



A good bet!

BEN will be in Macau on Monday to report on all that is new and emerging in this country of cultures, cuisines and casinos.



Home to Asia's largest fully integrated convention and exhibition centre; and some of the world's most elaborate and futuristic hotels, it is an exciting time to be there.

The Macau International Fireworks Display Contest will be in full swing, filling the night sky with, colour, light and dazzle, in celebration of its 'colourful' history and cultural inheritance.

It's an event that in the past has been won by our own Howard & Sons Pyrotechnics.

Coincidentally, Macau is soon to host its inaugural Global Tourism Economy Forum.

A three-day event at the Macau Tower - 9 to 11 Sept, it is expected to attract 600 delegates and tourism stakeholders.

Under the auspices of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, the conference is billed as one of the most important international tourism events on the Asian centre's 2012 calendar.

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Pictured is Belinda Valesini, Katoomba Flight Centre with The Living

End's Chris Cheney

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BECA report's assessment

THE Business Events Council of Australia (BECA) has released the second annual State of the Business Events Industry Report, one that focuses on performance and delivery of the '2020 Tourism Industry Potential'.

BECA commissioned Dr Marg Dreery, director, Tourism and Business Events International to develop the report.

The annual update follows on from the inaugural State of the Industry Report released last October, which provides a measurable assessment of the



substantial contribution that business events make to Australia's economy.

In it is an overview of how Australia's business events sector performed in 2011 and the factors that affected this performance.

The report analyses a series of industry KPI's to gauge the health of the industry as a whole, including Australia's world ranking as a business events destination, convention arrival statistics, and international and domestic business event travel and convention bureau statistics on business bids and wins and losses.

It demonstrates a strengthening of the industry in numbers of travellers, with international business event visitor spend in Australia (IVS) increasing by 15% and domestic overnight business event visitor spend (NVS) increasing by 19%.

It also shows a weakening in State Government funding support of the convention bureaux by 28%, reflected in an increase in lost bids (5%) and the reduction of successful bids (12%).

Dr Dreery states at the conclusion of the report: "While there has been increased investment in infrastructure supporting the business events industry, in areas such as aviation and accommodation the growth of the industry in the Asia Pacific region, particularly in China, shows the need to maintain investment in the industry.

"Australia's business events challenge will be to maintain its product that is competitive on ROI and quality," she said.

The State of the Business Events Industry Report 2011 is available from the Business Events Council of Australia website: www.businesseventscouncil.org.au.

Return to paradise

ROBERT (Bob) Taylor has been appointed as Edgewater Resort & Spa's new general manager, in Rarotonga.



Taylor who brings with him a wealth of experience within the hospitality industry, is no newcomer to the island, having worked as resort manager at several properties since arriving in Rarotonga in 1999.

Taylor's love of Rarotonga and the Cook Islands means he has a good understanding of the culture and traditions of the island paradise.

Marina Bay conference



THE new Marina Bay Cruise Centre will play host to leading cruise expo, Cruise Shipping Asia Pacific, when it returns to Singapore on the 17-18 September.

The two-day conference and trade show, entitled "Optimising Opportunities in the Asia-Pacific Cruise Industry", focuses on the emerging Asia-Pacific cruise industry, providing delegates with the essential information and industry connections needed to be successful in this growing region.

The only annual event for the cruise industry in the region, it will include a tradeshow, conference & a social networking program and be attended by travel agents and tour operators as well as destination managers, ship owners and operators.

Delegates can learn from sessions led by a panel of regional and international cruise industry experts.

Rent a Resort For Exclusive Events



Club Med
GROUPS & INCENTIVES



business events news

24th August 2012



crumbs!



CLEARLY a case of don't put your daughter on a United Airlines flight unaccompanied, Mrs Worthington!

Phoebe, a 10-year-old US girl went missing on a United Airlines flight, midway through a trip from San Francisco to Traverse City, Mich., to summer camp.

Her parents, the Klebahns, who had organised (and paid for) the "unaccompanied minor service" were told by the airline that Phoebe would be accompanied at all times, except no one showed up in Chicago to transfer her to the next flight.

When the camp in Michigan called her parents to say their daughter had not arrived, their frantic call to United was diverted to their call centre in India.

