



MEETING up in Auckland

THE 16th
Annual
MEETINGS
conference



will wrap up today with a full day of sightseeing.

Time in Auckland has been hectic but fun and MEETINGS 2012 was a great way to see over 170 companies, destinations, venues and conference product and services all under the one roof.

It was also a great opportunity to network with old colleagues and new friends.

This weekend I will have to pull out the winter coats again after my return from back-to-back trips in Jordan and now Auckland.

Sydney is calling and so is all the MICE news that has been pouring in.

We love hearing from everyone so keep the news and comments pouring in to info@businesseventsnews.com.au.
Have a great weekend - Jill.

Mantra Peppers snow

AN expansion to Peppers Retreats and Lodges in Australia now includes the addition of Rundells Alpine Lodge in Victoria's Mt Hotham ski fields.

Renamed as Peppers Rundells Alpine Lodge, it will be the first Peppers property to be located in an Australian ski region.

"We are pleased to now offer our guests who've enjoyed staying with Peppers in wine regions, coastal destinations and golf resorts, the chance to enjoy the Peppers experience in Australia's premier ski destination," said Mantra Group ceo, Bob East.

The acquisition brings the Peppers network to a total of 28 properties across Australia and New Zealand.

SkyCity's drama and saga

"IT'S the only game in town," said CINZ ceo Alan Trotter, speaking at a special briefing at MEETINGS 2012, about what he described as the drama and saga between the New Zealand government and the legislative changes they are offering SkyCity to build a \$350m national convention centre in Auckland.

In return for this grace and favour, SkyCity is seeking an extension of its gambling license and an increase in the number of their poker machines and gaming tables.

"These discussions started a year ago," said Trotter.

"What the industry needs is for the discussions to stop and for the building to proceed."

Now, it appears the controversial deal is to be investigated by the auditor-general's office.

New Zealand's Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei, who requested the investigation, said the Government could "not possibly proceed with the SkyCity deal" while the inquiry was going ahead, because its terms of reference "cut to the heart of the decision to award the contract to SkyCity in the first place".

"I raised concerns about the fairness and adequacy of the process, especially given SkyCity was offered a law change that gave it more pokies in exchange for building the centre, and the deal didn't appear to consider the huge social and financial costs of increased gambling."

When the argy bargy ceases and the Centre becomes a reality, it is expected to have a capacity to host 3500 people.

This breaking news yesterday of the investigation caused Trotter, who initially said an announcement on the commencement of the project would be known in about eight weeks, has altered his prediction to at least three months.

"If it was up to our Prime



Minister, we'd have a convention centre on every street corner in the country," he added with customary Trotter humour.

Trotter said his dream was to have three new convention centres in the next five year. An international Convention Centre in Auckland, an international Convention Centre in Christchurch and a national Convention Centre in Queenstown.

From a convention arrivals perspective Trotter went on to say that New Zealand is doing well, with 70,000 arrivals in the past year, 70% of which are Australians.

"The challenge is to get more Australians to stay longer.

"The feeling is because we are just a few hours away, it is easy to fly in and fly out."

Meet in Mackay

HAVE you booked your event in Mackay with the Mackay Convention Bureau?

The Bureau is an operating unit within Mackay Tourism Ltd, which offers free advice and is the first point of contact for planners looking at holding an event, convention or meeting in the area.

The Mackay Convention Bureau is featured on **page 4** of today's issue and can be seen online at mackayregion.com.

TNZ business push

TOURISM New Zealand has announced a major new marketing campaign to target the business tourism sector and boost NZ's share of the meetings and events market (**BEN** breaking news).

Announced at MEETINGS 2012, Tourism New Zealand's ce Kevin Bowler said "18 months ago we looked at our mission to see what was missing and we found it was the marketing of business events".

The new 'Beyond convention' campaign has been leveraged off the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign has been in use for 12 years and will provide an umbrella theme for all Tourism NZ's destination marketing material.

Enjoy the tastes of Hawaii in Sydney



This week, *Business Events News* is giving readers the chance to win a copy of The Descendants DVD and four tickets to the Hawaiian Food Festival at The Grace hotel on 29th June in Sydney courtesy of Hawaiian Airlines.

Hawaiian Airlines flies daily from Sydney to Hawaii and 11 destinations on the US mainland. All fares from Australia include meals, drinks, on demand entertainment system and a generous baggage allowance of two checked items, each up to 32kg. HawaiianMiles and Virgin Australia Velocity points can be earned flying Hawaiian.

