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# perth's FIRST A HIT



**FOR AN INAUGURAL business event, the Perth Event Show pulled a crowd, drawing more than 1300 pre-registered delegates and over 68 exhibitors to the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre last month. STORY BY GRAEME KEMLO**

Staged by CMS Events, the 24 year-old company that is also behind Perth's Autumn Festival, Geographe Crush Food and Wine Festival, and the Gluten Free Food & Healthy Living Expo, the Perth Event Show was billed as "the space to connect". Director Richard Campbell's philosophy was "touch it, discuss it, smell it, squeeze it, try it and like it" - urging delegates to support the exhibitors and do business face to face.

*mice.net* AUSTRALIA magazine attended as a Preferred Media Partner alongside hotels and other meetings venues, destinations and industry suppliers. Your correspondent was among a small media contingent who had journeyed west.

As added incentive to attend, visitors including corporate and association planners, PCOs and executive assistants, had an opportunity to win a three-night \$1655 getaway to Eco Beach Resort Broome.

Two presentation areas were available - a main stage and a seminar area. The main stage featured some entertainment and motivational drumming sessions from Human Rhythms, as well as keynotes including inspirational Beechworth baker Tom O'Toole, Antarctic research leader Rachael Robertson, and West Australian mountaineer Patrick Hollingworth on his Everest ascent.

The smaller seminar space provided information from Perth Convention Bureau on hosting and funding business events, staging a green event and a session on mobile apps (smartphone applications) for events presented by New Zealand firm, ShowGizmo. ShowGizmo's Marie-Claire Andrews presented a session about her IT platform, which was being used to electronically connect buyers and sellers capturing the square barcode on each booth, known as a "QR Code". She presented some numbers on our use of mobile devices - 6.8 billion people on the planet and 4.6 billion mobile phone subscriptions. Mobile, she said, was the seventh mass market tool after print, recordings, radio, TV, film and the internet. As the new communications channel it would outpace PCs by 2013 as the

most common internet access device globally. For the meetings industry she said mobile apps would "extend the brand and life of your event...providing analytics in real time to respond to feedback...offering extra buzz through Facebook and Digg to amplify your message".

Anne-Marie said that while a recent breakdown of smartphone marketshare showed iPhone at 26 per cent, Blackberry 34 per cent, Google Android 27 per cent and Microsoft Windows nine per cent, she believed Android would shortly become the most popular. Unlike Melbourne's AIME event with its scheduled meeting timeslots for buyers to meet suppliers, it was free and easy in Perth, but that did not deter some visitors requesting proposals from hotels for 2012 meetings and events.

Some attendees were simply looking for ideas, among them Jason Fair, director of commercial operations for the Western Australian Museum, which has event space among its various venues. To him the Perth Event Show provided some insight into how a government agency might showcase its products and services.

Perth Convention Bureau's stand was busy with most staff in attendance, including Paul Beeson who had just been announced as the next PCB CEO following the resignation of Christine Allen. Paul took the chance to grab a photo with his enthusiastic team.

Organiser Richard Campbell said he'd had great reaction to the show from exhibitors and attendees, although he's wondering why 400 pre-registered attendees did not show up on the day.

"Anecdotally we know some business was done by hotels and suppliers and I have three good leads for other events... it was a good first show and after a debrief we will revise it slightly for next year and most likely we will open with an industry lunch and keynote speaker," he said.

Dates for next year are already set for Thursday, May 16 and Friday, May 17, abandoning the Saturday, which he says was light on visitors this year. He anticipates 110 exhibitors in 2012.