TTGassociations
TRAVEL TRADE MEDIA
OF THE YEAR 2017
MPAS Awards

TTGassociations
JOURNALISM EXCELLENCE
PRINT & ONLINE
2016
Anak Sarawak Award

11

GUIDE TO
Top meeting cities

16

DESTINATIONS
Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Australia

Forming Connections

Iain Bitran, executive director of the International Society for Professional Innovation Management, talks about knowledge legacies and the importance of working with a reliable, relevant convention bureau

TTG associations
January 2018
MCI (P) 024/05/2017

ADELAIDE CONVENTION CENTRE

A CITY IN TRANSFORMATION
A CENTRE TRANSFORMED

Following a $397 million investment, the Adelaide Convention Centre is Australia's newest, most versatile and technologically advanced venue. Comprising three distinct yet seamlessly integrated buildings, the Centre is the pinnacle of innovation and flexibility. The new East Building, launched in August 2017, features a state-of-the-art Plenary which can be subdivided into more than 15 different configurations.

The Centre is positioned at the heart of the city's Riverbank Precinct and sits adjacent to BioMed City – the largest health and life sciences cluster in the Southern Hemisphere. In the midst of a multi-billion-dollar rejuvenation, the Riverbank is where the city's cultural, sporting, education, medical, conference and entertainment zones merge, making Adelaide Australia's best connected business events district.

Adelaide. Australia's Convention City.

+61 8 8210 6677 | sales@avmc.com.au | adelaidecc.com.au

TTG | Publishing Travel Trade

TTG Travel Trade Publishing is a business group of TTG Asia Media

EDITORIAL
Karen Yue
Group Editor (karen.yue@ttgasia.com)
S Puvaneswary
Editor, Malaysia/Brunei
(puvanes@ttgasia.com)
Mimi Hudoyo
Editor, Indonesia (idmfasia@cbn.net.id)
Pamela Chow
Reporter (pamela.chow@ttgasia.com)
Rachel AJ Lee, Yixin Ng
Sub Editors
(rachel.lee@ttgasia.com, ng.yixin@ttgasia.com)
Rebecca Elliott, Adelaine Ng Australia
(rebeccaelliott@hotmail.com, adelaineng.abc@gmail.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)
Rosa Ocampo The Philippines
(rosa.ocampo@gmail.com)
Feizal Samath Sri Lanka/Maldives
(feizalsam@gmail.com)
Paige Lee Pei Qi
Assistant Editor, Special Projects
(lee.peiqi@ttgasia.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)
Ingrid Chung Business Manager
(ingrid.chung@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
Nur Hazirah 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)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission of the publisher.

MCI (P) 024/05/2017
Printed by Times Printers Pte Ltd
16 Tuas Avenue 5, Singapore 639340.

The unseen benefits

Just a week ago before this issue went to print, I was at the second edition of Business Events@Penang conference where a number of panel sessions saw industry leaders emphasising the importance of a destination winning over and hosting association events.

More than merely bringing in tourism receipts, association meetings leave behind unseen, long-term benefits for the host destination.

Taking this discussion even deeper during a panel session with GIS Group Taiwan's Jason Yeh, ICCA Asia-Pacific's Noor Ahmad Hamid, and Anderes Fourdy Malaysia's Fu Kei Cheong where I played moderator, we spoke about the legacy of knowledge associations leave behind for local attendees; the social benefits for the local community particularly when visiting associations build a CSR initiative around local underprivileged groups; and the future avenues of business investments these meetings bring along with them.

At the conference, I also had the chance to speak to operators of two of Penang's most notable natural attractions which function as education centres for anyone keen on local spices, agriculture and biodiversity of rainforest. I learnt that they look towards business events – including association events – as a beacon of hope for the preservation of Penang's natural environment.

How? Here is where an unseen benefit of association meetings is made clear. According to these operators, business event attendees are seen as higher calibre visitors that will appreciate opportunities to experience the authentic culture, heritage and natural aspects of a destination, and will in turn support their preservation. And when event delegates are in the business of nature conservation and research themselves, they can play a direct role in furthering this effort.

With this in mind, The Habitat Penang Hill took it upon itself to engage the global scientific community by bringing them in to study the local rainforest (*News*, page 3).

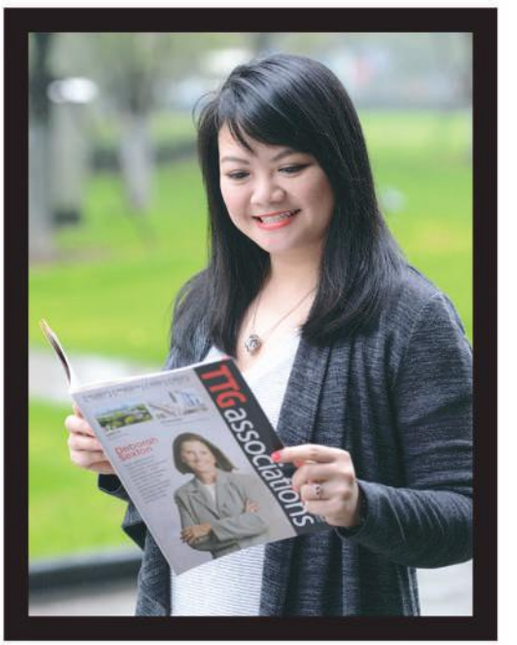
This message of association meetings bringing far-reaching benefits to the host destination and related communities is further reverberated through other stories captured in this issue of *TTGassociations*.

In the spotlight for Profile (pages 8-10) is Iain Bitran, executive director of the International Society for Professional Innovation Management, who tells me that building local and regional communities, and leaving behind a legacy of knowledge are critical goals for his meetings.

As well, determined to host a convention that makes a lasting difference, the Rotary Clubs of Singapore – in its bid for the Rotary International Convention 2024 (which it won) – hatched a plan to champion a legacy project striving towards sanitation progress and hygiene awareness.

The message that association meetings build lasting and far-reaching legacies is critical and must be emphasised for the associations and meetings sectors to get all the government support it needs to facilitate such gatherings. And I'd love to hear your legacy story.

Karen Yue
Group Editor



PROFILE

8

Forming connections

Iain Bitran, executive director of the International Society for Professional Innovation Management, talks to Karen Yue about knowledge legacies and the importance of working with a reliable, relevant convention bureau

GUIDE TO

11

Asia-Pacific's top meetings cities

From Singapore to Sydney, these are the top performing cities in Asia-Pacific for association meetings based on ICCA's 2016 global rankings

DESTINATIONS

16

Hong Kong // Hardware headaches

Hong Kong has done well with association meetings and is now keen to get China's associations to meet in town, but a venue shortage could hamper growth potential, discovers Prudence Lui

18

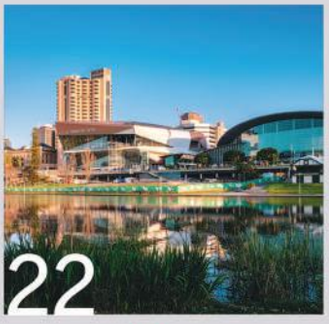
Japan // Forward thinking

Aside from massive events, Tokyo needs to fill certain gaps to ensure continued success. By Kathryn Wortley

20

Singapore // Reinventing the business experience

Singapore shows she is serious about being a centre of association activities, through stronger association industry collaboration and improved support scheme. By Pamela Chow



22

Australia // Adelaide's vaulting ambitions

The city has found various ways to beef up its offerings and are employing soft strategies to stay competitive, but there is still room to improve. By Adelaine Ng

DEPARTMENTS

1 To our readers

2 Contents

3 News

6 On the shelves

15 Case study

Non-profit organisation brings natural scientists to Penang for research

By Karen Yue

The Habitat Foundation, the non-profit sister organisation of The Habitat Penang Hill in Malaysia, an eco-tourism attraction committed to conservation and environmental awareness, held its first-ever Bio Blitz in October 2017, a programme that brought 117 scientists from around the world for a biodiversity study mission in Penang's lush rainforests.

Tan: taking the lead in engaging the science community

Allen Tan, managing director of The Habitat Penang Hill, said the scientists were teamed up with local peers, primarily from Penang's University Science Malaysia School of Biological Science.

"They went into the rainforest and documented 1,700 species of biodiversity in just two weeks. They even found a potential new species of scorpions and several other species that have never been reported on the island before," enthused Tan.

Describing the programme as "an exciting endeavour", Tan said the Foundation is now working on a bigger project.

"We are creating a rainforest research centre which will position both Penang and Penang Hill as a destination and centre of excellence for rainforest conservation and research," he shared.

Tan believes that Penang's fervent courtship of corporate, association and specialist groups that share a passion for environmental conservation will help the destination protect and conserve its natural attractions, and as a result ensure sustainable tourism development.

One simple reason, according to Tan, is that "business event delegates are a higher calibre visitor who will more easily appreciate the natural qualities of a destination".

However, Tan said the Foundation's efforts are "on a small scale" and it is committed to do more.

"We will work with even more partners, from the state agencies to academic institutions and corporate organisations, to continue to promote Penang as a destination for eco-tourism," he said.

"Our shareholders have also committed all excess revenues in future from The Habitat Penang Hill to support the work of the Foundation. We will be giving out mini grants to scientists from around the world to come and conduct their biodiversity and conservation research here in Penang."

To ensure the sponsorship is beneficial for everyone, one of the conditions for the mini grants is that the research must be open-source – available to anyone within and beyond Penang.

New book explores the benefits of conferences

A new book, *The Power of Conferences: stories of serendipity, innovation and driving social change*, launched in November, explores the long-term impact of conferences through the stories of 10 prominent Australians who are synonymous with such breakthroughs.

Business Events Sydney (BESydney) and the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) have joined forces to undertake this groundbreaking research, which demonstrates the vital role that conferences have played in some of the most significant global discoveries of the last 50 years.

The book includes stories from Nobel laureates Barry Marshall and Brian Schmidt, as well as a host of other Australian luminaries.

For instance, professor Ian Frazer AC talks about the role conferences played in his discovery of the HPV vaccine, which is saving millions of women from HPV-related cancer – and may eradicate it within a generation.

Meanwhile for professor Martin Green, conferences played an integral part in helping him and his team 'outpace' NASA and COMSAT in the global race to create a solar cell with 20 per cent efficiency – and more recently go on to achieve an unequalled efficiency level of 40 per cent.

As well, professor Tom Calma and member of parliament Linda Burney describe how conferences have been instrumental in transforming educational opportunities and outcomes for indigenous children and young people in Australia.

Lyn Lewis-Smith, CEO of BESydney, said: "These stories show why it's vital to take the long view when thinking about conferences, and the impact they have."

The book was authored by associate professors Deborah Edwards and Carmel Foley, together with writer Cheryl Malone.

ICCA picks Kaohsiung for 2020 Congress

The ICCA Board of Directors has selected Kaohsiung, Taiwan as the host destination for the 2020 Congress, following what was said to be the most competitive bidding exercise in the association's history.

Eight ICCA destination teams submitted first round bids, and three were shortlisted just before IMEX in May 2017: Kaohsiung, Yokohama (Japan) and Cartagena de Indias (Colombia).