To win be the first to answer: comp@businesseventsnews.com.au

What new aircraft does
Hawaiian Airlines use on the
Sydney - Honolulu route?



Hint: hawaiianair.com





FLIGHT moods

The days of getting stuck next to a boring conversationalist or in-flight snorer are on the way out if other airlines follow Latvia's national airline airBaltic, 'SeatBuddy' initiative.

The aim of the new scheme is to sit like-minded passengers next to each other.

"We're the first in the world to offer this," said airBaltic spokesperson Janis Vanags, adding that passengers will not however be given the option of banning anyone from sitting next to them.

"Passengers can choose from three preferred 'flight moods' according to whether they want to get on with work, make new business contacts or simply not be bothered by someone's droning voice."

The free service can also take into account any of the passenger's hobbies or interests.

Industry responds to State Budget

MORE than 24 general managers of major Sydney accommodation hotels were briefed this week on aspects of the 2012 State Budget at a special breakfast at the Radisson Blu, hosted by Tourism Accommodation Australia (NSW).

Industry leaders expressed a positive response to the Budget while TAA (NSW) director Carol Giuseppi addressed a number of areas of concern.

"What is particularly pleasing is that we have seen the Government focus on 'building demand' in the tourism sector - something we have been wanting for some time," she said.

"The need for more hotel rooms in Sydney's accommodation sector is constrained by demand levels.

"The \$125 million earmarked for Destination NSW in this Budget together with the \$45 million investment in major events, will ensure that much needed demand is built in the market.

"This will support continuing investment in existing hotels in particular."

Giuseppi said the sector also welcomed a boost to regional tourism funding.

"NSW is very much a two-speed economy," she said.

"Sydney's accommodation hotels are performing much better than regional properties and an extension to the Government's \$5.1 million Regional Tourism Partnership Program will help provide security to the industry for a 12 month period while the Government is considering the recommendations of the Visitor Economy Taskforce".

"The feedback from hoteliers recognised that Government has listened to this message and is committed to building demand in both the Sydney and NSW markets," Giuseppi said.

Don't fence me in

A remote coastal resort, the Berkeley River, only accessible by seaplane out of Kununurra or by private vessel has opened, approximately 170kms north-west of Wyndham.

The multi-million dollar tourism venture features 20 dune top ocean view suites, tasteful furnishings and unique outdoor bathrooms.

The retreat also features a main lodge with conference facilities.

Located next to the Berkeley River, guests will be able to experience relaxation or adventure, with activities such as boat cruises, bush and beach walks, fishing, helicopter journeys, or simply lazing by the pool.

The river is flanked by towering rock escarpments and a waterfall that flows most of the year.

Packages start at \$897 per person for a four night stay, for more information or to book email stay@berkeleyriver.com.au.

How high can you go?

HIGH tea doesn't come much loftier than the one Virgin Atlantic guests enjoyed recently at 35000ft.

All part of Virgin's sponsorship of the Sydney Film Festival, the tea party with a twist brought to life this unique onboard feature.

Guests were greeted by The Queen of Hearts and the Mad Hatter then guided down a purple carpet by Virgin Atlantic crew toward a long dining table covered with giant tea cups full of colourful flowers, strewn tea cups, milk jugs and sauces, toy rabbits, glasses overflowing with lollies and high tea stands filled with yummy treats of macaroons, finger sandwiches, mini quiches, scones with jam and cream and mini cupcakes.

While guests sipped on a glass of bubbly or a Twinings tea, British comedian Paul Warner presented a quirky comedy act.



At the events conclusion there was a preview screening of cutting edge British film 'My Brother the Devil' introduced by the director, Sally El Hosaini.

Virgin Atlantic's on board bar is a feature of the Sydney Film Festival hub this year, found in The Lower Town Hall.

Pictured above at the High Tea event earlier this week is Accor's Gaynor Reid, The Queen of Hearts and Belinda Gurd and Roni Trieu, Virgin Atlantic.

WIN A TRIP FOR TWO TO VANUATU



During the months of May and June, Business Events News is giving one lucky reader the chance a win an amazing holiday for two people to Vanuatu, courtesy of Air Vanuatu and the Grand Hotel and Casino.

The prize includes Air Vanuatu return airfares from Syd/Bne or Mel to Port Vila, and five nights accommodation in a Harbour Deluxe Room including continental breakfast daily at the Grand Hotel and Casino.

