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also works closely with the live entertainment division of the **INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE (ICC) SYDNEY**, overseeing its new 9,000-capacity ICC Theatre and 2,500-capacity Darling Harbour Theatre.

Worton said the reason for the decline is threefold.

“First, we had seen so many artists tour in the years up to 2014 that 2015 and 2016 were simply out of cycle for a lot of acts,” he said. “Also, the Australian dollar had been at parity or stronger than the U.S. dollar up until 2014, and the weakening to around 75 U.S. cents has made it more financially challenging to bring some tours to our market.”

In addition, a high incidence of stadium tours has negatively impacted Australian arenas.

“In the past few months alone, we’ve seen Coldplay, Guns ‘N Roses, Adele and Justin Bieber play outdoors,” said Worton.

Prince’s Piano & Microphone tour was Perth Arena’s highest grossing performance for 2016, and turned out to be one of the legend’s final few live appearances.

“This past January, the sensational Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band returned for three sold-out performances to 42,000 fans,” said Michael Scott, the arena’s general manager. “It will be difficult to top.”

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Changes in the Australian marketplace have resulted in the need for adjustments.

For example, Qudos Bank Arena is requiring additional bump-in and/or bump-out days to facilitate large-scale productions, as an increasing number of promoters and artists are requesting three to five or more days to set-up events, often for a single show.

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Based on concert and event grosses from Feb. 1, 2016 – Jan. 31, 2017, and as reported to *Venues Today*.

VENUE, LOCATION	NO. OF SEATS	TOTAL GROSS	ATTENDANCE	SHOWS
1. Qudos Bank Arena, Sydney	20,997	\$36,096,208	468,581	55
2. Perth (Australia) Arena	14,996	\$24,797,795	344,196	48
3. Vector Arena, Auckland, New Zealand	12,200	\$23,546,224	333,305	107
4. Brisbane (Australia) Entertainment Centre	13,500	\$19,584,323	328,053	55
5. Rod Laver Arena, Melbourne, Australia	16,310	\$12,442,964	147,654	14

Compiled by Monique Potter, HotTickets@venuestoday.com

“While we will always look to accommodate this where we can, it does come at a cost and can become quite problematic to schedule during peak concert touring periods,” said Hevern.

In 2016, to reduce casual labor hours, BEC used permanent salaried staff wherever possible to assist with set ups and post-event pull downs.

“When events were hosted, casual catering staff had been cross trained, so we were able to have a strong focus on redeployments of casual staff for peak periods,” said Trish McNamara, the Centre’s general manager. “Where possible, all staff was required to take annual leave to reduce this overhead.”

In an effort to further strengthen its customer service, the BEC began focusing on reducing lost property and reconnecting patrons with their goods starting late last year and will continue in 2017.

Social media has had a major impact on its success rate, as have proactive steps taken at the event with live announcements/checking of the patrons’ details through the ticketing system, etc.

“To date, we have returned approximately 90 percent of lost and found items since the customer service initiative commenced, and this has included wallets loaded with cash and cards, mobile phones, lost merchandise, etc.,” said McNamara. “The 10 percent not returned are items with no form of identification, such as shoes, clothing and drink bottles. While this

may seem like just a small element of our operation, it has had a profound impact on the people who have been reunited with their personal items, and it has restored a good will feeling among our team.”

Environmentally-focused improvements also were an emphasis for some facilities. For example, the Perth Arena successfully added an organic recycling program to its already effective waste management scheme.

“The result is 86 percent of waste is now diverted from landfills, which drives business value through sustainability,” said Scott.

Also in 2016, Perth Arena’s Golden Ticket campaign was launched in support of Breast Cancer Care for the first time. It raised \$71,710, with all proceeds to positively impact the lives of those in the community affected by breast cancer. The money paid household utility bills, provided home cleaning services, groceries, clothes or Counseling to 564 families.

“This year, we plan to partner with the public and private sector to expand the venue’s audience into Southeast Asia to be a positive contributor to tourism for Western Australia,” said Scott. 