The final presentations were made to the board on November 11, and the winner was announced by ICCA president Nina Freysen-Pretorius at the ICCA General Assembly during the 56th ICCA Congress in Prague, Czech Republic the following day.

On why the Taiwanese destination won the bid, Freysen-Pretorius said: "Kaohsiung told a compelling story of a city that is re-inventing itself through the power of meetings, their team designed creative concepts that will help ICCA engage more effectively with Asia-Pacific based associations, and they demonstrated great team cohesion and offered tremendous value for money.

"I have no doubt that 2020 will be a wonderful Congress experience for our entire global community. Yokohama and Cartagena should also be congratulated on their extremely professional, impressive bids".

Malaysia wins hosting rights for medical congress

Malaysia will welcome the World Congress for Endoscopic Surgery of the Skull Base and Brain from June 10-13, 2020, marking the first time the world congress will be held outside of the US and Europe.

With the rise in specialised medical research in Malaysia gaining traction, over 900 delegates from around the world and locally are scheduled to attend the four-day congress at Shangri-la Hotel Kuala Lumpur.

"With over 900 delegates set to attend the congress and generate an estimated economic impact of RM8.7 million (US$2.1 million), the congress will further strengthen our credibility as a knowledge and creative hub," said Zulkefli Sharif, CEO of Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau.

A legacy of successful medical-based business events in Malaysia has been hailed as the prime reason for the winning bid put forward by the Bureau in strategic partnership with the local organiser, the Malaysian Society of Otorhinolaryngologists Head and Neck Surgeons.

The congress will act as a platform for delegates to network and identify new medical trends and breakthroughs, while the show's conference programme also helps to provide a holistic and comprehensive view of the latest technologies, issues and opportunities in the sector.

The hosting of this event will further strengthen the country's aspiration to become a knowledge and creative hub by 2020. In 2016, the medical sector has attracted a record number of 10,532 delegates to the country.

Kuala Lumpur

{ Bureau brief }

Penang appoints ambassadors

Penang Convention & Exhibition Bureau will be introducing a conference ambassador programme in the new year to generate international business events leads and international specialised conferences. The ambassadors will comprise local and international association leaders who have experience in organising conferences or are industry leaders in their field of expertise and strongly believe in Penang as a business events destination.

Philippines takes strategic look at events

The Philippines' first business events roadmap will be unveiled in mid-December to address issues impeding its growth and challenges in positioning the country as a competitive destination. Tourism undersecretary Benito Bengzon Jr. said part of the deliverables is to have an extensive business events database as well as efforts needed to lure large events of 5,000 to 10,000 participants.

Sabah gets a MICE unit

Sabah will have its own unit for business events by end-2017, with staff seconded from Sabah Tourism Board. The new unit will function as a full fledged state convention bureau to attract more business events to the state. For a start, it will be located within Sabah Tourism Board and will have a small staff force of less than 10 people. The unit head was not named at press time.

Healthy conference wins for New Zealand

Tourism New Zealand has celebrated NZ$31 million (US$22 million) worth of conference wins for the coming years. These conferences, which include examples like the Pacific Early Childhood Education Research Association's 21st annual conference in Wellington in 2020, will bring 13,500 international delegates to the country. The celebration recognised the efforts of 23 experts, from university academics to health sector professionals, from across New Zealand who helped won these events.

Danang to get more hardware for bigger, global meetings and events

Vietnamese company Sovico Holdings is transforming the landscape of Danang's beachfront with the expansion Ariyana Tourism Complex, which will in two years' time welcome a 1,400-key luxury resort to support its new Ariyana Convention Centre, where a week-long series of APEC meetings and related events was held in November.

Ariyana Tourism Complex also comprises Furama Resort Danang, Furama Villas Danang and the International Convention Palace – all products of Sovico Holdings which altogether elevate Danang's status as a serious contender for international business and association events, opined Nguyen Duc Quynh, deputy general director, Furama Resort Danang.

The three-storey beachfront Ariyana Convention Centre, opened in mid-October, takes in 12 multifunctional rooms, three of which can be split into multiple spaces. The largest facility is the Ariyana Grand Ballroom, a 2,079m^2 pillarless hall that can seat 2,500 people in a theatre setting, and be divided into four smaller spaces.

Although the Ariyana Convention Centre is part of a bigger complex with hotel accommodation, Nguyen said it – as well as the "warmer, boutique-style venue" International Convention Palace – is marketed as a "standalone venue to be used by any event coming to Danang with attendees staying anywhere in the destination".

However, there is no doubt that the 1,400-room Ariyana Beach Resort and Suite Danang, opening in two years' time, will be a more convenient accommodation option for delegates attending events at Ariyana Convention Centre. Guests will enjoy complimentary tram and shuttle bus rides between the hotel and convention centre, with the journey taking no more than seven minutes.

Nguyen added that next on the plans are upgrading works for Furama Resort Danang. – **Karen Yue**

Ariyana Convention Centre

Singapore to host Rotary International Convention 2024

Singapore has won the provisional bid to host the Rotary International Convention in 2024, which is set to be the largest association congress ever hosted by the city-state.

More than 25,000 Rotary members from around the world are expected to converge on Singapore to connect, engage and share insights on how to create positive, lasting change in their communities. To be held at the Singapore EXPO Convention and Exhibition Centre, the event will run for five days, and include workshops, forums, breakout sessions, entertainment and other meetings.

Singapore EXPO Convention and Exhibition Centre

The annual convention, held in different cities around the world, was last held in Singapore in 1999 and was attended by approximately 19,000 participants.

The winning provisional bid was led by Rotary regional leader Chew Ghim Bok, and supported by Rotary clubs from Singapore and around Asia-Pacific. In addition to the Singapore Tourism Board, various public agencies and business event industry stakeholders also contributed to the successful bid.

As part of Singapore's bid to host a convention that makes a lasting difference, the Rotary Clubs of Singapore plan to champion a legacy project striving towards sanitation progress and hygiene awareness by 2025.

European cities sweep top 10 positions in GDS-Index

The Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index) has released its second ranking of the world's most sustainable cities for business events.

The top 10 performers with the highest overall scores were all from Europe, with Gothenburg in Sweden taking the lead with a score of 92 out of a possible 100 points.

Rank	City	Overall Score
1	Gothenburg	92%
2	Oslo	85%
3	Copenhagen & Reykjavik	82%
4	Glasgow	80%
5	Stuttgart	79%
6	Helsinki	78%
7	Uppsala	77%
8	Zurich	76%
9	Malmö	74%
10	Västerås	69%

The 2017 results were announced at the recent ICCA Congress, with the Overall Leadership Award going to Gothenburg, who also won the Innovation Award for her pioneering app which facilitates greater accessibility for events.

Glasgow was recognised with the Most Improved Award for her sterling achievement in engaging stakeholders through her People Make Glasgow Greener campaign and for driving sustainability performance in the last year.

Overall, destinations with a sustainability strategy for the business events sector increased by 25 per cent, average CVB sustainability performance rose by 11 per cent, with destinations such as Oslo (2), Aarhus (21) and Malmö (9) increasing their overall performance by more than 20 per cent.

Meanwhile, five Asia-Pacific cities made the list: Melbourne, Australia (12); Sydney, Australia (15); Sapporo, Japan (18); Kyoto, Japan (19); and Goyang, South Korea (28).

The GDS-Index is a collaborative platform that promotes the sustainable growth of international meeting destinations through knowledge sharing, capacity building, and benchmarking across four key areas: city environmental strategy and infrastructure; city social sustainability performance; industry supplier support (restaurants, hotels and convention centres); and Convention Bureau strategy and initiatives.

Radius Travel expands into meetings and events

Global travel management company Radius Travel has made a move into the meetings and events (M&E) segment by setting up Radius Meetings & Events.

Radius Meetings & Events manages and support all types of events, including congresses and provides DMC services.

According to Radius Travel's director of global M&E sales, Henrietta Balint, the move was made in response to requests from existing and prospective customers for a global meetings and events solution company that was different from the "mega players".

Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, the US, Radius Travel will have M&E "offices" around the world through agencies in its network. Its newest agents are Inntel UK and Proske Germany.

Sexton hands over reins to Karamat

After more than 12 years at the helm, PCMA president and CEO Deborah Sexton has decided to step down at the conclusion of Convening Leaders in Nashville January 2018.

The board has voted unanimously to approve COO Sherrif Karamat as the new CEO. Karamat joined PCMA in October 2003 as vice-president of sales and became COO of the organisation in April 2008.

In addition to her role as CEO, Sexton has also served as president of the PCMA Education Foundation and publisher of PCMA's Convene magazine.

Under Sexton's leadership, and through her partnership with Karamat, PCMA more than doubled its membership and revenue, as well as expanded its global reach. During her tenure, the Foundation has more than tripled its support for scholarships, research and education programmes.

Watch Vietnam's story unfold

Hanoi's latest attraction is a stage performance that harnesses the beauty of nature and ropes in both professional and amateur actors to tell a series of tales about countryside life in Vietnam, from the rise of Vietnamese Buddhism to the complexities of the feudal education system.

Named *The Quintessence of Tonkin*, the performance is played on the outskirts of Hanoi on a stage that sits just below the surface of a lake and with the mountains and Chua Thay, one of the country's oldest Buddhist pagodas, as backdrop. The cast pulls in 100 professional performers and 150 real farmers.

Performance-art technicians devised a world-class sound and lighting system for the cutting-edge production, but traditional instruments — such as wooden drums and brass gongs — figure prominently in the sensory experience, as well.

Hoang Nhat Nam, the show's director, draws attention to the farmers who took a year to master the art of acting.

"These farmers know rural life better than anyone," said Nam. "It is their story, so I wanted them to be the ones to tell it. It's more authentic that way."

Perfect for corporate groups, the 2,500-seat amphitheater welcomes partial bookings of the Silver, Gold and Platinum sections or full venue hire. Planners choosing the latter can also arrange for delegates to meet with the producer and cast.

Special group rates are available.

For an extra special touch, have a dinner party set up on stage, on a stretch of private beach within Baara Land Resort, an easy five-minute walk from the show venue, or at a restaurant. Choose to feast on Vietnamese and international dishes on a buffet line or from a set menu. Dinner is priced from US$25 per person, excluding drinks.

Paint, for goodness sake

Elephant Parade, an international organisation that uses art to raise awareness of elephant welfare and conservation needs, is offering opportunities for association meeting groups to get involved in its mission.

Meeting planners looking for an opportunity to satisfy their event's corporate social responsibility objectives can sign up for sponsorship packages, purchase products that will make unique and meaningful welcome gifts for event delegates or thank you gifts for sponsors, or arrange for art activities to be part of the programme.

An example of the latter: meeting planners can organise a bonding activity anywhere in Bangkok where delegates, placed in groups, work together to paint a small elephant statue. All completed art works could be kept as souvenirs by the host company, or arranged to be auctioned off, with sales proceeds going towards Elephant Parade's nominated conservation projects.

Delegates can also pay a visit to Elephant Parade's factory in Chiang Mai.

ICC Sydney makes it easier for delegates to fly off after an event

International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney) has become the first venue of its kind in Australia to pilot a mobile airline check-in and baggage drop service, in partnership with Off Airport Check In Solutions (OACIS).

