always a top priority.

I also noticed that all participants were given gloves and socks to use, as some activities required them to remove their shoes.

Operation hours 12.00 to 20.00

Contact district21@ioigroup.com

Website www.district21.com.my



Revved up to go big

With government will strong after its G20 success, Hangzhou could rise to rival Shanghai as a preferred business events destination. By **Caroline Boey**

Hangzhou is sending out a strong message that it is determined to become an even bigger business events destination, having pulled off a successful G20 summit in September last year.

Some observers are even saying that Hangzhou – dubbed Shanghai’s back garden and with its picturesque vistas, tourism attractions and an infrastructure development boom – could rival the glamorous port city that is one position ahead in ICCA’s China ranking. High-speed Rail connects the two cities and travel time is about an hour.

In Hangzhou’s favour is support from the government, which is shifting its focus from tourism to business events. The development of a new CBD, improved international air access, cheaper prices and cleaner air all make the city worth a serious look.

Zhao Hongzhong, vice director, Hangzhou Tourism Commission, said: “We want to create ‘Summit Hangzhou’ to mean a place to hold meetings.”

Hangzhou has obvious strengths in its business events capacity.

Zhao said: “With the Hangzhou International Expo Center (HIEC), we can handle groups of 10,000 people.”

HIEC’s Sky Garden is equipped to host outdoor mega-events, while the four-star, 262-room North Star Hangzhou International Expo Center Hotel within HIEC has five meetings rooms and Chinese and Western restaurants that can each seat 350 people.

When complete this year, the nearby 400,000m² Hangzhou Olympic Sports Center will boast a 80,000-seat main stadium, a 10,000-seat tennis centre, an aquatic centre, a convention centre, athletic facilities, a retail pavilion, restaurants and a multiplex cinema.

International air access continues to increase, Zhao added. Flights between Hangzhou and Japan, Pattaya and Jakarta have resumed. And in 2016, new flights were launched to link Hangzhou to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sydney, Vancouver, Paris



zhu difeng/shutterstock

Clockwise from above: Panoramic night view of Hangzhou; Hangzhou International Expo Center; Treasure Boat



Destination: China

and Bali. Addis Ababa will be added this year and Lisbon and Copenhagen in 2018.

To attract more international association meetings from Europe and Belgium, Hangzhou invested in its own stand at ITBM World in Barcelona for the first time last year.

Jackson Wang, deputy managing director, Hangzhou New China Travel Service, said the stand with five companies was even bigger than Beijing's, which it used to share exhibition space with.

He added that there was interest from Russia, the US, Singapore, the UK, Germany, Spain, Italy, France and the Netherlands.

"With the flights to Vancouver, we are targeting the US East Coast in 2017 and are looking at using Doha as a transit point," he shared.

The G20 summit had sparked the creation of new business events products, including Treasure Boat, a

Chinese-style vessel built to take G20 leaders on a West Lake cruise, which can now be used for charters for up to 150 people.

The 25-minute Qiantang River light show themed *City, Water, Light and Shadow* was another G20 project. A total of 700,000 LED lights are used to illuminate more than 30 high-rise buildings along the river.

Even with these developments, Roger Shu, deputy general manager of Hangzhou Convention Exhibition & Travel (HCET), said there was still a lack of hotels near HIEC.

HCET intends to attract more international hotel brands to the city and is constructing a purpose-built conference and exhibition facility.

HCET itself is a new PCO tasked with creating new business events. Shu said: "PCO numbers in Hangzhou are small and one of the things we want to set up this year is a 'bid factory' with regional DMCs, hotels and other industry players."

Looking ahead, Shu, who was formerly MICE manager, Business Events Hangzhou (BEH) and Hangzhou Tour-

ism Promotion Centre, proposed: "The first step is to establish a Conference Ambassador Programme; then, the bid factory can get leads from ICCA's database, create a taskforce and HCET can partner BEH.

Step two, he added, is for HCET to create new business events for around 2,000 delegates.

"For 2017, HCET will be 'delegate-focused' and its immediate job is to help Hangzhou raise service standards by creating a welcome package at railway stations offering a VIP welcome, Chinese-hospitality style," he said.

{ Talking numbers }

27

The number of international association meetings held in Hangzhou, according to the 2015 *ICCA Statistics Report*, placing it third in China, 24th in APAC and 100th globally. This compares to 17 meetings the previous year, placing it third in China, 32nd in APAC and 141st globally

850,000

The square-metre floor area of the Hangzhou International Expo Center, which has 61 meeting rooms, a 10,000m² multifunction hall, 90,000m² of exhibition space and a 65,000m² Sky Garden

10,000,000

The annual funding in RMB (US\$1.5 million) for Business Events Hangzhou and the Hangzhou Tourism Commission in 2017, up from RMB7 million, to embark on marketing and promotional activities



"PCO numbers in Hangzhou are small and one of the things we want to set up this year is a 'bid factory' with regional DMCs, hotels and other industry players."

