

micenet

NEW ZEALAND DIGITAL

September 2011 www.micenz.net

- ▶ Christchurch Airport
- ▶ Quiet kick-off
- ▶ New venues, new opportunities
- ▶ Corporate tree change

Those Aussies just love New Zealand

Independent research into the meetings and events industry in Australia by Micromex Research and commissioned by micenet AUSTRALIA magazine has revealed New Zealand is on top of a planner's wish list when it comes to international events.

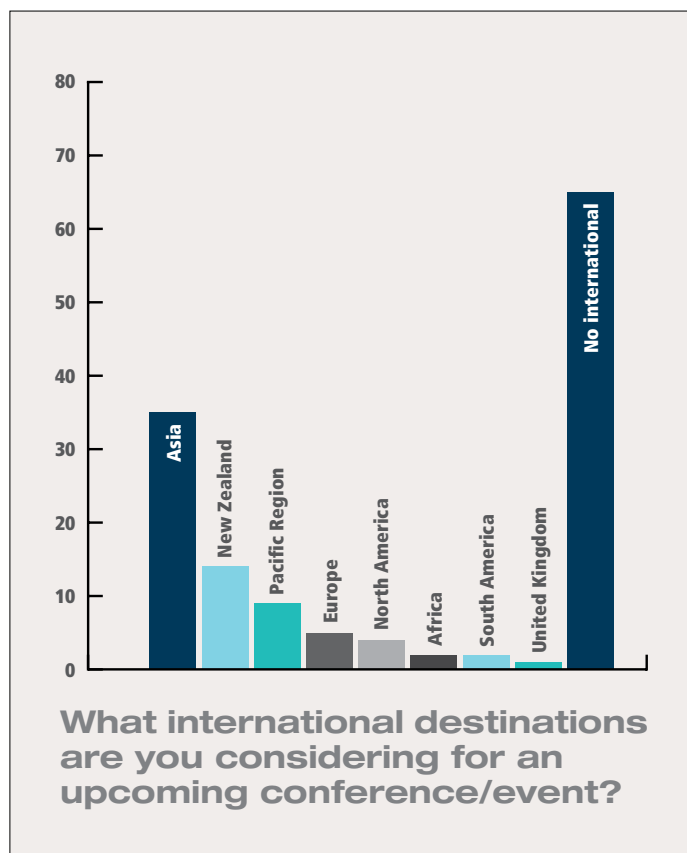
The online study of almost 1000 readers of micenet magazine conducted in July this year provided a raft of interesting findings that give a clear indication of the current state of the industry and the outlook for the remainder of 2011 and beyond. On the international front 35 per cent of survey respondents are considering international destinations for upcoming events, with Asia a clear leader (35 per cent) and New Zealand (14 per cent) the most popular. Sydney (32 per cent) and Melbourne (28 per cent) continue to be the pick of the domestic destinations survey respondents are considering for upcoming events. Despite the ongoing economic doom and gloom and the high

Australia dollar it appears as if many events are going ahead albeit with slightly reduced attendees. On average, study participants organise or book 25 events per year, with the majority (46 per cent) having an annual budget of between \$0 and \$50,000. The average annual expenditure/budget for meetings and events was: up to \$50,000 (46 per cent); \$51-\$100k (21 per cent); \$101-\$250k (14 per cent); \$251-\$500k (11 per cent); \$501-\$1m (five per cent); and \$1m+ (three per cent). The survey also found that 72 per cent of respondents believe expenditure on events will remain the same for the next 12 months. Good news is that 22 per cent of respondents believe expenditure on events will increase with only six per cent expecting a decrease. (In the 2009 Micromex study nine per cent expected an increase and 27 per cent expected a decrease). The average number of event attendees has fallen, albeit slightly compared to 2009. In 2011 the average number of attendees per conference or event is 143. In 2009 the average number of attendees per conference or event was 149, and in the 2007 study

conducted by Micromex Research on behalf of micenet magazine, the average number of attendees per conference or event was 158.

Exhibitions aplenty
Industry exhibitions continue to be

▶ [Click here for more info](#)



Christchurch widens offerings



Christchurch & Canterbury Convention Bureau is reminding meeting and event planners that the destination remains open for business.

While admitting much of the central city's conference venues and accommodation are out of action, the Christchurch & Canterbury Convention Bureau is quick to remind planners that there remains plenty of options beyond the city limits.