The trial took place at the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia (ASFA) conference in late-November, which had nearly 2,000 delegates in attendance.

The service enabled international and interstate visitors to check-in and drop off their luggage at an OACIS counter within ICC Sydney on the final day of the conference, travelling to Sydney Airport luggage-free, and conveniently collecting it at their final destination.

Geoff Donaghy, CEO of ICC Sydney, said the successful pilot marked another moment of innovation for the venue as it continues to deliver a world class experience for business travellers.

"Since opening in December 2016, ICC Sydney has already received numerous accolades for its unique offering, and we are excited to be leading the charge here in terms of optimising the visitor experience.

"Our pilot with OACIS was a success on all fronts and with more than 1,000 events secured until 2026, it could be a game changer for our clients, delegates and visitors," he said.

Another benefit of the off-site check-in, noted Donaghy, is that its gives event delegates "more time to enjoy our beautiful city, including its restaurants, shops and other city attractions".

The OACIS system uses cloud-based technology to remotely integrate with airline check-in systems. Luggage is then securely transported to the airport and placed in the baggage system for security screening.

Le Meridien Angkor unveils new outdoor space

Le Meridien Angkor in Siem Reap, Cambodia, has launched its Grand Marquee, a transparent marquee equipped with state-of-the-art meeting and catering facilities.

The 1,125m² Grand Marquee is set in the property's Palm Garden, and can cater to events for up to 1,000 people. The space can be adjusted according to an event planner's needs.

Aside from the Grand Marquee, other meeting spaces in the 213-key hotel include six function rooms ranging from 26m² to 310m², as well as outdoor options at the poolside, an Elephant Courtyard.

Yogyakarta welcomes a Marriott

Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel has opened its doors, giving the city its first Marriott branded hotel.

With 347 guestrooms and suites, Yogyakarta Marriott Hotel features what's said to be the largest club lounge in town; a spa; exercise room; outdoor swimming pool; all-day dining Yogyakarta Kitchen; the Taman Sari Bar & Grill specialty restaurant which looks out to the hotel pool; and a lobby lounge.

Meetings and events facilities include a pillarless ballroom, which at 1,870m² is the largest in Yogyakarta, a boardroom, seven meeting rooms and several pre-function areas.

The hotel is located 20 minutes away from Adi Sutjipto International Airport and an hour from UNESCO World Heritage Site The Borobudur Temple.

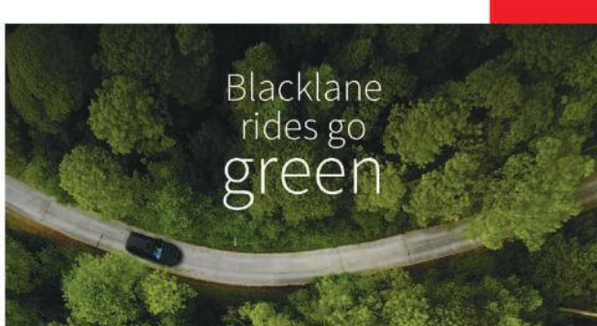
Green is the new black

All Blacklane rides are now green, with the company committed to offsetting the carbon footprint of all rides across the 250 cities and 50 countries it operates in.

Blacklane offsets carbon emissions by funding a wind farm near Pune, India, where 40 wind turbine generators produce electricity with no fossil fuel consumption.

The company also partners Carbon Footprint, the UK government's provider, to offset ministerial travel emissions. The company calculates Blacklane's emissions based on ride distances and vehicles in the fleet.

Jens Wohltorf, CEO and co-founder of Blacklane, said: "Quality rides (that do not) compromise the environment benefit travellers, drivers and the world. They also align companies' business travel needs with their sustainability goals."



Mövenpick opens close to Chiang Mai convention centre

Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts has launched the brand's first property in Chiang Mai, located a 10-minute drive from Chiang Mai International Airport and 10km from Chiang Mai National Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Mövenpick Suriwongse Hotel Chiang Mai offers 266 rooms across seven categories and various F&B options including an all-day dining venue Feung Fah Restaurant for Thai and international cuisines.

For meetings and events, two multifunctional venues are available on the property, including a ballroom for up to 400 pax.

Hainan Airlines spreads its network

Hainan Airlines has introduced two new routes between New York's John F Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and the Chinese cities of Chengdu and Chongqing.

Services to Chongqing commenced on October 21, while inaugural flights to New York from Chengdu took off on October 27. Each route will be operated twice weekly.

On Wednesdays and Fridays, flights from Chongqing to New York depart at 22.00, and land at 00.50 the following day. The return flights, occurring on Thursdays and Saturdays, depart New York at 02.50 and arrive in Chongqing at 05.55 the following day.

Flights depart Chengdu at 22.00 on Thursdays and Saturdays, and arrive in New York at 00.50 the following day. The return leg sees flights departing New York at 02.50 and arriving in Chengdu at 05.55 the following day on Fridays and Sundays.

Iain Bitran

Forming connections

Iain Bitran, executive director of the International Society for Professional Innovation Management, talks to Karen Yue about knowledge legacies and the importance of working with a reliable, relevant convention bureau

The International Society for Professional Innovation Management (ISPIM) has confirmed its first meeting in Japan. How did this decision come along?

I've never heard of Fukuoka before my meeting with Fukuoka Convention and Visitors Bureau (FCVB) at IT&CMA 2015. It turned out to be the best prepared convention bureau I've ever met.

They came to our meeting with all the materials and information that I've always wanted. They provided a report on business innovation in Fukuoka, a list of industries in the city, names of all the universities in the city, etc. They even had a person from Fukuoka at the booth who could answer my questions about the city.

I was so impressed at the end of the meeting (that) I told myself that I've got to do an innovation event in Fukuoka.

So did you decide right away that Fukuoka's the one for the next ISPIM meeting?

Well, no. The next step for me (after the meeting at IT&CMA 2015) was to plan a trip to Fukuoka to get prepatory work done, with a view of doing an event in 2019 or 2020.

However, things accelerated when FCVB informed me that ICCA will be doing something in the city in June (ICCA Associations Meetings Programme, June 29 to July 1, 2017). I have been doing a lot of stuff with ICCA recently and my involvement would take me to Fukuoka. So I arrived a few days earlier for a site inspection, and realised that 2018 was free on their calendar. I decided then to do Fukuoka in 2018 instead of waiting till 2019 or 2020.

But before the trip to Fukuoka I caught up with my friend Roy (Palmer, executive director) of the Association of International Seafood Professionals (AISP). I told him about my meeting with FCVB. Roy had done events in the past in Japan, in Kagoshima in 2013 which went very well. So he proposed that we co-locate our events in Fukuoka, where his association will run a track on innovation in the seafood industry at my summit (in addition to AISP's own programme) and both associations will co-host social events. It was the perfect arrangement.

"FOR ISPIM, THE CONNECTION WITH THE LOCAL INNOVATION COMMUNITY IS CRITICAL. WITHOUT THAT, WE ARE JUST TOURISTS IN A DESTINATION AND NOTHING MORE WILL HAPPEN AFTER THE MEETING ENDS."

So Roy and I went on the site inspection of Fukuoka together in June, and extended two days in Hiroshima. We hope to do a one-day post trip to Hiroshima, a city most people have heard so much of. Japan has an amazing power of recovery and ability to create success out of disasters. Not just Hiroshima (Atomic bombing, 1945) but also cities like Kobe (Great Hanshin earthquake, 1995) and Sendai (Tohoku earthquake, 2011). There's so much our innovation colleagues can learn from Hiroshima.

My hope is that following our 2018 event in Fukuoka, we could return to other parts of Japan for yet another event, say in Hiroshima or Kobe or somewhere else.

What were your first encounters with other convention bureaux like?

Some convention bureaux will give you only maps, others will give you money (for hosting your meeting there) but that's just the sum of their involvement.

But what does an association want from a convention bureau? For ISPIM, we see the convention bureau as the first

port of call whenever we consider taking an event to a city. The convention bureau has to become our partner and provide us with local connections.

We know every city has hotels and venues, but what we don't know is the local innovation community, the relevant government agencies, the presence of innovation incubators in the city and state of the local start-up scene. We need the convention bureau to make these local connections for us. If they can't, why should we take our event to the city?

So you don't care much for financial subsidies?

It helps to some extent, of course. Our events must be affordable for everyone because we attract academics and non-academics. To get a programme going, we need sponsorship which is more and more difficult to find these days, so some local subvention always help. Money we save in some areas can be used elsewhere to offer a better programme.

But between the two – great local connections and generous subventions from a convention bureau, I'd rather have local connections. That is far more important to us. Somehow, we will always find ways to make things happen, even without any financial support.

I've been so impressed with the materials FCVB had prepared for me, that I've been showing them to other convention bureaux, telling them that this is best practice. Those materials have also enabled me to think broader and discover ways to work with another industry association to enhance content. It was through them that I learnt that there are five main industry sectors in Fukuoka, one of which is seafood – and that sparked collaboration possibilities with AISP.

FCVB understands what needs to be done to attract an association event. Not only did the representatives come to our meeting with the right materials, they had also proactively gone out to meet some of ISPIM members in Japan to understand what our event is like and what issues are important to us.

Do you think that there are enough convention bureaux that are doing it right?

No. Many talk endless about their city's infrastructure and ask how big my event is, do I use a convention centre and do I use a DMC or PCO. They then pass me a list of all that. That's not what I want. For ISPIM, the connection with the local innovation community is critical. Without that, we are just tourists in a destination and nothing more will happen after the meeting ends.

A lot of associations are talking about legacy these days; what do you leave behind after attending a conference in a destination. I don't think convention bureaux look at this particularly well.

There are some exceptions, of course. Auckland is very good at looking at event legacy, which is understandable because the convention bureau sits right under the national economic development agency.

The fact that we could say we've been to a city and left something (knowledge) behind, will enable us to consider the city again for future events. Because if we don't (establish a legacy), there is no measurement of our achievement, and we will just move on to somewhere else, another city that will want to help us make the right connections and bring benefit to the local economy and community.

In many cases, convention bureaux are just concerned about bringing that one event in.

Do you think the rotational nature of association meetings encourage such one-off relationships with the convention bureaux?

Maybe. But associations speak to one another and we become ambassadors of certain destinations.

An innovator at heart

Iain Bitran is the executive director of ISPIM, the International Society for Professional Innovation Management. It is an association of members from research, industry, consulting and the public sector, all sharing a passion for innovation management – how to successfully create new products, processes and services from ideas to stimulate economic growth and well-being.

Formed in Norway in 1983, ISPIM has members in over 70 countries and is the oldest, largest and most active innovation network in Europe, expanding rapidly in the Americas and Asia-Pacific.

As well, since 1993, Bitran has been the co-founder and chief technology officer of Enterprizer Technologies, the provider of intelligent decision management solutions driven by Enterprizer, an innovative enterprise modelling system. He worked on many client projects with enterprises, governments and NGOs. As lead designer of Enterprizer, Bitran trained consultants to use Enterprizer and was been involved in many EU and UN funded projects. In 2017 Enterprizer Technologies split into two main business areas, Enterprizer Consulting and Enterprizer Events, with Iain becoming CEO of the latter.