Roger Shu

Deputy general manager, Hangzhou Convention Exhibition & Travel

{ Developments to watch }

1

In its 2016 No. 10 Document, the Hangzhou Municipal Party Committee announced the making of Hangzhou into an international conference destination as one of four directives in "internationalising" the city and shifting from traditional tourism to business events.

2

The Hangzhou Tourism Commission (HTC) set up Business Events Hangzhou (BEH) in 1Q2015 to act as the city's CVB. BEH is tasked to promote business events, enact policy, improve infrastructure and create a "better industry environment".

A close to 43 per cent increase in funding has allowed HTC and BEH to mount a PR and marketing campaign, attend

trade shows like IT&CM China in Shanghai and IMEX Frankfurt, host the Conference and Incentive Travel Industry Fair, Hangzhou China, organise fam trips, launch the Conference Ambassador programme, become an ICCA member and support the Hangzhou MICE Association.

3

In November last year, the Hangzhou, Inspiring New Connections brand was launched to create "warm experiences" for business events delegates. A Great 20 contest to identify the 20 warmest wait staff, venues, Hangzhou cuisine, etc., is being carried out at press time. When voting is done, meeting planners and event organisers will be invited to Hangzhou for site inspections and to experience what the city has to offer.

{ **Review central** }

China Silk Museum

By Caroline Boey

First opened in 1992, the museum, located on a 40,000m² southern Chinese garden site, was given a facelift and reopened in time for the G20 summit in Hangzhou that ran from September 4 to 5 last year.



Concept Silk production in Hangzhou dates back to the 13th Century and the museum houses six permanent galleries showcasing the history of silk, the Silk Road, silk artefacts and modern Chinese and western silk fashion. There are also areas for sericulture, weaving and textile training and research.

The museum provides a look at raising silkworms, dyeing, weaving, the earliest pattern loom models and preserved silk items from China as well as European painted and embroidered silks mainly from the 18th and 19th Centuries.

Its interactive video wall at the entrance introduces silk and silk weaving from all over the world.

MICE application The museum provides a beautiful backdrop and its opening act after its renovation was a G20 spouses' tour of the facility.

The museum is now considering how it can collaborate with meetings planners interested in using the venue.

For now, the Brocade Café and sunken open air space can be used for cocktails and receptions and visitors can do a

bit of shopping and buy designer silk products at the Jingluntang World Silk Boutique and local silk products at the Sibo Silk Shop.

The museum organises public lectures by industry experts and offers hands-on experience for visitors, who can try their hands on the looms to create items made with different types of yarn, dyeing, etc.

In addition, the museum, which owns the most advanced technology in textile conservation in China can show visitors how silk treasures are treated, repaired and packed for joint projects with partners like the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Service The escorted service for the site inspection was efficient, insightful and professional.

Website

<http://en.chinasilkmuseum.com/>

Contact (86-571) 8703 5150

Operation hours

09.00 to 17.00;

(Mondays) 12.00 to 17.00

Diaoyutai Hotel Hangzhou

By Caroline Boey

Diaoyutai State Guesthouse is well-known for offering a standard of accommodation reserved for foreign dignitaries and government officials. The residential-style hotel, managed by Diaoyutai MGM Hospitality, is mystery shopper-tested six times a year.

Located in the CBD, it 25 minutes by car from Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport, 20 minutes from Hangzhou East Railway Station, 15 minutes from Chenzhan Railway Station and 20 minutes to West Lake and Liuhe Pagoda.

Rooms The rooms here are large. Deluxe rooms measure 60m²; premier rooms 60m²-80m²; grand rooms and executive suites 90m²; luxury suites 100m²-136m²; diplomat suites 128m²-136m²; the Ambassador Suite 200m² and the Chairman Suite 315m².

My Grand River View Room was one of the most beautifully-appointed and elegant rooms I have stayed in. The pops of colour and the home decorative items made my room warm and welcoming. The opulent bathroom was a treat and I had fun playing with the motion-sensors on the toilet seat.

On the old-style Chinese writing desk was another interesting discovery. What looked like a metal ruler unfolds into a cool desk lamp.

Finding a Nespresso coffee machine inside the armoire was also heaven sent when I needed a caffeine boost.

MICE application On the 18th floor is the 300m² Sky Ballroom with floor-to-ceiling windows and a river-view balcony. It is connected to Qiantang Garden, named after the river it overlooks, a 680m² garden for cocktails and private events.