Air Vanuatu offers daily flights from Australia, just over 3 hours away. Complimentary inflight service and the friendliest smiles in the Pacific!

Grand Hotel and Casino offers a relaxing yet sophisticated French style setting, in a prime waterfront location in the heart of the shopping, business and entertainment district. 74 rooms with floor to ceiling windows, own private balcony, Internet access in all rooms and 24 hour room service. We also cater for conferences sizes between 10 - 80 delegates and for groups up to 130 people.

Q.14: In 30 words or less, tell us why The Grand and Vanuatu offer a great venue for meetings & incentives.

The person who answers correctly all the questions and comes up with the most creative answer to the final question will be the winner.

Email your answers to: Vanuatu@businesseventsnews.com.au

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MEETINGS 2012 Auckland

AUCKLAND was showcased at MEETINGS 2012 through a cruise on Auckland Harbour with *Adventure Bay* earlier this week.

“Auckland is more than a city. It’s a whole region full of things to see and do”, said the Auckland Convention Bureau.

“From the tranquil waters and emerald island of the Hauraki Gulf, to the urban sophistication of downtown, the sheer diversity of the place means you can engage in any manner of adventures”

Pictured is CINZs media guru Anabel Darby enjoying her time on Auckland Harbour with a NZ buyer.



Vanuatu’s Farea Pacifik

A new conference centre, the “Farea Pacifik” was officially opened this week by Vanuatu’s Prime Minister, The Honourable Meltek Sato Kilman Livtuvanu, in the extensive grounds of the Warwick Le Lagon Resort & Spa in Port Vila.



Billed as the largest in Vanuatu, it comprises more than 1000 square metres of conference space and is fully equipped with the latest audio visual equipment.

Catering for up to 800 people for banquets and 1000 theatre style, the Farea Pacifik has the flexibility for smaller groups to be accommodated in more intimate and comfortable settings.

Conference delegates will have access to the resort’s comprehensive 5 star facilities without imposing on the other guests.

The Centre’s first event, the

African, Caribbean & Pacific States and joint European Union Parliamentary Assembly was attended by approximately 400 primary delegates and their support staff.

The Centre, funded by the Warwick International Hotels group, includes comprehensive kitchen and catering facilities, state-of-the-art air cooled air conditioning systems, dedicated power supply and back up, fully integrated audio-visual systems and expansive verandas that allow delegates to experience the lush tropical grounds of the resort for break-out sessions and al-fresco dining.

GETTING TO KNOW: Hilton Melbourne South Wharf Hotel

What more can you ask for other than easy access to the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC), DFO shopping and beautiful views of the Yarra river? Well the Hilton Melbourne South Wharf hotel offers all of the above and so much more to the leisure and business traveller.

The 396 guest room the hotel features floor to ceiling glass windows in every room as well as a four-point bathroom with all the latest technology.

The meetings and corporate market has also been catered for through a partnership with the MCEC that allows access to the facility through level one of the hotel.

South Wharf Meetings and Events can host small to medium events of between 10 to 250 delegates with state of the art conference facilities.

Private spaces within the hotel include the Cocktail Bar, Dining Rooms, Boardrooms, Outdoor Terrace as well as the Gallery Space that can also be used for events.

The private spaces can accommodate events for between 10 to 500 people showcasing tailor-made menus, state of the art audio technology and is close to a range of local bars and restaurants.

There are three options of dining at the hotel, the Sotano Wine and Tapas, a bar showcasing a wine gantry over the bar; The Caffe Cino features a menu that focuses on fresh, local produce and is a great spot for casual dining or a quick bite to eat and Nuevo 37, an al fresco venue located on the riverfront where guests can enjoy Australian cuisine including fresh seasonal produce, fine cured meats and cheese and a variety of light seafood dishes.

The hotel also offers guests staying in the hotel’s suites access to an Executive Lounge which offers a ‘light and airy’ space, internet and wi-fi access, comfy lounge chairs and table and chairs for a comfortable meeting space, or somewhere to have a quick bite to eat or a complimentary drink of choice.

Corporate clients also have access to a Business Centre, Express Mail, photo copying service, business phone service, a fax and printer.



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Offering free professional advice, the experienced staff at Mackay Convention Bureau are dedicated to ensuring that your next event will exceed expectations.

*Call today to discover more of our hidden gems!
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