Below: Bitran (left) catches up with FCVB representatives at AIME 2017 in Melbourne

Let's talk more about local connection. Why is this critical?
For ISPIM, a successful event needs to have 25 per cent local delegates and 75 per cent international. We can showcase innovation in the host city, look at the various industry clusters and discuss the challenges the local community faces.

Nobody wants to hear only how good things are. That isn't beneficial. They want to understand challenges and share possible solutions. A question may be asked and somebody from a different part of the world, from a different industry, may have an answer to that or suggest a different way of approaching the problem. We want people to share knowledge and are always thinking of ways to engage our people. Our conferences have evolved in this manner.

But to achieve this high level of engagement, we need to know how to interest the local community.

What could poor local connections do to your events?
In 2016, our summit in Kuala Lumpur drew around 140 people. We usually aim for 200 people at least. It was a relationship issue with this event. The CEO of the Malaysia Foundation for Innovation left his position when we started promoting Kuala Lumpur at our event in Brisbane a year before.

Originally we talked about doing something together with the Foundation, but after the CEO's departure we were told that the collaboration was off. The foundation was going to bring in 50 delegates, which would have placed our attendance at 190, closer to our 200 target. To make things worse, the foundation put up a free innovation event a day after ours. A lot of the government delegates went to that event instead.

Additionally, many speakers from the local companies only showed up for their presentation slot at our conference and did not bring their people with them. The local involvement was very weak – barely 25 per cent of our total delegate numbers, which is our usual target.

Here's another lesson – when we did our 2014 event in Singapore, we worked with a professor in the Singapore Management University. I got a little lazy and relied only on his network, which meant that our attendance in 2014 was smaller than the one we had in 2008.

Since then, we have decided to postpone our 2017 Singapore event to 2019 and use these couple of years to know people in agencies like A*STAR (Agency for Science, Technology and Research), SPRING Singapore (a government agency supporting local enterprises), National Research Foundation, National University of Singapore, etc. I want them to be enthusiastic about our event, and to want to participate in it with quality speakers and content. Without them, I'm relying on one person's network again.

So what's did you learn?
We learnt that we must have more than one local partner. That is why I told FCVB that they may have done an excellent job impressing us, but the real work starts now. I've asked them to host a half-day event where people from the local innovation community will be invited to talk about content, speakers, venues, promotions and delegate incentives, everything. The event has to benefit everyone – ISPIM and the local stakeholders. I want to know what is it they want out of the conference so I can build it into the programme sooner.

It is also important to ask the right questions to the convention bureau. Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is helping me with delegate boosting now. It didn't in 2014 because I didn't know to ask them.

Would you agree that an association's relationship with the convention bureau could be a better one if associations came prepared too?
Well, yes. The association must know what it wants and engage the convention bureau in the right manner for a successful relationship. If we were able to say exactly what we wanted, then we would hope the convention bureau could find the right people to help achieve what we need to do.

What I used to do at tradeshows, was to have a draft RFP (Request For Proposal) showing what I needed. I realised that made us talk mostly about (the city's hotels, venues and attractions) and not about other critical driving factors that I've mentioned earlier.

So in the past year we have changed our approach to enable us to better articulate what we need from the city to host an event there.

ISPIM has events around the world. How is it different building delegate numbers in the different regions?
ISPIM Conference had 120 delegates in Athens 2006, over 400 in Vienna 2009, and over 500 in Barcelona 2012. After that we capped our European conferences at 500 pax. Europe is a lot more compact, making it easier for us to form communities.

In 2008 we started our first non-European event in Singapore (ISPIM Innovation Symposium), with 180 delegates or so. We moved it around the world, but there was no real connection. One year it was in Canada, the next in New Zealand, and they are not quite neighbours.

After the sixth ISPIM Innovation Symposium in Melbourne, 2013, where we got 201 delegates, we decided to kill it and split our conferences by regions – Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific.

We have been building up momentum in North America and the delegate numbers are growing.

But it is more problematic in Asia-Pacific, which is a large geographical region. The countries and culture are so unique that it is more challenging to create communities.

We thought of having a conference for just the South-east Asia region, but eventually ditched that to focus only on big innovation cities in Asia-Pacific like South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia.

You'll notice that I've left out China because at this moment it is just too much hard word to for us to grow there (laughs).

An event destination has to be easy for people to go to, without having to struggle with visa, and easy for associations to hold an event, without having to struggle with getting the right licences. The barriers to entry are high in China, and some ways in India too.

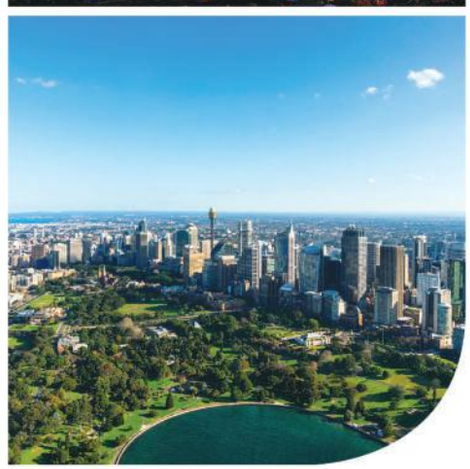
So you have two biggest populations, two biggest markets in the world that are not quite accessible to us right now. But we will get there eventually (laughs).

"THE ASSOCIATION MUST KNOW WHAT IT WANTS AND ENGAGE THE CONVENTION BUREAU IN THE RIGHT MANNER FOR A SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIP. IF WE WERE ABLE TO SAY EXACTLY WHAT WE WANTED, THEN WE WOULD HOPE THE CONVENTION BUREAU COULD FIND THE RIGHT PEOPLE TO HELP ACHIEVE WHAT WE NEED TO DO."

Asia-Pacific's top meetings cities

From Singapore to Sydney, these are the top cities in Asia-Pacific for association meetings based on ICCA's 2016 global rankings*

* Released in 2017



First column from top: Singapore, Seoul, Bangkok; Second column from top: Beijing, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Taipei; Third column from top: Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur, Sydney

1 Singapore

151 ICCA-qualified association meetings

Singapore is home to three main convention centres: Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre near Marina Bay; Sands Expo and Convention Centre, which has Singapore's largest meeting and convention space; and Singapore Expo in the east, which can provide up to 100,000m² of column-free space.

Hotels can be found around these venues, providing meeting delegates with convenient accommodation options. Sands Expo, for instance, is supported by Marina Bay Sands hotel which is connected to the venue by an underground mall. Pan Pacific Singapore and Conrad Centennial Singapore are some of the hotels located close to Suntec Singapore, while Capri by Fraser Changi City sits just opposite Singapore Expo.

The convention centres are surrounded by diverse dining options as well. Members can hold welcome or farewell

dinners at one of Marina Bay Sands' award-winning or Michelin-star restaurants; Suntec Singapore is connected to Suntec City, an expansive mall with mid-scale dining options; and behind Singapore Expo lies Changi City Point, where delegates can enjoy more local flavours.

Association events are overseen by the Singapore Exhibition & Convention Bureau, which sits under the Singapore Tourism Board.

Top three economic pillars
Electronics, pharmaceuticals and finance technology

Global access
Changi International Airport is Singapore's sole air gateway, which served more than 9.1 million international arrivals from January to August 2017. By land, Singapore's two checkpoints – located at Tuas and Woodlands – received almost 1.46 million international arrivals from January to August 2017. – **Pamela Chow**

2 Seoul

137 ICCA-qualified association meetings

The vibrant capital of South Korea is one of the largest cities in the world, home to at least 10 million citizens. The city's infrastructure is modern and boasts a standard of living one would expect of any global city. It has a reliable and accessible public train and bus network, major international credit cards are accepted by merchants across the city centre, and English is a language spoken by most service providers.

Seoul offers five convention centres, from the premium 63 Convention Centre where the 2,000-seat Grand Ballroom is the largest venue to the popular Coex Convention & Exhibition Center which hosts a yearly average of 200 exhibitions and over 2,000 separate meetings and events.

Unique venues are plentiful in Seoul, some modern and others traditional – a destination strength the Seoul Convention Bureau and Seoul Tourism Organization sing about when promoting Seoul to overseas meeting planners. On their website, miceseoul.com, 48 unique venues that satisfy strict criteria considered by meeting planners are currently listed.

Rounding up Seoul's extensive list of event venues are convention hotels – properties with world-class meeting facilities. One of the newest openings is Seoul Dragon City, a massive complex of four AccorHotels brands – Grand Mercure, Novotel Suites, Novotel and Ibis Styles. It boasts 1,700 keys, an impressive collection of meetings and conventions spaces, and a cluster of five themed entertainment lounges that can also be hired for private events.

On the accommodation front, Seoul is home to numerous international and trusted local hotel brands. One of the most prominent openings in 2017 is Signiel Seoul. The 235-room luxury property by local power chain, Lotte Hotels & Resorts, straddles the 76th to 101st floors of the Lotte World Tower – said to be the sixth tallest high-rise in the world.

Top three economic pillars
Electronics, telecommunications, finance

Global access
Seoul prides itself as one of the world's best-connected cities, being served by two international airports – Gimpo International Airport, located about 30 minutes from Seoul city centre, and Incheon International Airport, about an hour away from Seoul. The latter, opened in 2001, manages more than 450 inbound and outbound international and domestic flights daily. – **Karen Yue**

3 Bangkok

121 ICCA-qualified association meetings

A popular lesiure destination long before it was recognised on the world map for serious association meetings, the capital city of Thailand is able to promise the best of both worlds – professional connections with industry peers across Asia as well as fun ways to experience Thai culture and heritage.

Bangkok offers a host of world-class venues and supporting accommodation – 65 convention centres, 14 exhibition centres, 34 unique venues and 422 hotels with more than 94,000 keys.

Association meeting planners can choose from massive complexes like IMPACT Arena which has more than 150,000m² of indoor space, Queen Sirikit National Convention Center which has a floor space of 65,000m², and Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre which has excess of 50,000m², or convention hotels that offer both venue and accommodation under one roof such as Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld and Bangkok Marriott Marquis Queen's Park.

An element of fun could easily be injected into a meeting programme by utilising one of the many unique venues in and around Bangkok city centre, such as a dinner river cruise down the Chao Phraya River, or a Thai cooking class or introduction to organic farming at Sampran Riverside, an eco-cultural destination on the fringe of Bangkok.

Associations keen on Bangkok should contact the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, which has a dedicated division to support assciation meetings.

Top three economic pillars
Retail, manufacturing and real estate

Global access
Bangkok has two international airports – Suvarnabhumi International Airport and Don Mueang International Airport. According to data from Airports of Thailand, Inc., the former received 46 million passengers, up 5.6 per cent, in 2016, while the latter had 11.8 million, up 29.55 per cent. – **Karen Yue**

4 Beijing

113 ICCA-qualified association meetings

Beijing, the political, cultural and educational centre of China, is the second largest Chinese city after Shanghai and home to the headquarters of most of China's largest state-owned enterprises.

China's sprawling capital has more than 555 star-rated hotels, comprising some 65 five-star, 130 four-star and 203 three-star properties and inventory continues to increase.

