



So appy!

HOW useful is this?

With the advent of the London Olympic Games, London has set itself up as the largest free wireless zone in Europe.

In addition, ever increasing numbers of free wi-fi hotspots are available around the UK.

As an adjunct to this connectivity, a free app is available on all major mobile platforms including iPhone, Nokia and Android that provides information on destinations across the UK, along with some bookability for flights, more than 11,000 hotels, a range of tours, restaurant suggestions, a guide to attractions, where to shop and the best modes of transport.

The Mx Great Britain app is available to download for free at mobiexplore.com/visitbritain.

Sounds like a great idea for Australia too! - Jill.



Sunshine Coast mega tourism plan



PLANS for a massive redevelopment of the former Hyatt Coolum Resort by leading businessman Clive Palmer have been announced, with the flow on effect expected to create some 9,000 jobs and elevate the region to one of the world's top tourism destinations.

Palmer released his concept plans on the weekend for a new Sunshine Coast International Airport, a new beachfront hotel and retail development, convention centre, casino, theme park, water park, aviary and aquarium at the Coolum site.

"This will boost the resort's workforce to more than 2500 staff when operating," he said.

"The new airport will be capable of taking A380s and 747 Jumbo jets from Singapore, Beijing and Tokyo directly to the

Sunshine Coast.

"Hawaii and other Pacific nations have taken all the real tourism growth out of the Australian and Queensland economies.

"We have not been able to compete with the beachfront development at Waikiki in Hawaii or with Fiji and other destinations because of restrictions.

"It is time to reclaim the state's mantle as Australia's and the world's premium tourist destination," he said.

Palmer expects the project when completed will significantly boost the region's capacity to accommodate both domestic and international visitors and create enormous interest in countries such as China.

Plans are also to link the revamped airport to the Palmer Coolum Resort with a proposed new monorail system and to operate an ocean-going hovercraft service with capacity for up to 400 people from the Brisbane CBD to Coolum.

The new beachfront hotels will also offer a thousand rooms as well as rooftop entertainment and ocean views.

"We will spend the next six months seeing if the community wants the Sunshine Coast to lead the world," he said, adding that he would consider a major development on property he holds in Bora Bora if there is major opposition to the project.

The construction phase is expected to take approximately three years.

Mudgee at Balmoral

DID you know, you can get a taste of what the the Mudgee district has to offer on Sunday 12 August without leaving Sydney?

It's all possible at Balmoral Beach when the Mudgee Wine and Food Fair returns for the 22nd year.

Held on the Esplanade, around 30 wine and food stalls will showcase Mudgee's country goodness.

The free event from 10am to 5pm also offers a \$20 package which includes a signature glass and five tasting tickets.

Free shuttle buses will run on a continuous circuit from Balmoral Beach to Military and Spit Roads via Raglan Street and Awaba Street throughout the day.

See - www.mudgeewine.com.au.

Win a night in Coffs Harbour



This week, **Business Events News** is giving readers the chance to win overnight accommodation for two in a Superior Resort room including full buffet breakfast, courtesy of Novotel Coffs Harbour Pacific Bay Resort.

The Novotel Coffs Harbour Pacific Bay Resort offers a beachfront location and is only an hour's flight from Sydney or Brisbane. The hotel offers 170 rooms and conference facilities to hold up to 800 people.

Novotel Coffs Harbour Pacific Bay Resort is an ideal venue for your next conference or incentive group.

To win be the first to email your answer the following question to-

comp@businessesnews.com.au.

Name three resort facilities found at the Novotel Coffs Harbour Pacific Bay Resort.

Hint: pacificbayresort.com.au

Terms and conditions apply



Grinner is big winner

IF a picture paints a 1000 words, then Rachel Dunn, travel manager at Sanford International Travel's photo says everything about the joy of winning the major prize at last week's World of Accor showcase - a new Peugeot 207 CC.

The event recorded excellent attendance, with around 1200 people jam-packing the ballroom of the Sofitel Wentworth Sydney.



Virtual conferencing

UK-based Virtual iVenth has announced a partnership with Australian design and technology agency Invisage Creative Services.

The collaboration will deliver "leading edge technology solutions" to the meetings and events industries.

The companies will jointly research, develop and deliver products that aim to improve the event experience, with Virtual iVent the exclusive UK/Europe development partner for US software firm VenueGen.

Both partners believe the sector is likely to see drastic changes.

MD of Virtual iVent, Gavin Newman says "No-one knew about online shopping 10 years ago and look at that sector now.

"We can offer everything a traditional conference or meeting has to offer - plus much more.

"Our virtual venues include rooms for speakers to make their presentations and where seminars can take place, as well as conference hall and lobbies where delegates can chat," he said.



crumbs!

IN Olympics news, did you know that in 1900, in Paris, winners received paintings instead of gold, silver and bronze medals?

Medals weren't given out until the third modern Olympics, in 1904.

Why give paintings? It's because the French believed them to be more valuable.