The Qiantang Function Room in the north tower is a multifunction space with a bar and pantry on the first floor and a rest area on the second – both floors are connected by a swirling glass staircase.

Across the garden on the south side is the lavish two-storey Villa Hangzhou, which houses a 24-seater roundtable, separate living, tea and mahjong areas.

Other facilities The hotel has three F&B options. The 154-seat Fangfei Lobby Lounge, serving Chinese and Western cuisine, is an all-day dining restaurant; Pinju Hangzhou is a 120-seat casual dining

Chinese restaurant, with outdoor seating, serving Hangzhou and Shanghai cuisine; while Royal Court Chinese Restaurant, with nine private dining rooms, offers renowned Chinese cuisine.

Other facilities include a 160m² state-of-the-art fitness centre with a yoga room and a 20m-long indoor heated swimming pool and jacuzzi.

Room count 162

Star rating Five

Email

dythz-reservations@dytmgm.com



In the swim of things

Wheels are now in motion as the country prepares for the 2023 Pacific Games – seen as a catalyst for future business events. By **Julian Ryall**



Clockwise from top: A fringing coral reef grows along the edge of a lush tropical island in the Solomon Islands; children play in the sea near their remote village; a traditional dancer from Temotu

The Solomon Islands will host the Pacific Games in 2023, the first time the nation will serve as a venue for a major sporting event, and an opportunity for investment in hotels, transport and all the other infrastructure that will subsequently raise the islands' profile as a business events destination.

Honiara, the capital city of Solomon Islands, was named in May 2016 as the host city of the Games. It will bring in athletes, spectators and media personnel from 22 South Pacific

nations and was hailed as “the biggest ever windfall” for the nation’s tourism aspirations by Josefa Tuamoto, CEO of the Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau (SIVB).

“We are hopeful that this major event will act as a catalyst beyond the sporting and business opportunity, especially for new hotel development and related tourism infrastructure projects in and around Honiara,” Tuamoto said.

It is anticipated that the new accommodation will include well-known international hotel brands.

“We look at the construction of extra room inventory from a two-fold perspective,” Tuamoto said. “Given these new properties will be up and running long before the Games actually take place, it will be providing much-needed inventory for our capital city in the process. We also see these extra rooms as a catalyst for the development of our fledgling MICE industry.”

Garedd Porowai, senior travel consultant for Honiara-based Charis Travel Services, said the Solomons already receive a number of high-profile

events each year.

"We have the headquarters of the Forum Fisheries Agency, which hosts five or six annual regional meetings and sees anything up to a couple of hundred participants at the larger conferences," he told *TTmice*.

"We have other organisations that pull in a lot of MICE travel, such as churches, NGOs, conservation entities and various governmental projects, but 2023 and the Pacific Games will definitely be a big year for us," he added.

Until relatively recently, facilities for business events in Honiara were largely limited to the Kitano Mendana Hotel, which has conference facilities for up to 150 people, a comprehensive business centre and restaurants. The hotel can also arrange transportation and tours for incentive groups. A newer addition is the Heritage Park Hotel, which has meeting and banqueting facilities.

The islands' top accommodation

is provided by the Coral Sea Resort & Casino, which recently opened its top-of-the-range beachside bungalows in January. A further 30 suites are on course to be completed by August, while finishing touches are also being added to the pool, the spa, the Boardwalk Bar & Restaurant, a private beach, a jetty – where drinks and meals are served – and a marina.

Moreover, the property has recently reached an agreement with an Australian hotel and brewery and will be offering incentive programmes through off-licenses across Queensland in the future, said Anthony Fargas, director of the Coral Sea Resort & Casino.

"This will give us good exposure in Australia and will bring us our first incentive tourism guests," he said. "I anticipate that once we start mass marketing, and through strategic alliances with Australian-based travel agencies, the numbers will

sharply increase for us in 2H2017."

The Coral Sea Resort & Casino is seen as a keystone in the nation's plans to develop its business events sector and the casino building attached to the main property has been designed so that a second storey can be added, Fargas said. It will be a convention and functions facility for as many as 500 people.

According to the SIVB's Tuamoto, the government predicts that the business events sector will play a major role in the tourism industry over the next five years.

"While our MICE activity is still relatively small, and currently we mainly see incentive and small conference groups, the sector will play a major role in the Solomon Islands, benefitting from the generation of foreign exchange, employment and foreign investment," he said.

"We know we have a big job ahead of us and we have a long way to catch up to other destinations," Tuamoto stressed. "But we also know the many unique benefits the Solomon Islands can accrue from this source of tourism."