Destinations including the nearby Hanmer Springs, Ashburton, Methven, and Terrace Downs are an easy drive from the airport and all offer excellent facilities in which to mix business with pleasure. The Australian rugby team is currently in Hanmer Springs (September 24-7) following their game against the United States in Wellington on Friday. The Wallabies were provided with 30 mountain bikes for team members to use to get around the

▶ [Click here for more info](#)

Pan Pacific shuts down incentive division

Inbound tourism operator Pan Pacific Travel Australia Pty Ltd has closed its incentive travel division citing commercial reasons, with three or four staff losing their jobs including well-known industry identity Narelle Falting.

A Pan Pacific spokesman said the reality was that incentives out

▶ [Click here for more info](#)

micenet

NEW ZEALAND DIGITAL

September 2011 www.micenz.net

► Click here for page 1 – contents

Quiet kick-off

By Edwina Storie

Wellington isn't brimming with quite as much event business as it is excitement during the Rugby World Cup.

The buzz of the biggest tournament New Zealand has ever hosted has electrified Wellington, although at this point in time business is a little quieter than desired.

Positively Wellington tourism chief executive David Perks says the first two weeks have been electric.

"There are people from all around the globe proudly wearing their country's colours, enjoying the city's Festival of Carnivale events and many of Wellington's attractions are busier than normal for this time of year."

The tournament has been an attraction for both leisure and business travellers.

"Wellington has been seeing a number of incentive groups through from South Africa and

► Click here for more info



Skyline chief Ross Davidson offloads the ZeroDe bike at the top of the gondola.

Queenstown welcomes new bike park

By Edwina Storie

A new bike park unlike any other in the Southern Hemisphere opened in Queenstown in September.

The Queenstown Bike Park is part of the Ben Lomond Recreational Reserve, and is a collaboration between the Queenstown District Council, the Queenstown Mountain Bike Club, Skyline and Cookie Time Ltd.

Riders are ferried 790 metres above sea level by gondola to

the top of a steep pine-covered hill and can then ride down 30 kilometres of purpose-built mountain bike tracks.

There is a 500-metre descent to the bottom via exhilarating bike trails for all standards of riders that weave through the trees and crevices of the mountain.

There are rough and groomed trails, off-camber goat tracks, rock gardens and a natural track. The runs are graded green, blue and black for beginners through to advanced, just like ski runs.

► Click here for more info

Auckland activity aplenty

There's still time for corporate rugby fanatics to get their fix of mixing a little business with pleasure says Auckland Convention Bureau manager, Anna Hayward.

Excitement is growing on and off the pitches of Auckland. Fans are lapping up some great matches and the city's conference and incentive sector is gearing up for what it hopes is a bumper period. Auckland Convention Bureau manager, Anna Hayward confirms Auckland will host

► Click here for more info

Christchurch Airport receives international accolades

By Edwina Storie

Christchurch's new airport has hit the ground running since its launch, recently receiving a spate of awards.

The first phase of the airport only opened in May with the final stage expected to open imminently.

At the 2011 Future Travel Experience Awards in Vancouver during September, the airport was awarded international accolades, being named as having the 'Best Arrivals Experience'.

When visitors get off an international flight at Christchurch Airport they walk through airbridges and themed video initiatives that wrap around

► Click here for more info

Hot pools cool stress

By Edwina Storie

Queenstown's Onsen Hot Pools' private baths soothe the mind and body through hydrotherapy.

Not all delegates enjoy trudging through the countryside or scaling cliff faces for their mid-meeting activities. And when they do, they appreciate a rejuvenating experience afterwards. Onsen Hot Pools is a relaxing activity for small incentive, meeting or

partner groups who can unwind in warm pure water surrounded by spectacular scenery.

Sitting high on a cliffside in Queenstown, the venue overlooks the magnificent Shotover River. The bubbling baths enjoy breathtaking alpine scenery and are the perfect vantage point to watch the jet boats on the river below.

The hydrotherapy of soaking in a hot pool combined with magnificent scenery

soothes sore muscles and joints, supports the circulatory system, aids sleep, clears metabolic

► Click here for more info



micenet

NEW ZEALAND DIGITAL

September 2011 www.micenz.net

► Click here for page 1 – contents



Hilton Surfers Paradise.

New venues, new opportunities

By Brad Foster

New venues and property upgrades are giving event planners plenty more options in Australia.

It seems that every way you look in Australia something is happening to hotels, venues and meetings facilities with a raft of upgrades, redevelopments and openings in recent times or just around the corner.

