

AIME 2014 REVIEW

A winning MICE Expo for 22 Years

Our company Virtual Assistant, Monika Newman and I flew to Melbourne on 18 February to attend the 2014 Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Expo <http://aime.com.au>

Having personally attended AIME several times, this was the second time in which we both went for a full day. We met at Sydney Domestic Airport at 6:30 am and then to the Qantas Club prior to our QF 407 flight * at 7:15 am.

Upon arriving in Melbourne, we took the Sky Bus Direct service **from Tullamarine Airport to Southern Cross Station. Up arrival, it was an easy 15 minute walk to the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) in which we arrived at 10 am.

After getting name badges at the registration area, we met with industry contacts James Broome and Louis Allen with Executive PA Magazine <http://www.executivepa.com.au> for a quick corridor chat and new year catch up.

Attending AIME in one day can be daunting for the unprepared or organised. It's easy to waste opportunities to meet lots of people by having too many one to one coffee or tea meetings. By 4:30 pm, most exhibitors and vendors are having pre-evening drinks and hors d'oeuvres with clients until the MCEC venue closes at 6 pm to get prepared for Day Two.

2014 AIME EXPO INSIGHTS:

Key insights learnt that have worked for us while attending AIME is to use the first half of Day One to visit the International section. We met with stakeholders and firms visiting from China, SE Asia, UAE, Turkey, India, Germany, Europe, South and North Americas.

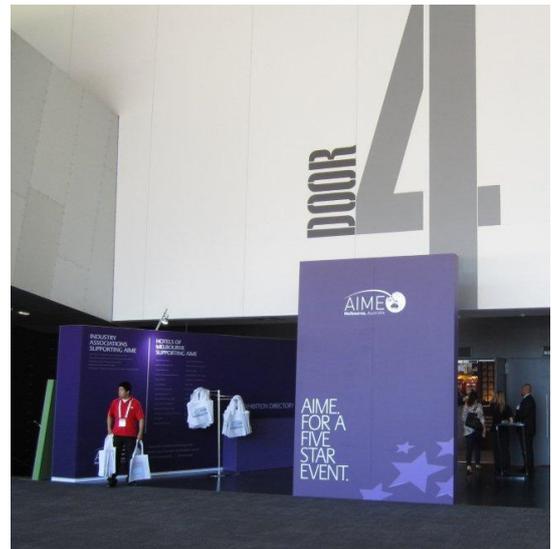
Located in the back of the MCEC, less attendees are there in the morning of Day One. Monika and I enjoy high quality time with meeting planners, hotel teams and MICE industry suppliers.

By 2:30 pm we had finished several meetings with regional industry contacts and a meal and catch up with the CEO of a national firm. By 3 pm, we were ready to explore the array of New Zealand and Australian firms located towards the mid centre and front of MCEC's main hall. *TIP: Bring lots of business cards for networking and prize draw opportunities.*

Having attended educational sessions and keynote presentations in past years, we met with as many vendors and exhibitors as possible while seeking to thank the 2014 AIME hosts and MCEC team for an excellent 22nd year showcase.

In finishing up at 5:45, it was an easy 5 minute walk from the MCEC to the Hilton Hotel for a cab that whisked us off to Southern Cross Station and a 6:40 pm Sky Bus to Melbourne Airport.

Special congratulations to **Joyce DiMascio** CEO of the Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia <http://www.eeaa.com.au> for being honoured as Industry Person of the Year as well as **Karen Bolinger** CEO of the Melbourne Convention Centre and **Jacqui Timmins**, AIME Exhibition Director for a great 2014 experience once again.



*** Inexpensive Flight / Travel Tip:** Our flights were booked in November with costs significantly defrayed by using 32,000 Qantas Frequent Flyer points for the Syd - Mel return. With no bags to check, Qantas ticketing kiosks at Sydney Terminal 3 were easy to use to get our boarding passes.

The return flight on QF 494 was an easy 65 minute trip to Sydney. Smooth skies and a jovial crew made it fun after a full day of travel, meetings and walking.

As a Qantas Club member, we enjoyed complimentary hot breakfasts and great coffee before our 7:15 am morning flight and a relaxing dinner prior to our 9 pm Melbourne departure.

****SKY BUS:** Great value versus a one way taxi charge of \$70 or more to the Melbourne CBD.

Operating 24/7 from the Melbourne Airport pick up or drop off at T3 for Virgin Blue and Regional Express and T1 for Qantas or Jetstar. Sky Bus runs every 20 minutes to Southern Cross Railway Station (corner of Spencer & Bourke Street). Average travel time of 35 minutes. Adult one way trip \$18 - round trip just \$30. www.skybus.com.au

This **AIME 2014** summary was written by **Rob Salisbury** CSP / CEO SRI Australia, Asia and USA.

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