"The beauty of the Solomon Islands is that while Honiara is ideal for larger meetings groups, our other islands lend themselves perfectly to pre- and post-meeting opportunities with which participants can avail themselves of some amazing activities."

"While our MICE activity is still relatively small and currently we mainly see incentive and small conference groups, the sector will play a major role in the Solomon Islands, benefitting from the generation of foreign exchange, employment and foreign investment."

Josefa Tuamoto

CEO, Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau

{ Developments to watch }

1 The Maruyama Trail was hacked through jungle by Japanese soldiers as they advanced in 1942 to attack US soldiers defending Henderson Airfield.

Today, work is under way to reopen this historic trail, named after lieutenant general Masao Maruyama, who led the Japanese troops in their futile assault. Francis Deve, owner of the Pure Solomon Islands Tour, said that the reopened trail will become a pilgrimage route for visitors interested in the history of the islands.

2 Charis Travel Services has tailored a walk through the Parisaia Caves to business events groups who are recent arrivals in the Solomons and want to experience some of the local wildlife.

Flying foxes roost in the high roof, while kingfishers, hornbills, parrots and wildfowl are frequent sights on the hike to the mouth of the cave. After working up an appetite on the four-hour hike, participants can enjoy lunch prepared by the chef who cooked for The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge when they visited the Solomons in 2012.

3 Fancy a flutter? A flip of a gaming chip from the front desk of The Coral Sea Resort is its plush new casino which opened in December 2016. And whether baccarat, blackjack, poker or roulette are your game, the tables are waiting for you.

4 The latest addition to the repertoire of dives available through Dive Gizo is a night dive around a large oval-shaped bommie (a coral reef outcropping) named Daytona – after the famous raceway in Florida. Every circuit of the feature reveals

additional flora and fauna that are found in the waters of the Solomon Islands.

Dive Gizo



Peter Pinnock



A royal lesson on cooperation

To create an event fit for royalty is no mean feat. But what happens when unforeseen circumstances force a no-show from the VIPs? By **Julian Ryall**

Event

The 18th Japan-Spain Symposium

Organiser/Client

The City of Shizuoka and The Nippondaira Hotel

Venue

The Nippondaira Hotel, Shizuoka Prefecture

Date

April 15-17, 2016

Number of participants

200 for the symposium; about 20,000 for related events

Event brief

The Japan-Spain Symposium is an annual event that has been held since 1997 and is one of the most important bilateral events on the diplomatic calendars of the two nations, which take turns to host the event.

Spurring tourism was a big topic in this year's discussions, alongside social issues, such as on ageing populations.

Shortly after Shizuoka City The Nippondaira Hotel were selected to host the 18th symposium, the embassy of Spain in Tokyo sent word that King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia would attend. Japan's Imperial Household Agency responded immediately that Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko would also be present.

Challenges

Given that the heads of the Spanish and Japa-

nese royal families were due to attend, security was a major concern initially.

Shinichiro Suzuki, head of the MICE & International Affairs Division of the City of Shizuoka, said the organisers moved immediately to secure additional funds to ensure that security was of a suitable standard and that facilities were up to scratch.

The number and scale of associated events to mark the royals' attendance were also increased.

The additional work meant that the event was pushed back to April, giving the organisers approximately six months to complete preparations – an extremely narrow window. One seasoned organiser said preparing an event of such scale normally requires three years.

Solutions

There was no substitute for hard work, extensive cooperation between the divisions within City Hall with a stake in the symposium, as well as local event planning companies, media outlets, volunteer organisations, and other organisations.

At the last minute, however, the Spanish king and queen were obliged to cancel their visit to Japan due to political problems at home. On the evening before the event was scheduled to open, the Imperial Household Agency announced that the Emperor and Empress would also have to withdraw due to the series of major earthquakes that had struck Kyushu, causing widespread damage and loss of life.

"It is impossible to predict political or geological upheavals, so we simply had to roll with the punches and try to deliver the best possible event, despite everything," said Suzuki.

Still, the symposium and associated events went ahead smoothly. On the day of the discus-

sions, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted an official luncheon and a dinner party in the evening was hosted by Shizuoka Mayor Nobuhiro Tanabe.

Former Miss Universe Riyo Mori, a goodwill ambassador for Shizuoka City, made a special appearance at the party. Ms Mori speaks perfect English and was able to mix and mingle naturally with the Spanish guests.

In addition, over the three-day duration, there were photo exhibitions, cultural performances and displays of the products of several companies from Spain and Japan.

Key takeaways

Said Suzuki: "While, unfortunately, neither royal couple was able to attend the symposium, we were able to gain priceless experience in preparing to host VIP guests."