In Sydney there is plenty of talk about expansion to the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre although nothing has been put to bed just yet. But just behind the centre, The Star, formerly Star City Casino is certainly taking shape. The property was relaunched in a glittering event recently with celebrities including Russell Crowe and Olivia Newton John in attendance. Hollywood A-lister Leonardo DiCaprio even turned up late for a look-see at what the new venue had to offer.

The \$870 million transformation of Star City includes the re-orientation of the building to embrace Sydney Harbour and the city skyline. Made up of 147 flags of clear glass, The Star's new harbour-side glass

façade formed a giant screen to showcase a dazzling light and visual arts display created by internationally acclaimed events producer David Grant. Around 250 guests were picked up by motor yachts from The Rocks and brought to Pyrmont Bay where they walked a red carpet to a viewing platform to watch the light show before dining at two of The Star's new signature restaurants – BLACK by ezard and Balla.

“The Star redevelopment represents one of the biggest tourism and entertainment investments in Australia today.”

Once complete, The Star will boast more than 20 restaurants, bars and cafes, a new luxury boutique hotel and 16 room spa, upscale retail collection, a 4000 capacity entertainment centre and world class gaming areas.

Larry Mullin, CEO of Echo Entertainment Group, which owns and operates The Star, says the redevelopment represents

one of the biggest tourism and entertainment investments in Australia today.

“By forging partnerships with leading chefs, retailers, designers and entertainers, in The Star we're creating the sort of integrated entertainment destination that will drive both domestic and international tourism,” he said.

Brisbane's darling

Not to be outdone, the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre is putting the finishing touches to its extension for a November opening. The extension is designed to meet the increasing demand for smaller and medium-sized meetings with 43 conventions already being confirmed for the new space. BCEC communications manager, Gail Sawyer says the expanded centre will be Australia's most flexible meetings and events venue. “It will be Australia's only convention centre with three stand-alone tiered plenary halls able to accommodate from 200 to 8000,” she said. Two auditoria will host 400 and 600 guests with accompanying foyer space, while an additional 44 meeting rooms and event spaces will include speakers' facilities and private boardrooms that allow delegates to 'own' the floor. The

extension will complement the centre's current facilities that include The Great Hall which accommodates 4000 to 8000 through its tiered design, four column-free exhibition halls, plaza gallery, speaker's presentation centre and a myriad of meetings rooms. Visit www.bcec.com.au to learn more.

Gold on the Gold Coast

Nearby, Jupiters Hotel & Casino is going through a metamorphosis of its own with a \$350 million makeover. Part of this includes a \$20 million theatre upgrade with the redevelopment doubling its capacity to 2000 seated or 2300 general admission guests. Jupiters' managing director Frederic Luvisutto said the investment into the venue would make the casino an integral part of the Gold Coast brand and drive national and international business to the city. The theatre's redevelopment will include a balcony level with up to 300 seats, VIP hospitality rooms for pre and post event functions, new bars and toilets on the balcony and orchestra level, a purpose-built integrated movie projection booth, multi-purpose mechanical thrust

► Click here for more info

micenet

NEW ZEALAND DIGITAL

September 2011 www.micenz.net

► [Click here for page 1 – contents](#)