Seoul, South Korea

Since its opening in 1985, the gigantic China World Trade Center (CWTC) complex is a highly-used venue. Within walking distance of the China World Exhibition Hall are the luxurious 716-room China World Hotel, the 570-room Traders Hotel Beijing and and the 278-room China World Summit Wing. The complex also includes the China World Apartments & Mall.

Other popular meeting venues include the China National Convention Center (CNCC), constructed for the 2008 Beijing Olympics and adjacent to the Bird's Nest and Water Cube – the national stadium and national aquatic centre respectively. Across a walkway is the 420-room CNCC Grand Hotel and close to two dozen mid-scale to high-end hotels are within a one-kilometre radius of the centre.

Opened in 1990, the Beijing International Convention Center (BICC) is right beside the Bird's Nest and linked to the 555-room Beijing Continental Grand Hotel.

Top three economic pillars
Finance, electronics/IT, pharmaceuticals-related research

Global access
Beijing Capital International Airport is the second busiest in the world by passenger numbers. International traffic is channelled through Terminal 2 and 3. In 2016 they served 18,624,533 foreign passengers and, 3,951,359 regional travellers from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan who arrived on 75 international airlines. **– Caroline Boey**

Tokyo, Japan

5 Hong Kong
99 ICCA-qualified association meetings

Hong Kong's sophisticated and reliable infrastructure, together with the extensive array of support services and incentives for organisers provided by Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong (MEHK), under the arm of Hong Kong Tourism Board, makes the city an ideal destination for association meetings.

Hong Kong has an inventory of more than 270 hotels with 78,000 rooms, ranging from high-end to high-quality budget.

In Wan Chai, where the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre is located, there are 47 hotels offering 10,555 rooms – promising covenient accommodation for event delegates with varying budgets.

As well, many of Hong Kong's major hotels are built with meeting facilities. These are perfect options for smaller-sized association meetings that prefer having all activities under one roof. Elsewhere, there are versatile offsite venues, from cosy wine cellars to art galleries, perfect for social functions during a meeting programme.

Top three economic pillars
Financial services, tourism and trade

Global access
Over 100 airlines operate flights to Hong Kong International Airport from 220 destinations, including over 50 cities on the Chinese mainland. In 2016, passenger throughput hit 70.5 million and the Airports Council International's preliminary ranking placed Hong Kong International Airport as the world's eighth busiest airport. **– Prudence Lui**

6 Tokyo
95 ICCA-qualified association meetings

Tokyo International Forum (TIF) is the largest convention centre in the city, comprising eight halls including the country's largest with 5,012 seats, as well as 34 meeting rooms and galleries.

There are 14 hotels – three five-star, five four-star, and six three-star properties – located within a 20-minute walking radius of TIF. This translates to a total number of 4,280 rooms, where the five-star Imperial Hotel is the largest with 931 rooms.

Unique venues for a memorable welcome or farewell dinner include Happo-en, Meji Kinenkan, and the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (Miraikan). Happo-en offers traditionally-styled buildings set within a 400-year-old Japanese Garden, while Meiji Kinenkan is an evergreen forest of 120,000 trees with 365 different species in the outer gardens of the Meiji Shrine.

The Tokyo Conventions & Visitors Bureau boasts a dedicated business events team, and bills itself as a one-stop shop for all international clients.

Top three economic pillars
Medical science, finance, and technology (IT, engineering and computer science)

Global access
Tokyo has two international airports – Narita and Haneda, with the latter located only 15km from central Tokyo. In 2016, Narita and Haneda handled approximately 6.8 million and 3.3 million respectively. Narita averages about 230 flights per day, while Haneda averages about 109 per day. **– Rachel AJ Lee**

7 Taipei
83 ICCA-qualified association meetings

There are seven convention centres in Taipei, three of which are specialised exhibition centres.

Taipei International Convention Centre holds the country's largest plenary hall, being able to seat up to 3,100 people.

The Zhongzheng district is arguably the city's business events hub, as it features a cluster of convention centres, affordable accommodation with meetings packages as well as unorthodox event spaces.

Chang Yung-fa Foundation International Convention Centre, GIS MOTC Convention Centre and NTUH International Convention Centre are located here. Other meeting venues are also available, such as MOTC's Taiwan Railways Administration.

Delegates can be hosted in close proximity at hotels with business and meeting services, including Caesar Park Hotel Taipei, Sheraton Grand Taipei and Taipei Garden Hotel.

Unique gala event spaces have also raised the profile of Zhongzheng district, with big draws such as Huashan 1914 Creative Park and the National Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall.

Association events are overseen by MEET Taiwan, the Bureau of Foreign Trade's business events promotion agency.

Top three economic pillars
Medical and health science, electronics, information technology

Global access
Taipei is mainly serviced by Taipei Taoyuan International Airport, Taiwan's larg-

est and busiest airport. It is one of two air gateways to Taipei; the other, Taipei Songshan Airport, now serves chartered flights, domestic flights and limited international flights. – **Pamela Chow**

8 Shanghai

79 ICCA-qualified association meetings

Shanghai's investment in infrastructure development and facilities targeted at the meetings industry make the modern, bustling gateway a sought-after destination among international associations. Shanghai has also expanded its conference ambassador programme to include representatives in the medical, mathematical, pharmaceutical and cultural fields.

The opening of new facilities like the mega National Exhibition and Convention Center (Shanghai) – the world's largest complex when it opened in 2015 – has greatly improved the city's positioning and is pushing demand for the Puxi area, in particular Hongqiao.

Shanghai has some 60 five-star and 70 four-star international brand hotels offering more than 100,000 rooms spread across two major business districts – Pudong in the east and Puxi in the west.

New hotel openings in 2017 include: the 187-room Meliá Shanghai Hongqiao near NECC; 396-room Cordis, Shanghai, Hongqiao with 1,600m² of meeting space and near Hongqiao International Airport; the 374-room W Shanghai - The Bund with 5,800m² of meeting space; and the 164-room Bellagio Shanghai with 2,000m² of meeting space.

Shanghai offers numerous large meeting venue options. In Pudong the Shanghai Expo Centre – built for the 2010 Shanghai Expo – is a convenient taxi ride of between 10 and 20 minutes away from a number of business hotels and entertainment facilities.

To ensure ease of delegate movement, there are venues like the Shanghai International Convention Center, adjacent to the Oriental Riverside Hotel, and other nearby hotels include Pudong Shangri-La, Grand Hyatt Shanghai and Grand Kempinski Hotel Shanghai.

Top three economic pillars

Financial services, retail and wholesale and real estate, although association meetings held in the city tend to be in the technology, medical sciences and management sectors

Global access

Pudong International Airport and Hongqiao International Airport serve Shanghai's two major business districts respectively. Passenger throughput of Pudong and Hongqiao airports in 2016 was 106 million, placing Shanghai number four in the world. The city is served by 107 airlines operating to 282 cities globally. Around 24 new routes have been newly launched to the Belt and Road countries. – **Caroline Boey**

9 Kuala Lumpur

68 ICCA-qualified association meetings

The capital city of Malaysia has two main convention centres in the capital.

The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre is a purpose-built facility with a gross built-up area of 120,000m². There are 17,000 rooms within a five-kilometre radius of the venue.

The Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC) opened its doors in August and is the country's largest exhibition centre with over 45,000m² of gross exhibition space. There are 5,600 hotel rooms of varying star ratings within a half-hour drive from MITEC.

Across the city are 30,302 hotel rooms. Four- and five-star properties come with meeting facilities suited for international business events.

The city also has unique venues suitable for dining functions, such as Aquaria KLCC which offers a spectacular view of marine life swimming in a gigantic aquarium.

There isn't a city convention bureau for Kuala Lumpur, but support for association meetings can come from the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau.

Top three economic pillars

Medical/pharmaceutical, science and technology, and logistics/shipping/freight

Global access

The main international hubs are Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and klia2. KLIA serves full-service, scheduled carriers while Klia2 handles low-cost airlines and is the hub for AirAsia and AirAsia X. Subang International Airport is a city airport servicing regional destinations served by propeller jet. It is a hub for Firefly and Malindo Air. – **S Puvaneswary**

10 Sydney

61 ICCA-qualified association meetings

As one of the world's most desired cities to visit, Sydney prides itself on being a safe and stable place to do business with an established record of delivering polished events.

Sydney's International Conventions Centre (ICC) is the city's premier meeting space with indoor and outdoor networking areas that feature the world's largest natural harbour and the Sydney city skyline as its backdrop. The ICC can host up to 8,000 people for a plenary and has a total exhibition space of 35,000m². It is within walking distance to more than 15,000 hotel rooms.

The city offers unique venues for dinner events like the Sydney Town Hall (800 pax), the Australian Maritime Museum (190 pax), or Cockatoo Island where a corporate buyout is possible.

Business Events Sydney (BESydney) is the bureau for Sydney and New South Wales state, hosting about 90 international events in the last financial year. BESydney provides a Suppliers Search online service for planning events.

As well, conventions aligned with the city's top economic pillars receive enhanced connections and collaboration with the New South Wales government for their events.

Top three economic pillars

Health, science engineering and infrastructure, and professional service

Global access

Sydney Kingsford Smith International Airport is the main gateway to the city, serving 41.9 million international and domestic passengers in 2016. – **Adelaine Ng**

Sydney, Australia

International Corporate Governance Network Annual Conference 2017

Working remotely in a different timezone is challenging. ICGN reveals how they made this event, held in another continent, a successful one. By S Puvaneswary

This year's International Corporate Governance Network (ICGN) annual conference, themed *Redefining Capitalism for a Sustainable Global Economy*, was hosted by the Kuala Lumpur Retirement Fund, in partnership with Minority Shareholder Watchdog Group Malaysia.

The annual meeting is rotated every year, and is always hosted by a local member organisation.

ICGN aims to raise the awareness of corporate governance and stewardship developments in the host country or local region to global investors and capital market professionals, as well as inspire and promote effective standards of corporate governance to support the sustainable value creation of companies, and advance efficient markets and economies world-wide.

The three-day event included plenary debates, keynote speeches, workshops and social events. It focused on the many good initiatives taking place in Malaysia, many of which were promoted through a mix of government-driven reforms.

The conference is important for Malaysia as it would help attract inward investment by virtue, by instilling investor confidence when emphasising key corporate governance issues. It also explored governance priorities in Asian markets.

Milly Sheehan, ICGN's communications manager, said: "We are a global organisation. Much of our work and the way we communicate with our members is carried out online, via conference calls or written forms of communication. The conference is very important as it offers our members and interested non-members the opportunity to meet face-to-face to network, share and learn from one another."

As it was organised by the ICGN secretariat based in the UK, there were a number of challenges.

Elle Thomas, ICGN's head of communications & events, elaborated: "Malaysia is seven hours ahead of the UK. As we were coming into work, people we were working with were finishing for the day, which was challenging when quick responses were required.

"Fortunately, our team was able to work flexible hours, and we could adjust our hours to better align with our partners in Malaysia. The organisations also made themselves accessible throughout the run up to the conference."

Thomas added that another challenge for the team was the difficulty in sourcing for local vendors to carry out logistical tasks such as printing conference materials and banners, designing the stage, and creating city tour itineraries for delegates. Fortunately, the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) stepped in.

"They helped to set up meetings when I was in Kuala Lumpur in May 2016 for a site visit to choose our venue and meet potential service providers," Thomas shared.