Phoebe did eventually reach her camp after her parents spent an estimated 18 hours on the phone.

The Klebahns said it was their worst experience ever!

Home of the blizzard

ONE for the "bucket list" or incentive reward.

Antarctica Sightseeing Flights have five flights scheduled over the upcoming summer, beginning with their legendary New Year's Eve party flight from Melbourne.

Other flights depart from Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth on Saturdays or Sundays in January and February 2013.

The only one day Antarctica sightseeing flight in the world, takes in the icebergs, coastal cliffs, glaciers and spectacular mountain ranges for which Antarctica is renowned.

Prices begin at \$1,199 in Economy and up to \$7,499 for First Class - www.antarcticaflights.com.au.



Holiday Inn for P'matta

IN a ten-year franchise agreement, IHG will take over the Clarion Hotel on the Park from 18 October, to establish Holiday Inn Parramatta.

The property, whose seven meeting rooms totalling 371 sqm of function space, already attracts a fair amount of MICE business, also incorporates an all-day dining restaurant, bar, a heated outdoor pool, business centre and parking for 220 vehicles.

A refurbishment program has already been completed, which saw all the guest rooms and public areas upgraded.

Holiday Inn's international brand hallmarks will be put in when the hotel launches in Oct.

Vale John Richards

SADLY missed, John Richards of Conference Plus, the much loved husband, of Luba and adored father of Clinton, Jason and Lydia, passed away on 05 August after a short illness.

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Oh, holy night!

HOW about dazzling the troops with this spectacular Sofitel offer during the Christmas season?

The Sofitel Sydney

Wentworth, wearing its 'Hotel of the Arts' hat on its 5 five-star roof, is to join with the Art Gallery of NSW to present The Seven Sopranos spectacular 'Joyeaux Noel' Christmas Concert.

For two nights only: Friday 30 November and Sunday 2 December from 5.30pm, this visual, aural and culinary feast will feature a performance by the world-acclaimed 7 Sopranos, with Australian conductor Simon Kenway, a private viewing of the Francis Bacon exhibition and a welcome glass of champagne.

Priced at just \$125 per person, the all-female 7 Sopranos will sing Christmas classics like Brahms'



Silent Night as well as operatic masterpieces including Ave Maria, Rachmaninoff's Vocalise and more against a backdrop of one of the finest collections of 19th century art in the country.

Following the concert and at an additional cost of \$75, the Sofitel will host a special two-course set menu dinner, with a glass of sparkling wine on arrival, where guests can mingle with and meet the glamorous 7 Sopranos while they dine.

Then turn an astonishing evening into something even more memorable with a special 'Stay Rate' of just \$245 including full buffet breakfast for two.



brochures



GREATER Shepparton, located two hours north of Melbourne, attracts more than half a million

visitors annually.

Conference facilities are available in the region to cater for conferences ranging in size from less than 10 participants to more than 1000. Past events have attracted up to 35,000 visitors. Greater Shepparton has established an enviable reputation as being a host venue for many diverse and successful conferences and events. For more details about the Conference Planner guide or for a copy call 03 5832 9858 or email events@shepparton.vic.au.

Puzzled?

Join us to see how the pieces fit together to create memorable events in Cairns & Great Barrier Reef.

Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef invites you to join us at our showcase event.

MELBOURNE
Tuesday 18 Sept. 2012, 12 - 2pm
Rivers Edge, 18-38 Siddeley St, Melbourne

SYDNEY
Thursday 20 Sept. 2012, 12 - 2pm
Opera Point Marquee, Sydney Opera House

BRISBANE
Friday 21 Sept. 2012, 12 - 2pm
Victoria Park, 223 Herston Rd, Herston

A cocktail lunch will be served at each event.

CLICK HERE TO RSVP
by Tuesday 11 September

BUSINESS EVENTS
CAIRNS & GREAT BARRIER REEF
The natural place to meet



Passage to India



AN intimate gathering of MICE and leisure agents had their senses awakened on Thursday evening, when Cox & Kings, Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces and DMS Destination Marketing Services hosted a special, invitation-only event showcasing "A Taste of India."

Guests were treated to an array of cocktails and canapés as they explored the mystic of India with Cox & Kings' global head of sales Rajat Gera.