When prince and princess Akishino visited in October 2016, this knowledge was put to good use, he explained.

Another learning point was that having a good venue and convenient access are major pluses, but it is important to also highlight local attributes, said Suzuki.

"Shizuoka gives a stellar view of Mount Fuji from Nippondaira Hotel, and we were blessed with beautiful weather during the symposium, so our guests came away with a 'uniquely Shizuoka' experience.

"We also served a number of local specialties such as *oden* stew and bluefin tuna that landed at our Shimizu Port, not to mention locally brewed *junmai daiginjo* sake made with our renowned, ultrapure water.

"I believe we were able to give this big group of Spanish VIPs a very strong sense of what makes Shizuoka so special among cities in Japan."

Keen coordination, communication

Experience pays off for PEACH when four gala dinners for 12,000 guests altogether land on the venue's lap. By **Karen Yue**

Event brief

Infinitus (China) Company, which manufactures and distributes skincare, healthcare, and beauty care products, wanted to award more than 12,000 of its employees with a free trip to Thailand, where they visited Bangkok and Pattaya. In a show of hospitality, Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau hosted four welcome gala dinners on May 16, 18, 23 and 28 for the group at Pattaya Exhibition and Convention Centre (PEACH), each for 3,000 delegates.

The team at PEACH was informed of the event on February 2016, while the gala dinners were due to take place just three months later in May.

Challenges

The four gala dinners presented various operational challenges to the PEACH team due to the sheer number of attendees and the fact that every dinner required four different menus to cater to the different guest segments – VIPs, company delegates, vegetarians and Muslims.

Maria Gequillana, PEACH spokesperson, said: "Because of this, we had to provide a large quantity of food while meeting each different requirement."

A wide range of menu choices that satisfied the dietary considerations of the attendees was given to the client ahead of time, but confirmation arrived late and along with that came a string of "intricate special requests that made things a little difficult for our team".

On event days, the F&B team also had to ensure food quality was not compromised while some dishes were prepared in advance.

Another major challenge was the need for traffic control "to ensure the smooth arrival and departure of such a large number of people", said Gequillana, who added that the 3,000-strong group arrived in more than 100 buses within an hour for every night of the gala dinner.

Also, manpower was stretched – first, during dinner setup, especially for the first and second



Event
Infinitus China gala dinner

Client
Infinitus China

Venue
Pattaya Exhibition and Convention Hall

Date
May 16, 18, 23 and 28, 2016

Number of participants
12,000, split into four groups



attendees to and from the venue," Gequillana told TTGmice.

Other measures on site included programming all escalators to run towards the dinner hall at arrival and away from it at the end of the event; placing security officers at escalators to prevent overcrowding; and creating entrances and exits that are small enough for just one person to pass through to create an organised queue.

To address manpower challenges, PEACH activated its Dream Team, a team comprising staff from different departments who will help with the setup of major events.

"This extra manpower helped us finish this rapid turnover successfully in such a short period of time," remarked Gequillana.

To ensure a seamless food service on the four big days, all staff involved had to undergo rehearsals to be familiar with the process and timings, and attend debriefings at the end of every dinner.

Key takeaways

"(This project taught us) the importance of being prepared by identifying and assessing potential issues that might occur beforehand, which allowed us to create contingency plans," said Gequillana.

"Being prepared also involved (having) our entire team understand their specific roles and responsibilities during the event's execution."

"Another lesson (for us) was (the need to) discuss details with the organisers beforehand so that our team clearly understands what needs to be delivered," she added.

dinners which were held just two days apart; second, during food service when 100 staff must serve 12 dishes within 45 minutes. As well, the first dish – a seafood boat – must be served in a synchronised parade.

Solutions

Despite challenges in menu planning and execution, PEACH overcame them through its experienced F&B team that is used to handling large-scale events and is focused on processes, cleanliness and food quality.

Gequillana shared that Royal Cliff Hotels Group – which PEACH is part of – is certified with the prestigious Food Safety Management certificate, issued in conjunction with the ISO 22000 accredited by the British Standard Institute.

To bring the crowd under control, Gequillana said several meetings were held beforehand with Pattaya Traffic Bureau to ensure a smooth traffic to and from PEACH, as well as between the various internal departments and the event organiser to address potential issues.

"A traffic control/management system was provided by our security department where all staff involved were made to learn and understand how to direct traffic and efficiently lead



Paul Beeson

The chief of Perth Convention Bureau tells **Karen Yue** that the stars are aligned for his city to rise up in the competitive game of business events

The last time I was in Perth was 2001, as a young student there for a summer course. How has Perth evolved since?