Asian Overland Services Tours & Travel was then selected as the local mediator for sourcing service providers, and to be the local DMC for tours.

As for marketing of the conference, acquiring sponsorship and press coverage, ICGN sought assistance from the hosts, who were instrumental in reaching new potential sponsor organisations. They introduced ICGN to the right people and also mentioned the event to all their appropriate contacts to help market the conference. Moreover, the Kuala Lumpur Retirement Fund and MyCEB also liaised with both the local and international press for coverage both before and after the event.

Event
ICGN Annual Conference Kuala Lumpur 2017

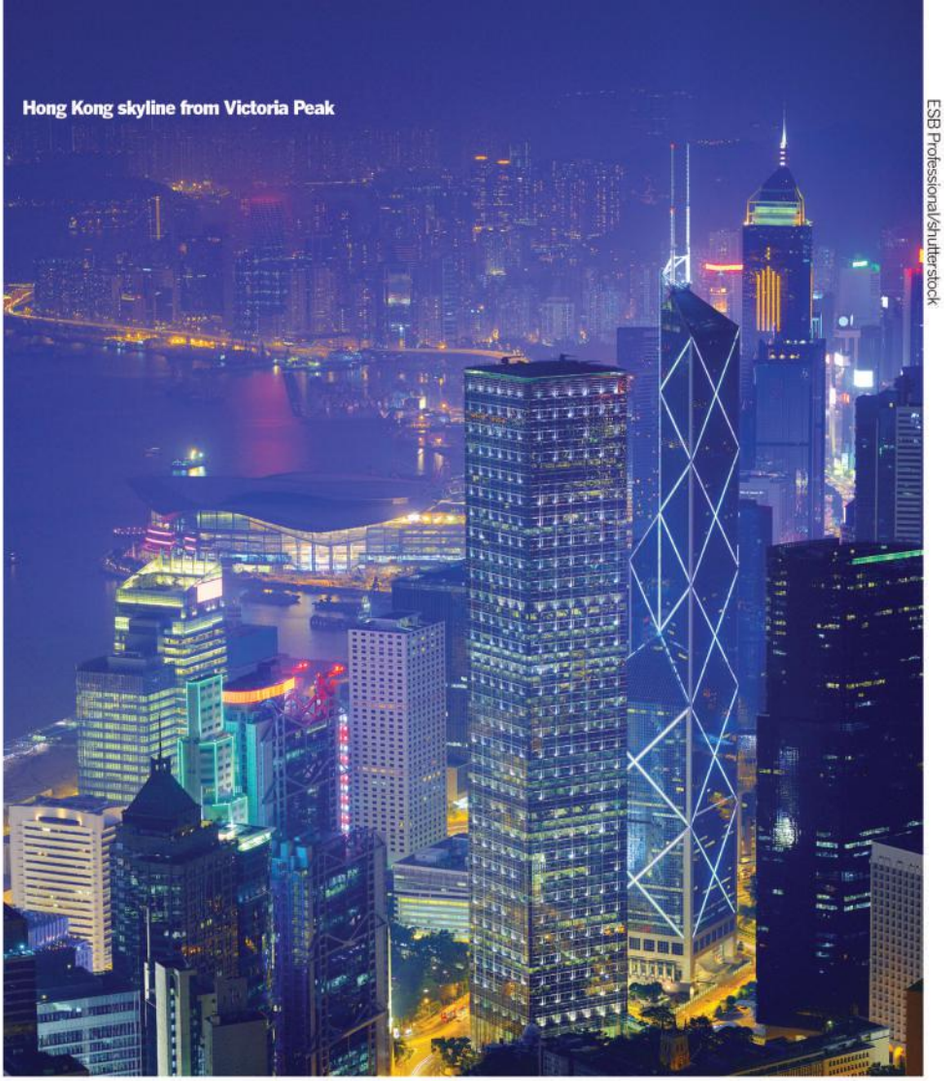
Organiser
The International Corporate Governance Network

Date
July 11-13, 2017

Venue
Shangri-La Hotel Kuala Lumpur

Number of attendees
442 people from over 20 countries

Challenges
Malaysia is seven hours ahead of the UK, which was challenging at times when quick responses were required. It was also difficult to source for local vendors to carry out logistical tasks.



Hong Kong skyline from Victoria Peak

ESB Professional/Shutterstock

Hardware headaches

Hong Kong has done well with association meetings and is now keen to get China's associations to meet in town, but a venue shortage could hamper growth potential, discovers Prudence Lui

Medical meetings featured strongly on Hong Kong's 2017 calendar of association events.

According to Hong Kong Tourism Board's MICE & cruise general manager, Kenneth Wong, Hong Kong won at least 10 medical events – eight of which were first to Hong Kong or Asia.

Wong said: "The largest is the 33rd Asia Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology Congress 2018 (and together with) Spine World Summit 2018 and 22nd International Congress of Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders, these events brought more than 15,000 medical professionals from all over the world to Hong Kong."

Besides the stronger performance in medical association meetings, Hong Kong also did well in attracting a variety of high-level gatherings across industries and disciplines including music, sports and telecommunication. Some of the noteworthy wins, according to Wong, are the 13th World Harp Congress, Critical Communications World and FIBA Mid-term Congress 2017.

For the year ahead, Hong Kong Tourism Board's vision is locked onto China.

Business event arrivals from the mainland rose 6.1 per cent year-on-year in 1H2017, and Wong noted that half of Hong Kong's business event arrivals for that period were from China.

Wong said: "We wish to attract more mainland association executives here, particularly those from the science and technology sectors, to meet their local counterparts for exchanges. Hopefully these mainland Chinese executives would bring their local meetings to Hong Kong, or maybe organise a big convention for Greater China here."

With this desire in mind, the business events division of Hong Kong Tourism Board – Meetings & Exhibitions Hong Kong (MEHK) – is putting in place policies and rolling out campaigns to target Chinese associations.

As well, MEHK is taking a broader view on growing the destination's number of association meetings. It is strengthen its partnerships with professional conference organisers and intermediaries, such as the American Society of Association Executives, HelmsBriscoe, the International Congress and Convention Association, and the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers, in order to leverage their communication platforms and networks to reach more potential customers.

Wong added: "On the government front, we work closely with various government bureaus to make Hong Kong the destination of choice for conferences in specific industries or areas. For such efforts, one of our closest partners is InvestHK.

"Other than government bureaus, MEHK has conducted proactive outreach programmes for local universities and institutions to assist local medical professionals in hosting a homegrown conference or bringing a global event to the city. Our close partners include the Chinese University Hong Kong, the University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong Academy of Medicine."

However, Gloria Slethaug, managing director of Connexus Travel (previously Swire Travel), thinks more efforts are needed. "The government is not aggressive enough in terms of sponsorships to (strengthen) bids and in the final stages of negotiations. Perhaps this is due to our constraints in venue and capacity," she said.

Hong Kong's limited hardware is also an obstacle brought up by Doris Lam, general manager of Momentous Asia Travel and Events.

"It is not easy to book a space at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, even if the event is two years away," Lam said, adding that hotels are not an option as few have ballrooms capable of accommodating gatherings of more than 400 delegates.

The high demand for hotel ballrooms also meant that conferences had to vacate premises for wedding banquets in the evening and build up again the next morning, or pay an overnight charge to avoid the trouble, lamented Lam.

Lam's wishlist is for more convention centres and a policy that gives association meetings booking priority at venues.

International Conference Consultants director Katerina Tam agreed that "more financial support from the government, attractive hotel and venue (prices), and infrastructure development will help bring more global association meetings to the city".

{ Need to know }

1 **New immigration procedures**
If you have delegates holding Indian passports, do note that the Hong Kong government has implemented online pre-arrival registration for Indian nationals since January 2017. A successful registration is required for Indian passport holders to enter Hong Kong visa-free. The registration is valid for six months with unlimited entry .

2 **Safety first**
Hong Kong takes pride in its safety records. Hong Kong is one of the 10 safest and most secure cities in the world to visit, which gives meeting planners greater confidence to host evening social functions in popular night spots like Lan Kwai Fong. In fact, travellers should never leave Hong Kong without first experiencing its vibrant and glamorous night life.

3 **Easy search**
The website of the Meetings & Exhibitions Hong Kong, the CVB of the destination, offers a hotel and venue search function. Users can see at one glance the largest venue and the number of guest-rooms in each property, where available. There is also a Request for Proposal tool.

4 **Destination promotion support**
Meetings & Exhibitions Hong Kong operates an online Download Centre that contains a well-stocked copyright-free photo gallery where meeting planners can easily obtain attractive destination images for use in destination promotion. Other useful marketing materials are also available at no charge.

{ Pre/Post }

Sail the last Chinese junk

Said to to be the last surviving Chinese junk in town, the *Aqualuna II* set sail in April 2017 and offers day and night harbour cruises. It can accommodate a maximum of 80 guests on its two decks.

A variety of itineraries are available, from 90-minute day cruises that go around Stanley on Hong Kong Island's south side to 45-minute sunset cruises to take in Hong Kong's famed city skyline.

Aqualuna II also sails to Lamma island and Cheung Chau Island.

Contact
aqualuna.com.hk
(852) 2116-8821

A Michelin-star bus ride

Not your typical sightseeing bus, Crystal Bus is one that brings a Michelin-starred dim sum experience along for the ride. The upper deck can accommodate 28 diners, while the lower deck is a VIP area for no more than 10 guests.

Three standard tours are available, and private hires are welcome.

Contact
www.crystalbus.com.hk
E-mail: info@crystalbus.com.hk

Serving up Hong Kong's traditions

The Peninsula Academy's Hong Kong Traditions Well Served programme takes you on a journey to meet and learn from artisans of the city's disappearing crafts. These include the creators of the bamboo-and-flower displays that adorn outdoor Chinese Opera theatres; paper-tearing artists; shadow-puppet masters, lion dancers and qipao-button crafters.

Contact
(852) 2926 2888
E-mail: reservationgcsc@peninsula.com

Hong Kong Tourism Board

Walk around the old town

Hong Kong Tourism Board's Old Town Central programme, launched in April 2017, features five thematic self-guided walking routes designed to take participants deep into the Central district, down streets and walkways to discover the heritage buildings and landmarks, arts and culture, lifestyle as well as dining and entertainment elements unique to the area.

Contact
(852) 2807-6543
Email: partnernet@hktb.com

See the city from a new spot

There's now yet another location to enjoy the sparkling city that is Hong Kong. The new Observatory Deck on the rooftop of Harbour City – Ocean Terminal's new extension – is open to the public for free. One can also choose to enjoy a meal at one of eleven restaurants in this five-storey complex while taking in views of the harbour.

Contact
www.harbourcity.com.hk

Tokyo's skyline at twilight

Rudy Balasko/shutterstock

Forward thinking

Aside from massive events, Tokyo needs to fill certain gaps to ensure continued success. By Kathryn Wortley

Tokyo hopes to attract more association meetings from 2018 after securing the BestCities' Global Forum in December 2017, the second of its kind to be held in one of the alliance's 12-member destinations.