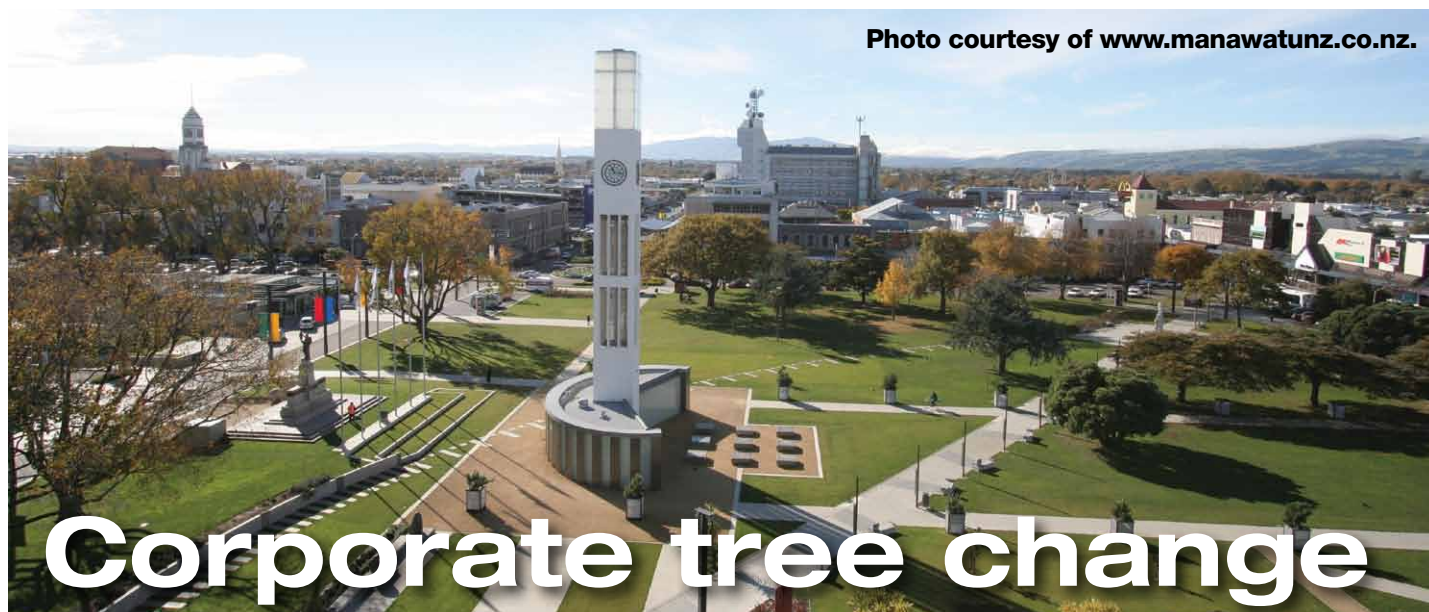


Photo courtesy of www.manawatunz.co.nz.

Corporate tree change

By Edwina Storie

Palmerston North and Manawatu on the North Island allow delegates to escape the city for a productive getaway.

With franchise hotels and convention centres similar in most big cities, escaping the urban jungle to somewhere a little more unique can provide the change of scenery required to clear the mind and get down to business.

For local New Zealanders, Palmerston North and Manawatu make for a tree change that still resonates with a familiar, homely feeling, while providing a whole new experience for internationals. The boutique destinations host independent venues that create a unique experience with a touch of community atmosphere and country hospitality.

The benefits of conferencing in Palmerston North and Manawatu have recently been noticed, having previously being under the misconception they were limited on activities and atmosphere. On the contrary, both regions are brimming with unique character and entertainment.

Destination Manawatu's marketing manager Phil Hildred says the organisation's strategies are

starting to make a breakthrough in raising awareness of the region's attractions and potential.

Mr Hildred says through these efforts, the city has attracted cultural and business events such as the New Zealand Jazz & Blues Festival which adds to the area's character, and will in turn attract more corporate visitors.

"Only a couple of weeks ago Palmerston North successfully secured the rights to host the UCI Men's Cycle Classic Tour which attracts international cycle teams and helps support the region's [identity as] 'the best place to ride a bike'." Destination Manawatu is continuing to promote the potential of Palmerston North and Manawatu as refreshing and unique MICE destinations.

Being aware of the hidden gems of the area, the organisation endeavours to take the stress out of organising accommodation and venues through special group booking services.

"Not only can you do this in Palmerston North City, but you'll receive a percentage of the accommodation costs back to put into your event. No strings attached," Mr Hildred says.

The Two Towns

Palmerston North is a vibrant and compact city with accommodation and event venues sitting close together. The cultural hub hosts

the unique New Zealand Rugby Museum along with large education and scientific institutes such as the Centre of Food Innovation.

The nearby Manawatu is a region of picturesque valleys, scenic cycling routes, and beautiful country estates. Many of the grandeur estates date back to the late 1800s and still stand in style, surrounded by manicured gardens.

Relaxation for the people of Palmerston North and Manawatu is found by getting back to nature. Its corporate country retreats that dot the area allow teams to experience an environment that is a world away from the office.

These country homesteads sit on endless blocks of bushland and

are perfect for regional incentive trips highlighted by horse riding, spa treatments and gourmet feasts made with local produce.

Retreat and relax

River Valley

Tucked within the Rangitikei District is River Valley – an intimate lodge that is the base for nature expeditions and a place for delegates to relax and focus, away from the bustle of the city. River Valley takes the classroom outside for teams to learn while camping, rafting, fishing, horse trekking and bonding over campfire.

► [Click here for more info](#)