The oldest established travel company in the world and a market leader in travel related services in the Indian subcontinent, Gera said that Cox & Kings is the market leader in handling international conferences and incentive programs from all over the world.

This was followed by a fusion of colour, energy and dance by the Bollywood Sensations Dancers and a decadent Indian feast at Aki's Indian Restaurant, with a special appearance by the 'Godfather of Indian cuisine' master chef Kumar Mahadevan,

who gathered the guests in the kitchen, to demonstrate how he brings the flavours and colours of India to his culinary artistry.

Pictured above at the Cox & Kings dinner from left are: Leila Fiedler, DMS; Khaver Ali Khan and Rajat Gera, Cox & Kings Ltd; Marissa Fernandez, DMS and Thushara Liyanarachchi, Taj Hotel Resorts and Palaces.

Major squeeze in Laos

THE ninth Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM9) involving heads of state and government leaders is being held in Laos, in the capital Vientiane from 5-6 November.

Reported to be the biggest international meeting ever to be held in the capital, it is putting a major squeeze on hotel room availability.

Consequently, the majority of room bookings will be blocked during the duration of the event.

Destination Asia cautions not to make any hotel bookings during this period as even confirmed reservations could be cancelled by the government.

"Our team will assist with handling provisional bookings that may be subsequently affected," said a Destination Asia spokesperson.

The high-level meeting will involve 51 delegations from both Europe and Asia with topics for discussion including terrorism, piracy, human trafficking, drug smuggling and the financial crisis in the Eurozone and its impact.

A LIST gets A listers

THE A LIST Guide which offers a range of prizes to win in its pages, from a 5-Star hotel package to an iPad, great products offering and a superb range of venues, reports welcoming another 1300 new event professionals to their guide after last week's Sydney Event Showcase at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Grays' Say

Peter Gray, managing partner of Motivating People presents a regular Business Events News feature on current issues in the MICE industry.



HEAD IN THE CLOUDS

RECENTLY Apple co-founder, Steve Wozniak, caused anxiety among web users when he spoke of the potential pitfalls of cloud computing.

He is quoted as saying "I really worry about everything going to the cloud, I think it's going to be horrendous."

"I think there are going to be a lot of horrible problems in the next five years."

And yet, increasingly, the meetings industry is being targeted by companies such as Cvent, Certain, Ungerboeck and Ivvy, all of which would have us believe that data held by them in their 'cloud' is both secure and constantly available.

In fact, they're all costly alternatives to the more traditional but eminently reliable software which can be installed on a server, a desk or laptop computer.

The high cost may bring additional features (CRM and survey software) but in spite of

this Cvent's software can only be run via a broadband connection - unless you wish to purchase software from a third party which they don't guarantee will work!

Without a broadband connection - in remote areas in or outside Australia, on board cruise ships, etc. - you and your clients are dead in the water.

Ungerboeck does at least have a desktop version of their software so this at least can keep you working and able to update files.

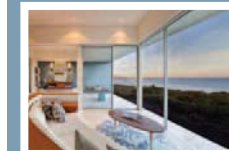
Before you invest your hard-earned cash in any of these cloud computing options you should ask some very searching questions.

Peter Gray is an independent motivation and meetings consultant.

To contact Peter Gray email peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net.



Win a luxury stay at Southern Ocean Lodge



During the months of August and September, Business Events News is giving one lucky reader the chance to win an amazing two-night stay at the exclusive Southern Ocean Lodge, Kangaroo Island courtesy of Baillie Lodges.

The prize includes two-nights accommodation for two people in a Flinders Suite with breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, open bar with premium wines and spirits, in-suite bar, signature experiences and return island airport transfers.

To be in the running simply answer the 17 questions and the final creative answer which will be featured in BEN on 21 September.

The person who answers ALL the questions and has the most creative response will win.

Email your answers to:

baillielodges@businesseventsnews.com.au

Q6: Name the tasty annual event hosted in August at Southern Ocean Lodge?

Hint: www.southernoceanlodge.com.au

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Bay watch meetings



ST KILDA's iconic Novotel Melbourne hotel with 12 conference rooms able to accommodate 300 delegates, has a 'warm weather' day package starting from \$60pp.