Designed to showcase Tokyo to senior executives of international associations, the forum will feature presentations by association meeting experts and introduce attendees to Tokyo's top venues. These include the Tokyo International Forum, and its newest meeting space opened in October 2017, the Akasaka InterCity Conference, which has 12 rooms of various sizes.

Kazuko Toda, director of the business events team at Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau (TCVB), said participants would have "the chance to enjoy Japan's rich and unique culture" while meeting all partner cities in a "stunning location".

Alongside TCVB's collaboration with BestCities, which began in 2014 "to maintain exceptional standards in conference, event and association management in order to help clients achieve a meaningful impact", the Tokyo Metropolitan Government also provides support for association events in its long-term vision, from 2014 to 2024.

"The main focus is on providing financial and in-kind support for large associations to ensure success," said Toda, pointing out that Tokyo has successfully secured a large number of international association meetings in various fields until 2026. Among them is the 10th International Congress on Industrial Applied Mathematics in 2023, and the 11th Siggraph Asia in 2018.

But while the industry may reap rewards from current efforts to attract these events, convention centres report demand from associations in recent years has been stable.

Etsuko Sato of the public relations department at Tokyo International Forum said that although staff do not count the number of association events separately from business events, they have the impression there has been no big change in the movement of association events in the past few years.

Other event spaces also reported that it was difficult to assess changes in Tokyo's association meetings business, because they do not separate their events business by category.

Joris Vanzieleghem, director of business development at Destination Asia Japan, said that although Tokyo has been successful in attracting large association business up until 2026, it needs to do more for long-term success.

"There are not enough convention centres in Tokyo," he stated. "We need to develop venues and five-star hotels; we need to think five or 10 years ahead. Securing a conference with 10,000 attendees alone may kick-start developments and give an energy boost to Tokyo."

Vanzieleghem added that large events like the 2019 Rugby World Cup and 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games were important to Tokyo's future as well. However, he warned that the city needs to fill in the time gaps between such events and be aware of all possible impacts.

"There is a perception that Tokyo is not a place to go in 2020. After the Olympics finishes, there are still four months left in the year. Normally Tokyo can expect to host three or four events within this time span," he opined. "Cities light up when there is a large event and Tokyo needs that on a quarterly basis."

Vanzieleghem also suggested a greater need for flexibility from suppliers. Japan's domestic association events market is vast and proactive, often blocking off hotel space up to five years in advance, which results in hoteliers refusing to give quotes to others for that same space and date. Meanwhile, some hotels refuse to give quotes a year in advance.

That is why he believes that greater cooperation from Japanese partners would also encourage large international associations to bring their events to Tokyo.

Important, too, he added, is the need for Tokyo to really push the city's characteristics in the marketplace because it can be less aggressive in attracting association business than other types of business events.

"The main focus is on providing financial and in-kind support for large associations, to ensure success."

Kazuko Toda, director business events team, Tokyo Convention & Visitors Bureau

{ Need to know }

1 **Don't meet during Golden Week**
Avoid meeting in Tokyo during Japan's Golden Week when almost all Japanese workers are on holiday. Although the holidays in 2018 are May 3-5, many people add a few days' break to either side, leading to congestion, hotel room shortages, and raised prices for about a week.

2 **Respect cultural festivals**
Don't choose to do water activities at the seaside during Obon (celebrated August 13-15 in 2018) as it may cause a stir.

During Japan's annual Buddhist festival when ancestors' spirits return to the world to visit their relatives, the sea is believed to be dangerous.

3 **Special dietary requirements**
Many bars and restaurants in Tokyo remain unsure of what exactly constitutes a vegetarian or vegan dish. Some dishes may still contain meat or fish stock, ham, or dairy products. Be sure to confirm all the ingredients when making your order if you have specific dietary needs.

4 **Cash is king**
Bring sufficient cash for your trip or bring enough to last until you might be able to access a bank. While credit cards are increasingly accepted, Japan is a cash-dominated society and many shops and bars, particularly local ones, will not accept plastic. Cashpoints that accept foreign cards can also be hard to find.

{ Pre/Post }

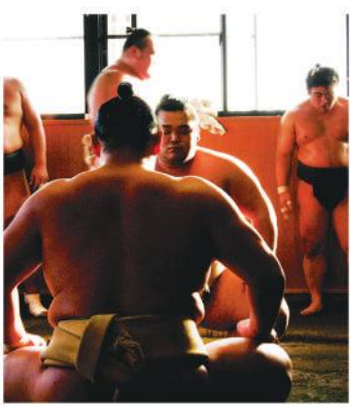
An ancient form of wrestling

Visit the morning practice of a sumo stable (training centre). Visitors can watch the wrestlers train and observe the rules and regulations during the 2.5-hour sumo practice. Note that one cannot talk, eat, drink, chew gum or take flash photography during the event.

Held at Arashio Beya near Hamacho Station, visitors are advised to call the stable the day before because whether or not practice will be held depends on the wrestlers' condition.

Practice is held almost every day except in March, July, November, and following grand tournaments.

Contact
www.arashio.net/tour_e.html
(81) 3-3666-7646



Eat your way around the city

Join a food tour to experience Tokyo's culinary Golden Gai. Famous both as an area of architectural interest and for its nightlife, it is composed of a network of six narrow alleys, connected by passageways.

More than 200 small pubs and eateries are squeezed here, making it one of the most densely packed nightlife areas in the world. The area is well known as a meeting place for musicians, artists, directors, writers, academics, and celebrities.

Contact
www.arigatojapan.co.jp/packages/golden-gai-tour/

Attend a Kabuki performance

Meaning sing, dance and skill, Kabuki is a classical dance-drama known for its stylised drama and elaborate make-up worn by some of its performers.

Most performances consist of a number of plays but if you are short of time, a ticket for a single kabuki play is available at the Kabuki-za Theatre in Tokyo. Seats are at the back of the theatre but provide a flavour of the drama. English earphone guides offer translation of dialogue and lyrics.

Contact
(81) 3-3545-6800

An iconic fish market

Look in on Tsukiji Fish Market's tuna auction. Open daily except for Sundays and the occasional Wednesday, the market's opening hours are 03.30 to 06.00, and there are two groups of 60 people who are allowed to watch the auction, the first between 05.25 and 05.45, and the second between 5.50 and 06.10. To be one of those 120 people, you need to arrive between 03.00 and 04.00. During peak tourist times (spring and fall), both sessions may fill up before 05.00.

Contact
5-2-1 Tsukiji, Chuo-ku

A traditional tea ceremony

Happo-en's teahouse Muan offers two Japanese tea ceremony experiences. Tencha serves matcha green tea along with the season's confectionery while Otemae (by reservation only) gives a lesson in the proper etiquette of enjoying Japanese tea. Muan was built in the Meiji period (1868–1912) by a Yokohama-based merchant.

Contact
www.happo-en.com/banquet/plan_en/detail.php?p=837

Peruse Japanese artefacts

Located near Ueno Station, The Tokyo National Museum collects, houses, and displays a comprehensive collection of artwork and antiquities from Japan as well as other Asian countries.

The permanent collection comprises some 600 various works such as paintings, calligraphy, sculptures, decorative arts and archaeology. It is also home to the Kuroda Memorial Hall, which houses a selection of oil painting and drawings that are free to view. Opening hours are 09.30 to 17.00, with last admission at 16.30.

Contact
www.tnm.jp

Night view of Marina Bay

wolfmaster13/shutterstock

Reinventing the business experience

Singapore shows that she is serious about being a centre of association activities, through stronger association industry collaboration and improved support scheme. By Pamela Chow

While Singapore remains an attractive destination for association events, the city continues to reinvent its policies and offerings according to market trends.

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB), which oversees the Singapore Exhibition & Convention Bureau, is beefing up alliances with international partners to raise its global business events profile.

In October 2017, STB and Maritz Global Events formed a partnership to pull in events from the North American market. With this move, STB will leverage on Maritz Global Events – through its proprietary Experience Design Labs technology and other methods such as in-depth interviews – to create a product that appeals to meeting planners in the region.

Jeannie Lim, executive director, conventions, meetings & incentive travel, STB, told *TTGassociations*: "Business travellers and delegates are, more than ever, seeking immersive and transformational meeting experiences. As meeting planners must find novel ways to engage their clients in an increasingly connected world, the partnership will enable meeting planners to be more creative, and push the boundaries of what business events can be."

STB is also stepping up its incentive programmes for association conferences. The In Singapore Incentives & Rewards Programme for Europe and North America will be extended for an additional year to December 31, 2018.

The programme has been updated to include "more generous air ticket offers and engaging experiences", commented Lim.

Additionally, STB in May 2017 enhanced the Singapore MICE Advantage Programme to include new and improved benefits, which can help organisers and visitors gain a differentiated and seamless business event experience in Singapore.

The country is also a member of the BestCities Global Alliance, a network of 12 premier convention bureaus who partner associations to help them achieve success through international events.

STB's efforts have helped event suppliers pull in record crowds. For example, Sands Expo and Convention Centre hosted a record number of 50 association meetings in 2017, of which five association meetings were major new-to-Singapore events, shared Mike Lee, vice president, sales, Marina Bay Sands.

He said: "I am proud of Singapore for its achievements within the global association meetings space… Our city-state sees itself as a knowledge capital of the world, evident in the government's focus on promoting research and development, and support for the growth of high-value industries.

"Singapore offers a compelling environment for these high-level association meetings to host their events here."

Still, Lee acknowledges that the industry needs to "constantly innovate product offerings to the association market" whose demands are evolving.

He explained: "We must 'wow' potential clients with experiences that they will not get elsewhere in the world. As an industry, we must constantly challenge ourselves and grow our human talent."

{ Need to know }

1 Watch out for the races
Avoid meeting in Singapore in the middle of September when the Singapore Grand Prix race is on. Road closures and spikes in hotel rates are common then.

2 New passionate new identity
Under the new destination brand *Passion Made Possible*, The Progressor features industry-focused programmes, such as site visits and networking sessions, for industries such as applied health sciences and advanced manufacturing.

3 Meet green
The city-state has a sustainable events initiative, under which planners can source for green venues and programmes. Visit www.visitsingapore.com/mice/en/why-singapore/be-sustainable

4 Note the speaker tax
Event organisers have to pay taxes for each speaker who is not a Singapore resident. Organisers are required to withhold a percentage of that payment for tax, to be paid to the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore.

{ Pre/Post }

apiguide/shutterstoc

Step into these gardens of a different kind

A prominent icon of Singapore, the lush sprawl of Gardens by the Bay is a relaxing respite in the heart of the city. Visitors can wander through the outdoor trails and admire the man-made Supertrees, and enjoy the cool air within the Flower Dome and Cloud Forest where special exhibitions are often held

Contact
www.gardensbythebay.com.sg

Feel on top of the world

Take in a different view of Singapore from up in the sky on a cable car ride to the top of Mount Faber, where delegates can gather over evening drinks and dinner. Mount Faber is home to several dining options, such as the newly opened Dusk Restaurant & Bar and the romantic sky dining concept Dining on Cloud 9.

Contact
www.onefabergroup.com

Dusk Restaurant and Bar

Carry on and cook

Looking for a unique meeting venue that comes with a memorable ice-breaker? Consider CulinaryOn's private event packages, which can be followed by a fun cooking class. Its meeting space can take up to 60 pax, and is attached to a cooking studio where participants can compete for the masterchef title.