OK, wow, Perth is completely different today. Even from when I first started with the Bureau in 2007, the city has changed dramatically since. A lot of changes happened six or seven years ago.

We want to encourage people who use Singapore as a stopover to come have a taste of Perth which offers a very different experience from the city-state.

Accessibility is great – not much time is wasted travelling within the Metropolitan Area, and even in the Margaret River wine region – which is a very popular

destination. There are plans to expand Busselton Airport, in the north of Margaret River region, to take flights in from the east coast and beyond, possibly international flights by Singapore Airlines. That's the plan for the future, but right now (the region) is still accessible by chartered flights, bus rides or motor vehicles down a dual-line causeway.

Besides the draw of the (Western Australia's) hinterland, Perth now has also Elizabeth Quay – much like the lively Clarke Quay in Singapore – where there is a large range of restaurants.

In the last five years, we struggled with accommodation because cost was driven up by the mining boom. The mining executives would happily pay A\$600 (US\$459) or A\$700 a night, but leisure tourists couldn't afford that.

We have reacted to that by building an enormous range of hotels. In the CBD we will have up to 8,000 new rooms in the next two years. The latest are 500 rooms of six-star quality in Crown Towers. The Crown Perth complex itself has over 2,000 rooms.

How will you fill those 8,000 new rooms plus existing ones?

We will have an overcapacity (once all the developments are done), and visitors will be able to access some very competitive room prices.

We are fortunate to have both a government and opposition Labor Party that recognise the value of the business events we secure. Our (Western Australia) premier Colin Barnett, who is also tourism minister, sees the potential in tourism and has granted extra funding of 30 per cent for the bureau. Of course, we don't get as much funding as Sydney or Melbourne, but we are very efficient.

We return about A\$30 per dollar invested by the Western Australia government – higher than

that of what our east coast competitors do. We are poorer, but far more efficient and far more clever.

Much of the promotional materials I get on Perth's redevelopment are about Elizabeth Quay and the Perth City Link. What other developments should business event planners watch out for?

Those materials are government data driven, so naturally you will hear a lot about the massive infrastructure developments. But the number one (new) product has got to be Crown Towers. The opening was (in November), and it is an exceptional product that you have to see to believe. I'd say it is the highest standard of accommodation in Western Australia.

Luxury barges are also being developed on the beautiful Swan River, and floating events can be held on these incredible spaces that come with pools and palm trees. There are also countless new restaurants across Perth.

It isn't just tourism driving these developments. We have an innate population growth which ensures the viability of these many developments and additional products, and tourism benefits from that (all the new features across the state).

How can Elizabeth Quay add value to a corporate programme?

Elizabeth Quay is still in development stage, and the beauty of it is that the government is very keen and open to having all sorts of events there. We've had quite a few large events from Europe that would otherwise not have come to Perth if wasn't for the big events spaces in Elizabeth Quay. For now, Elizabeth Quay is really a large open event space.

But once everything is ready in Elizabeth Quay, the district will complement the Perth Convention Centre, yes?

Yes. It will mostly be Elizabeth Quay's accommodation – The Ritz-Carlton, some serviced apartments, and other quality hotels – and some smaller events space for boutique groups.

How about the Perth City Link?

There will be accommodation at that end of the city too. We've got the riverfront where Elizabeth Quay is, and what was traditionally viewed as the back of the city. The land was all railway, so what the Perth City Link project does is to sink all that underground and build accommodation, venues spaces, retail shops, and more above ground. The beauty of Perth City Link is that it allows



you to walk from North Bridge, which is our cultural and dining district, through the city and to Elizabeth Quay. You are ensured of different experiences as you walk down that stretch, as opposed to merely walking on a railway bridge. The walk takes 10 to 15 minutes.

Let's talk about changes to the bureau since you joined in 2007.

Perth Convention Bureau (PCB) has been around since 1974, and is one of the oldest convention bureaus in Australia. It started as a chamber of commerce entity, funded by all the hotels until it became part of the government.

Our focus has been on association conferences. Because our funding is from the government, we are required to keep our spending on not-for-profit organisations. Ninety per cent of our remit for the past 40 years has been on that, so (we looked at) all the professional conferences. Corporate incentive groups account for only 10 per cent of our remit.

When I joined in 2007, PCB was a low-performing bureau. But we changed that methodology completely and did very well in that space. With the amount of accommodation coming up, the range of leisure products we now have, and our proximity to South-east Asia plus wonderful regional air links, we've decided to change our strategy towards corporate incentives, particularly out of South-east Asia.

How about China?

We have less of a focus on China. Our view is to leverage on markets we have a heritage with and have the same business ethics, like South-east Asia.