And, if you were wondering what is going to happen to the Olympic village after the London Games, it to be transformed into 2818 new homes, including 1379 low-cost dwellings and houses for rent, in a new quarter to be known as East Village.

New parklands, open space, transport links and facilities such as schools will be built.

Oaks on Castlereagh

TWO minutes from Sydney's Central Station, OAKS Hotels & Resorts has opened its newest property.

The 4.5-star Oaks on Castlereagh offers a range of studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom self-contained apartments.

Daniel Csorban, area director of sales and marketing said, "We see the launch of Oaks on Castlereagh as an excellent opportunity to foster existing relationships with local, interstate and international guests."

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Pictured is Carly Adler from Flight Centre Group Travel with Rove

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New hotel to Crown Barangaroo

NEWS that Crown Limited had signed an Exclusive Dealing Agreement with Lend Lease to develop plans for a new hotel complex at Barangaroo on Sydney Harbour, has been welcomed by Tourism Accommodation Australia (NSW).

"A new 'iconic' hotel in Sydney would complement the great accommodation venues already available in our only global city, said TAA director Carol

Giuseppi, adding that it is just what the city needs.

"Importantly, the Crown Limited hotel would be built with a direct market in mind – that is the kind of development we need, development that is sustainable and will add to Sydney's image as Australia's premier city", she added.

Giuseppi said the accommodation sector in Sydney is going from strength to strength and that the announcement is just the latest indication.



"Not only do we have the luxurious refurbishment of the Park Hyatt and the opening of The Darling at The Star last year, we have major refurbishments at: Four Seasons, Novotel Rockford Darling Harbour, Hyde Park Inn, Holiday Inn Darling Harbour, The Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, The Shangri-La, Hilton Sydney, Radisson Hotel & Suites, Sydney Marriott Hotel, Swissotel and the Four Points by

Sheraton," she said.

"The Langham Hospitality Group has also secured its first flagship property in Sydney with the acquisition of The Observatory Hotel and has signalled its intention to invest millions in upgrading this prestigious property."

Citing the value of these refurbishments as in the order of \$80 million, Giuseppi said they demonstrated that investor confidence in the Sydney market is increasing.

"For the first time in more than a decade Sydney hotels are in a position where investors are prepared to invest millions of dollars on refurbishments, ensuring that Sydney retains its position on the travel itineraries of the world's most discerning travellers," she said.

Mantra hubble, bubble

THERE will be tarot card readers, tea leaf reading and hand writing analysts when the conferencing team at Mantra Group are on Stand D29 at ABE (Australian Business Events Expo).

They will provide an in depth look at visitors' personality types and fill them in on the best places to conference with Peppers, Mantra and BreakFree.

"In keeping with our company mantra of 'Knowing What Matters', this year we wanted to give our clients some insights into themselves as well as provide them with all the updates from our ever growing portfolio of venues and meeting spaces," said national director of MICE, Paul Wilson.

"There is a business side to conferencing but a key component to a successful conference is providing memorable experiences which is what we are offering at our stand this year," he said.

Blithe joins Heritage

SARAH

Blithe (nee Huband) has been appointed as conference sales manager for the Heritage Queenstown.



With an extensive background in sales, conference management, promotional events and launches, she joins the Heritage from Mediaworks where she was senior account manager.

Raffles 125th

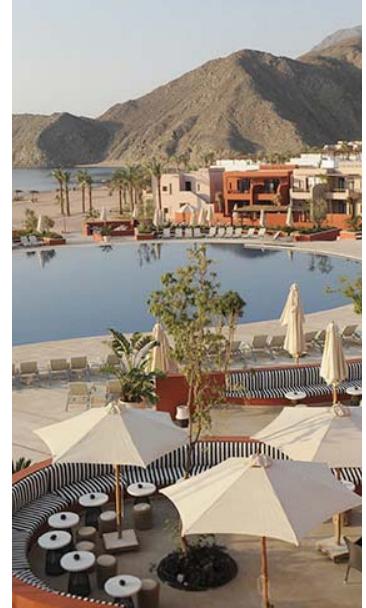
COME September, Singapore's most revered hotel, Raffles will celebrate its 125th anniversary, making it one of the world's oldest hotel brands.

In celebration, two other global luxury brands are joining the celebrations: - Jaeger-LeCoultre, with a limited edition classic Reverso watch and Billecart-Salmon with a 125th Anniversary Brut Réserve Champagne.

Exclusively bottled to mark the occasion of the legendary hotel's opening, the private label cuvée will be available at Raffles Hotel Singapore and at the other hotels in the Raffles Hotels & Resorts family, in Paris, Seychelles, Cambodia and China.

The champagne will have its debut in Singapore during the hotel's anniversary festivities in September, which will launch a year of celebrations.

Rent a Resort For Exclusive Events



Club Med
GROUPS & INCENTIVES



Cairns to host pre-G20 meeting

A GROUP of senior global leaders will gather in Cairns in two year's time, for a G20 Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' meeting.

The high level discussions will take place in the lead-up to the G20 Leaders' meeting in Brisbane in Nov 2014.