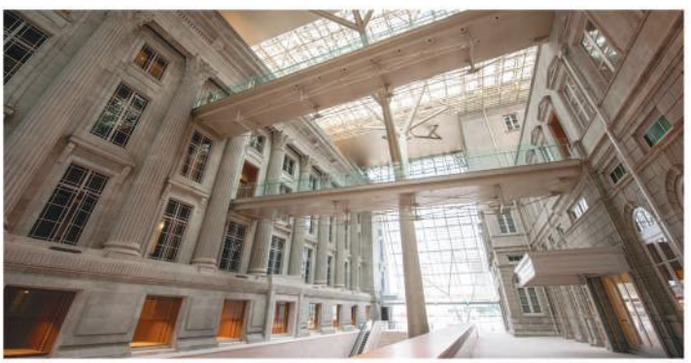
Contact
welcome@culinaryon.sg

Savour the wild side of Singapore

Go wild with Singapore's friendly furry inhabitants at the Singapore Zoo, a 26ha wildlife park nestled within the Mandai rainforest. It is home to more than 2,800 animals. Don't miss out on popular animal shows like the Elephants at Work and Play Show. Closely located to the Zoo are the Jurong Bird Park, Night Safari and River Safari.

Contact
www.zoo.com.sg

tristan tan/shutterstock



Explore an artistic world in conserved environs

Enjoy the diverse modern art offerings in Singapore and South-east Asia in this museum, housed in two restored national monuments: the City Hall and the former Supreme Court. The Gallery houses both long-term and seasonal exhibitions, often in collaboration with international museums. Its latest show features famous Impressionist works from Musée d'Orsay.

Contact
www.nationalgallery.sg

Adelaide Convention Centre, the first purpose-built convention centre in the country

arnophoto_au/shutterstock

Adelaide's vaulting ambitions

The city has found various ways to beef up its offerings and are employing soft strategies to stay competitive, but there is still room to improve. By Adelaine Ng

Adelaide may be the longest established destination for association meetings in Australia, but she's certainly not showing any signs of greying. Rather, the city has a new vibrancy that has both stakeholders and delegates waxing lyrical about the transformation underway.

"Delegates are raving about the city," enthused founder of Adelaide-based associations PCO The Meeting People, Lara Malcolm. "They are loving the little bars, laneways and vibrant life that's on offer in the city especially at night. That's a massive change for me as I don't think I would have heard that five years ago."

Adelaide was the first Australian city to construct a purpose-built convention centre in 1987, although the Adelaide Convention Bureau has been active at bidding for conferences for 43 years.

In recent times, they've upped the game with a A$5 billion (US$3.8 billion) makeover along the city's riverbank, revealing an upgraded Festival Centre, an expanded convention centre, and the largest bio-medical institute in the Southern Hemisphere. Not to mention creating those laneways Malcolm mentioned and encouraging the set up of smaller eateries and bars to bring life to the after-hours in the city.

It's a smart move not just for tourism. All this makes Adelaide more attractive to association meeting delegates and planners, who make up the bread and butter – 80 per cent – of the Adelaide Convention Bureau's (ACB) business.

"It's set up perfectly for the delegate," Damien Kitto, ACB's CEO, pointed out. "There are almost 2,000 hotel rooms directly across the road from the Adelaide Convention Centre, which adjoins the new BioMedical precinct, and is a close walk to the laneways and bars in the city."

The numbers do speak for themselves. Kitto shared that the past four years have been particularly successful, with a 53 per cent increase on the economic value of association conventions secured by the bureau, representing A$725 million in business activity for the industry.

But while much of the attention has gone to the physical remake of Adelaide, perhaps the real secret sauce to the city's popularity with associations lies in the soft strategies employed by the Adelaide Convention Centre.

Its director for convention and exhibition sales, Simon Burgess, reveals that its service has adapted over the years from being purely a convention space for rent, to working with associations as a partner in their marketing.

"Associations have

"(Adelaide is) set up perfectly for the delegate. There are almost 2,000 hotel rooms directly across the road from the Adelaide Convention Centre, which adjoins the new BioMedical precinct, and is a close walk to the laneways and bars in the city."

Damien Kitto
CEO,
Adelaide Convention Bureau

sometimes been in a situation where they have to review what their relevance is, especially in an information age where information – that used to be provided at these meetings – is now readily available. It becomes a challenge to maintain membership numbers or attract the younger end of the audience," said Burgess.

"What they want us to do is help them access our public relations channels so they can interact with the community. And they're interested in creating a legacy, to have some sort of meaningful end result to a conference," he added.

However, Kitto was quick to correct any suggestions that the path to success is guaranteed.

"It's a great success story, but there are more destinations now that are very hungry to host global association events with some very large convention centres being constructed, particularly across Asia and the Middle East," he shared.

"(Meanwhile), the conventions pie hasn't grown. That's why it has become more challenging despite Australia's great product, and is one of the reasons why we're slipping down the ICCA rankings. And that's why we all have to work harder than ever".

Currently, Australia ranks 16 on ICCA's list, having dropped in recent times after enjoying top 10 status for a prolonged period.

Still, there are silver linings. While Adelaide's strategy has been focused on attracting small- to medium-sized associations more suited to the size of the city, Malcolm said she feels more confident the bigger ones will now be coming to Adelaide because of the city's transformation. Recently, the city hosted its largest ever business event, the 68th International Astronautical Congress with 4,470 delegates.

Nevertheless, Malcolm believes there are areas the ACB can do better.

"I think suppliers that are a bit out of the box and don't have big marketing budgets to help themselves could be linked and showcased a little better. We have an abundance of amazing produce that could serve as conference gifts for example. We just need to go that step further," she concluded.

The Three Rivers Fountain in Victoria Square

aeyjbx/shutterstock

"Associations have sometimes been in a situation where they have to review what their relevance is, especially in an information age where information – that used to be provided at these meetings – is now readily available. It becomes a challenge to maintain membership numbers or attract the younger end of the audience."

Simon Burgess
Director for convention and exhibition sales, Adelaide Convention Centre

{ Need to know }

1 A partner you can count on
The Adelaide Convention Bureau (ACB) is a reliable resource and partner for organising events as they work closely with hotels, merchants and tourist attractions. They can even cordon off streets for a more exclusive reception experience.

They're also closely associated with the Adelaide Venue Management which runs the Convention Centre, Stadium and Entertainment Centre, and has a catering arm.

2 Book tours online
To make choosing and booking post-conference activities even easier, the ACB has an online touring booking portal. There, delegates and organisers can peruse options based on time available, costs and transport logistics.

Go to www.adelaideconvention.com.au, follow the links within the Adelaide Planner's Guide, and choose the Delegate Experience tab.

3 The best time to visit
March is a big month for cultural festivals in Adelaide, making it the most expensive period for hotel bookings but at the same time providing the most opportunities for incorporating entertainment into an event. Weather-wise, the best time to visit Adelaide is March to May, or September to November when rainfall is rare and temperatures mild.

4 The city is delegate-friendly
Within the city, delegates can have access to free Wi-Fi, as well as free bus and tram services which connect key locations like the Central Market and Entertainment Centre. This January, these services will extend to museums and the Botanic Gardens. For more information, drop by the Adelaide Visitor Information Centre.

{ Pre/Post }

To market, to market

Adelaide Central Market has been a top choice for visitors since it opened in 1869. With more than 80 stalls, the market is rich with traditions, gourmet experiences, and little surprises to be discovered at every turn. Think local gin makers, crocodile meat, edible ants and English Stilton. Head right next door to find the city's Chinatown, which has a history of migrants from Singapore and Vietnam.

Contact

www.adelaidecentralmarket.com.au

Going down the grapevine

A trip to Adelaide isn't complete without a visit to Penfolds, one of the world's most iconic wine brands and the original home of the legendary Grange. The estate, located just 15 minutes from the CBD, also boasts two award-winning restaurants. For an unforgettable experience, join the Ultimate Penfolds Tour which takes visitors to the Magill Estate winery, vintage cellar and underground drives, before ending with a private tasting of Penfolds' most awarded wines including one vintage of Grange.

Contact

magill.cellardoor@penfolds.com

Dine in a historic town

The historic German town of Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills is a highlight for many visitors. While there, dine at The Haus which offers German specialities, pizzas, a generous breakfast menu and a beer garden.

Their signature Wagyu Beef Brisket dish – it has a 9+ marbling score – that is slow-cooked for 12 hours in Canadian maple syrup and spices is highly recommended and worth the 30-minute wait. The Haus is also a conference and events venue for up to 200 guests.

Contact

functions@haushahndorf.com.au

Up close with South Australia's iconic animals

Observe and interact with Australia's native animals at this park, including Tasmanian Devils, wallabies, kangaroos and koalas in their natural environment. Any handling of koalas however, are subject to their health so if this is high on your priority list, it is best to check the park's website for updates. The attraction is located on the picturesque Adelaide Hills, a 20-minute drive from the city.

Contact

www.clelandwildlifepark.sa.gov.au

A memorable taste of native Australian produce

Bush tucker (also called bushfood) is given a very glam treatment at Orana, the restaurant that grabbed headlines after winning Australia's Restaurant of the Year by Gourmet Traveller in 2017 – the first restaurant outside Sydney and Melbourne to do so in 20 years.

Orana, which is an Aboriginal word for "welcome", showcases indigenous ingredients and traditions with a dinner tasting menu of 18 to 20 courses. This represents years of conversations and food research with Aboriginal communities on a delicious plate.

Contact

restaurantorana.com

IT&CM events
Leading MICE Events in Asia-Pacific, China and India

association days @ IT&CM Events

Educational Forums • Business Appointments •
Destination Presentations • Hosted Networking Luncheons & Dinners

IT&CM 中国(上海) CHINA
国际会奖旅游博览会 | Incentive Travel & Conventions, Meetings

20 - 22 March 2018
The Leading International MICE Event in China
Shanghai, China
www.itcmchina.com

IT&CM Asia
Incentive Travel & Conventions, Meetings
Incorporating Luxury Travel

18 - 20 September 2018
The Leading International MICE Event Centered in Asia-Pacific
Bangkok, Thailand
www.itcma.com

Curated Programmes Tailored Just For Association Executives & Professionals, Held During **Each of Our Leading MICE Events**

Endorsing and Supporting Associations

AACVB · euromic · IAPCO · ICCA Supported Show · PCO World PCO Alliance · PATA · PCAAE · Site · SCEIA · Shanghai · 上海市旅游局 Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administration · M.I.C.E.

TTG | Events
A Business Group of TTG Asia Media

1 Science Park Road #04-07 The Capricorn Singapore Science Park II Singapore 117528
Tel: +65 6375 7575 • Fax: +65 6536 0896 • Email: itcmevents@ttgasia.com • www.ttgasiamedia.com

TTGmice

ttgmice.com

Exclusive Content

More Postings

Easier Access To Top News

NEWLY LAUNCHED

TOGGLE BETWEEN BOTH SITES WITH EASE

TTGmice PLANNER

planner.ttgmice.com

Enhanced Event Planning Experience

Research & Issue RFPs Easily

TTG Publishing Travel Trade

A Business Group of TTG Asia Media