The South-east Asian markets are also more appreciative of the types of tourism products we have in Perth. The Chinese won't be as impressed, as we don't have 10 Louis Vuitton stores, but we do have plenty of pristine natural attractions. South-east Asians, like the Europeans, are happy to venture out on their own and not with 10 groups of 10,000 other people. Our product is perfectly aligned with the markets we are focused on.

Moreover, there are so many destinations working on China. Why would we want to fight with all that?

Tourism Australia, as you know, has a strong focus on China. We will let Sydney and Melbourne chase after the Chinese market. They have more flights from China anyway; Perth has only one. Of course, China air links to Perth will grow over time, but for now our immediate focus for the next four years is on familiar markets in South-east Asia.



Elizabeth Quay on Perth's waterfront will bring new tourism and event products

What are your targets?

In 2016, corporate incentive groups made up 10 per cent of our business. By the end of four years, it will grow to 40.

I had a meeting with our minister before Christmas and I told him that the stars are aligned now – our products are ready, the funding for the bureau is coming in, and developments are coming up at the right pace – and we should put cash back into the agency for them to get incentive delegates down to Perth. Once somebody comes, they get overwhelmed in a good way by how different the experiences are in Perth. So we just need to get past that first hurdle.

Do you see South-east Asia as an easier market because of all the people who had once been schooled in Perth?

Absolutely. They are familiar with Perth and are aware of how safe it is. They also desire the products we have – luxury boutique hotels, wineries, pristine environment. There is so much nature, even within the Metropolitan area.

We found that South-east Asians value natural attractions. When they live in the big cities, they crave getting away from it and into a natural environment. Perth is all that and we don't have to position ourselves differently.

How many days on average would an incentive group spend in Perth?

Three or four days for just the Metropolitan area. It depends on what they want to do and where they want to go. If they choose to venture out to the hinterlands to see the wineries, chocolate or honey factories, they can just add a number of days.

Tourism Western Australia and PCB recently ended its contract with its promotion agency in Singapore and Malaysia. So who's marketing the destination for business events then?

Both Tourism Western Australia and PCB used the same agency, and the contract was relinquished. For PCB, we found that it was more efficient to pay someone who's in-market because Perth is in close proximity to South-east Asia – only a five-hour flight to Singapore. We have Melvin Chan supporting Clinton Barnes (senior business development manager, recruited in mid-2016). Clinton was from the hotel industry so he is familiar with the markets and knows all the agents. Melvin speaks the language here and in Malaysia, and he understands the market.

Let's talk about domestic competition. Perth isn't the only city in Australia undergoing a massive redevelopment that will improve the tourism product. How will PCB catch the attention of your desired markets?

Well, let's look at ICC Sydney as an example. It is an exceptional product. Our convention centre isn't as large nor as new as that. But you've got to look at the products surrounding the convention centre.

On my business trip to Sydney (in January), I paid A\$500 a night for a room. That's a lot of money for a small hotel room! In Perth, you could get a room at the Hyatt Regency Perth for A\$180 a night or a 50m² room at the brand-new six-star Crown Towers for A\$380 a night.

Our isolation is our advantage. We've got pristine tourism products and the group sizes to Perth are generally smaller than those that inundate Sydney. You won't have to join long queues or jostle for space with many others, so the experience is more pleasant.

And finally, what new activities can be expected from the bureau?

Western Australia has its own brand (*Experience Western Australia*) but not Perth. Premier Barnett has requested that a brand for Perth be created, and that will happen very soon.



Anne Busfield

Anne Busfield

Shangri-La's Boracay Resort & Spa, Philippines, has appointed Anne Busfield as general manager to succeed Ester Marcaida, who will move on to handle various Shangri-La projects. Busfield has worked with numerous international chains as a general manager.

Antony Box

Antony Box has been appointed director of sales and marketing for Marco Polo Hotels, Hong Kong. He was last director of sales and marketing, and regional director of business development at The Westin Resort Macau.

Ateeb Shrestha

Ateeb Shrestha has been promoted to the position of general manager at Six Senses Ninh Van Bay in Vietnam, after joining the property in September 2016 as resort manager.

Carol Chia

HRS has named Carol Chia as head of corporate solutions. She holds an extensive track record in regional sales and business development in the US and Asia-Pacific.

Freddy See

Freddy See has been appointed director of sales and marketing at Sofitel Singapore City Centre, which is expected to open in 2Q2017. He



Antony Box

was previously the sales and marketing director at Grand Copthorne Waterfront.

Kaci McAllister

Kaci McAllister is now general manager for Destination Asia China. She joined the company in early 2014 to lead product development throughout China.