The Cairns event was announced late last week by federal treasurer Wayne Swan and PM Julia Gillard, who said it would "provide a huge boost to Cairns particularly across the accommodation, hospitality, transport and tourism sectors".

The leaders said that holding the event in Cairns would "allow us to advertise everything that's great about Tropical Queensland to the rest of the world".

A second Finance Ministers' and



G20 Mexico Jun 2012 - photo courtesy Reuters

Central Bank Governors' meeting will also be scheduled in the lead-up to the main event in Brisbane, with the location of this additional meeting to be announced shortly, Gillard said.

G20 member countries include South Africa, Canada, Mexico, the US, Argentina, Brazil, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Russia, Turkey, the EU, France, Germany, Italy, the UK and Australia.

Durban high-flyers

WHEN the upcoming Sports and Events Tourism Exchange (SETE) conference is held at the ICC Durban, a number of high profile international and local speakers will be taking to the stage.

To be held 12-13 September, the exchange of ideas it generates will provide a platform that will enhance the sport, tourism, and event industries in South Africa.

South Africa's Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, Sports Sector Education & Training Authority has come aboard as a major sponsor, and the partnership with SETE is said to add much impetus to the many aims of this influential event.

Both the SETE conference and exhibition will look to facilitate relationships between South Africa's tourism, sport and event industries and promote the country as a popular sports and events destination.

The conference program will include presentations and panel discussions from His Excellency Sheikh Saoud Bin Abdul Rahman Al Thani, Secretary-General Qatar Olympic Committee, Mike Lee and ceo of Vero Communications, Winand Krawinkel.

Star struts its stuff

SURROUNDED by passionate, inspiring people, The Star sponsored the Seventh Annual Associations Forum National Conference welcome drinks during the national conference held last week, at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Amanda Lovett, business development manager & Kathryn Fleming, sales manager – MICE, shared the potential of The Star's event spaces via artist's impressions and animated virtual tours with association delegates and gave them the opportunity to register for hard hat tours of their 1000 square metre Event Centre, in early 2013.

"The Star has held strong relationships with a range of associations for a number of years through their attendance at events within The Star or the close by Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre.

"Showcasing the increasing number of options for events has helped us continue to strengthen our connection to the industry," said Lovett.

The International Association for Lung Cancer is one of many events booked at The Star in 2013.

Unconventional SCEC

THE Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre has won a prestigious International Special Events Society (SES) Esprit Award.

The accolade was announced in Dallas, Texas on the weekend, with the Best Event Design and Decor Award acknowledging the Centre's spectacular Unconventional Evening last Nov.

The event was themed around some of the SCEC's amazing art, which includes Tim Storrier's 9m *Point to Point* landscape.

Storrier was in attendance as guest of honour, and the Centre's executive chef Uwe Habermehl created a succession of theatrical fire and ice dishes.

The Bayside Terrace was also transformed into a "shimmering interpretation of the evening's theme" including hundreds of candles and a huge projection of Storrier's *Landscape*.

The award was announced at the ISES Eventworld 2012.

BCEC really rocks

LEADERS from across the global geosciences community are this week converging at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, which is hosting the 34th International Geological Congress.

The huge event has attracted almost 6000 delegates, making it the largest geoscience event to ever be held in Australia.

The congress will focus heavily on mining and energy issues, reflecting record activity in Australia's resources industry.

The conference program will also feature the much-anticipated release of new geological and geophysical surveys of Central and Eastern Asia, along with an education outreach program called Geo Expo.

Attendees during the six day event will include visitors from 112 different countries.



NEW Caledonia, with its French/Melanesian culture, can offer a myriad of activities as well as great food and wine, and is the closest South Pacific neighbour to Australia, with the destination less than 3 hours from Sydney.

New Caledonia Tourism has increased business events and incentives throughout 2012 and targets smaller group sizes of between 10 and 80 delegates.

Throughout 2012 the Tourism board will aim to reach its goal of 1000 additional room nights versus the same time last year.

"We are working hard at increasing industry awareness of this precious country," said a spokesperson for New Caledonia Tourism.

Current trends in the industry are positive for New Caledonia with companies choosing to stay closer to home and looking for experiences with a difference.

Currently the French Pacific Franc is parity with the Australian Dollar so there has never been a better time to go to New Caledonia.

"In addition we have a wealth of experience in major DMC's in New Caledonia, Arc en Ciel and Transat Tours, who are capable of creating unforgettable events."

The most challenging aspect for the tourism board is in the area of education, with the organisation saying "We are endeavouring to educate both consumer and trade on all there is to offer in New Caledonia and really have a great story to tell."

Activities available for incentive and event delegates include an exclusive dinner on a tropical island, Tjibaou Cultural Centre, 120 restaurants throughout Noumea, French cooking classes, Amedee Island, helicopter joy ride, the Loyalty Islands, progressive dinners, and plenty of team building activities.

CONTACT US:

Publisher

Bruce Piper

Contributors

Chantel Long

Advertising:

advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au

P: 1300 799 220

F: 1300 799 221

PO Box 1010 Epping, NSW, 1710

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