The special Meeting@Novotel package, is available for bookings up to 31 December.

With a minimum spend of \$10,000 you will receive \$1,000 off the value of your conference, triple Le Club Accorhotels points plus the chance to go in the draw to win one million Le Club Accorhotels points.

For more information contact the Novotel Conference & Events team - h1506-sb02@accor.com.

Spencer Travel expands its business

SYDNEY-based corporate travel agency Spencer Travel has announced the opening of Spencer Ericson Brown Conferences and Events.

The one stop conference and events company, a new addition to the Spencer Travel portfolio, is headed up by three directors - Penny Spencer of Spencer Travel, as well as Kahlia Ericson and Samantha Brown who have both been in conference and events for the last 10 years.

"We are looking forward to growing this area of the business and with the expertise from Kahlia and Sam and access to Spencer Travel's resources and clients I am sure it will be a success," Penny Spencer said.

"The first week has proved to be very busy with three appointments and our first job won on day two," she added.



AAA calls for entries

IN a bid to put the fun back into the Accommodation Association awards and celebrate the hard working people in this vibrant and dynamic accommodation industry, the Accommodation Association of Australia (AAA) have announced that entries are now open for their refreshed Accommodation Achievers' Awards 2012.

The eight people-based categories are in addition to the HOSTPLUS ACES Awards.

"This year we wanted to do something different", explained ceo, Richard Munro.

The innovative award approach is to be via a three minute video of the entrant in their workplace, undertaking daily duties and describing the best part of their role, the skills they have acquired and generally demonstrating passion for the industry they work in.

Entries close on Wednesday 19 September, with the awards ceremony being held on Wednesday 17 October.

For guidelines, categories, entry requirements and information on how to enter, visit aaoa.com.au.

GETTING TO KNOW: Cuba, Latin America

IF you are looking for a different destination for your next incentive, put on your salsa shoes and take a step back in time to Cuba, a land of Christopher Columbus, pirates, slaves and revolutionaries. Of classic cars, colonial squares, cobblestone streets and homestays - where the music of the Buena Vista Social Club seems to pour out of every street and door.

This is what **BEN** experienced travelling from Havana to Santa Clara, Trinidad, Camaguey, Santiago de Cuba and Baracoa, staying with and joining in the life of local people, in their casas (homes) as well as in hotels.

For the Australian traveller, this tiny island is accessible through Mexico and Canada and requires you to obtain a visa prior to your departure.

Havana, the capital of Cuba, is famous for its Tropicana theatre with its cabaret-style performances, cuban cigars, daiquiris and mojitos and earthy authenticity.

It is not until you move out of Havana and on to Santa Clara that you learn more about the country and have the chance to immerse yourself in its history with a visit to the mausoleum and museum of the major figure of the Cuban Revolution, Che Guevara.

This Argentinean born man witnessed poverty and alienation as he travelled throughout Latin America as a young medical student. He decided that revolution was the only remedy to the capitalism, monopolism, neocolonialism and imperialism that he saw ingrained there.

Guevara met Raul and Fidel Castro while living in Mexico City, joining their 26th of July Movement, sailing to Cuba and eventually playing a role in overthrowing the US backed Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista.

In 1965 Guevara left Cuba to instigate revolution abroad but was captured in Bolivia by CIA assisted forces and executed. To this day Guevara remains both a revered and reviled figure.

Meanwhile, back in Trinidad our group was living 'la vida loca' and experiencing different aspects of Cuban culture with some of the local families.

In a casa, down the road from where were staying, we took part with others in our group, in salsa dancing lessons, afterwards drinking mojitos made by the owners of the house. That night, in the middle of town, we joined tourists and locals, dancing in the street to a local band.

In Camaguey, the grass roots of the country, we spent an afternoon being pedalled around town on the back of bikes - going to a market and being shown local produce and stopping here and there at historical and significant sites.

For event organisers, Cuba is ideal for small incentives and reward programs, and the Cuba Convention Bureau, which has been operating for more than 25 years, can assist in planning adventures of all types.

With such an array of aspirational, once in a life time experiences, Cuba makes a destination that everyone should put on their bucket list.