Louise Daley

AccorHotels has appointed Louise Daley as deputy CEO, Asia-Pacific, on top of her current role as CFO, Asia-Pacific. Since June 2015, Daley has served as executive vice president and CFO, Asia-Pacific. She has been with AccorHotels for 26 years.

Michael Delargy

Michael Delargy is now general manager for Le Méridien Kuala Lumpur. Prior to joining the hotel, Delargy spent three years as general manager of The Westin Nanjing, China. He has over 20 years of international hospitality management experience, primarily in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Philip Wigglesworth

Destination Asia has promoted Philip Wigglesworth to general manager Thailand. He had his start at Destination Asia Thailand in 2011 as product and contracting manager, and progressed to



Kaci McAllister

his most recent position of business development director.

Thomas Reupke

Swissôtel Hotels and Resorts has appointed Thomas Reupke as general manager of Swissôtel Beijing Hong



Louise Daley

Kong Macau Center. Prior to this, Reupke was general manager for Centara Grand Beach Resort and Villas in Krabi, Thailand.

Thomas Zhong

Pan Pacific Hotels Group has appointed Thomas



Thomas Zhong

Zhong as vice president, operations support and pre-openings. He was most recently the director for performance management at the Singapore corporate office of Raffles Hotels and Resorts, where he spent five years.

One minute with Emmanuel Ebray

Emmanuel Ebray has moved from HRS Global Hotel Solutions' head office in France, where he was managing director, to take on a bigger role in Singapore. He is now the managing director for South-east Asia, South Korea and India

What do you look most forward to in this new role here in Asia?

To create value for corporates which are looking for solutions to take control on their hotel spend while keeping compliance, duty of care and traveller satisfaction. In EMEA, it has been proven that there are solutions to help corporates better manage travel and I certainly hope this can be advocated in Asia more aggressively too.

Secondly, to create value for our partners who are looking for hotel experts to enhance their value proposition to corporates.

Thirdly, to create value for hotels which want to increase their occupancy rate and revPAR.

And finally, to create value for the company and our teams.

What will keep you busy right away in this new position?

Diving in to fully understand the specifics of all markets in South-east Asia, South Korea and India, and to better view corporate travel from the customers', TMCs', OBES' and hotels' perspectives so that we can create a more wholesome ecosystem.

I'll also be busy with recruiting talents.

HRS has already been experiencing solid positive growth the past few years. I am brainstorming on ways to further accelerate growth plans, and to strengthen and reinforce closer relationships with customers and partners in this region.

My key to a productive day is...

to have the big picture in mind. I want to be able to anticipate and weigh the value of every meeting and strike a balance between business and internal ones. Achieving synergy and to get the most out of each day are also important. I want to make things happen.





宁波北仑世茂希尔顿逸林酒店 DoubleTree by Hilton Ningbo Beilun

宁波北仑世茂希尔顿逸林酒店
中国浙江省宁波市北仑区黄山路699号
DoubleTree by Hilton Ningbo Beilun
No.699 Huangshan Road, Beilun
District, Ningbo, Zhejiang, China
电话 T: 86 574 2690 8888
传真 F: 86 574 2690 2666
NingboBeilun_info@hilton.com



*MUST BE A HILTON HHONORS MEMBER.
TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY.

会议团队开业特惠 OPENING MICE OFFER

在2017年4月30日之前预定团队会议，并在2017年6月30日前举办会议的宾客可以尊享以下礼遇：

Book before Apr 30, 2017 and materialized before Jun 30, 2017, guest can enjoy below exclusive benefits:

会议室及客房畅享无线WIFI；

Included Wi-Fi in meeting room and guest room;

每十间付费房晚中，可免费升级一间客房至下一等级；

One room upgraded to next category for every 10 paid rooms daily;

会议室场租可尊享会场价格门市价的50%优惠；

50% discount for Meeting room rental from the Rack rate;

可尊享会议茶歇升级服务；

Upgraded coffee break;

希尔顿荣誉客会双倍积分。

Double HHonors points.

SMART MEETINGS AT SANDS RESORTS MACAO

The widest spectrum of offerings
in one ultimate events and meetings destination



Book your meetings at any of our hotels to enjoy outstanding offers.

- 5% off master bill
- Complimentary room and upgrade
- 20% off audio visual equipment rentals
- 50% off ferry tickets
- 50% off entertainment to enhance your event

Contract your meeting by 31 December 2017 for arrivals until 22 December 2018



SandsResortsMacao.com/SmartMeetings

*Terms and Conditions Apply

澳门金沙度假区
Sands
RESORTS MACAO