



### Let it rain!

LAST night BEN was at the Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour - *La Traviata*.



It poured throughout the event but you know it didn't seem to matter.

Despite the rain, it was a magnificent evening and a fantastic production.

There's so much more to relate, so keep an eye out for Monday's issue where I will give further details on the event.

I'm at the airport about to head for Singapore to check out the latest MICE offerings there, so stay tuned...

Have a great weekend - Jill.

## Royal Caribbean's one and only

ROYAL Caribbean Cruises is the latest cruise operator to tout the advantages of meetings afloat, with spokesman Adam Armstrong, saying it's the only cruise line to have dedicated conference centres on board their ships in Australia.

"We offer dedicated, flexible spaces capable of accommodating between six and 1,350 people along with the assistance of a conference co-ordinator onboard – all at no extra cost," he said.

"With sleek and modern spaces, the ships are able to accommodate everything from a board retreat for a few to a large scale national sales meeting.

"Holding your meeting or conference at sea is such a cost effective, convenient and entertaining way to get business done," Armstrong said.

Along with the conference facilities the ships offer accom, a la carte dining and entertainment – "coupled with great service".

Royal Caribbean's complimentary state of the art audio and visual equipment, can save "thousands of dollars," he added.

For particularly large events an entire ship can be chartered, with product and cruise itinerary tailored to specific requirements.

In Australia alone, next summer Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises will offer five "world class superliners" with capacities ranging from 1,000 to 1,600 cabins, accommodating groups of up to 3,500 people.

### Luxperience launch



THE newly refurbished Park Hyatt Sydney provided the perfect foil for the launch on Wednesday evening of Luxperience.

One a supremely stylish hotel and the other a new high-end, experiential, travel trade show with its own stamp of glamour and style.

Headed up by well-known MICE industry identity, Rosemarie Sama and ably assisted by two other industry personalities, Angelya Vassiliadis-Balaguer and Shaun Murphy, the glamorous affair, borne along by free-flowing quantities of Verve Cliquot, was attended by some of the travel and hotel industries' most well-known and influential guests.

The inaugural Luxperience expo which is expected to attract 100-150 exhibitors, will take place 10-12 September at Sydney's Overseas Passenger Terminal.



It almost sounds like the first instalment of the horror film *Final Destination!*

27 frightened passengers abandoned a Moscow to Krasnoyarsk, Russia flight after a passenger reported what seemed to be a hole in the engine.

According to *The Australian*, the "hole" was just a missing inspection panel, which the plane was allowed to fly without.

The plane eventually took off without the fleeing passengers.

## WIN A 2-NIGHT ULURU ENCOUNTER



To celebrate the \$10million redevelopment of Ayers Rock Resort's Uluru Meeting Place conference centre **Voyages** is offering a great prize to **Business Events News** readers.

The Uluru Meeting Place will feature striking contemporary interiors that reflect the Indigenous heritage of the location. Facilities include a new ballroom that can comfortably seat 420 people as well as a second ballroom that seats over 300. These two rooms combined can create a large area that is ideal for events and trade shows.

The prize includes two return economy airfares to Ayers Rock Resort from the winners nearest Australian capital city, return airport transfers, two nights accommodation in a newly refurbished room at the Sails in the Desert Hotel, dinner at the intimate Tali Wiru fine dining experience and a Desert Awakenings Small Group Sunrise tour.

All you need to do to be in the running to win this great prize, is to email your answer to the below question by COB on Friday 30th March to: [voyagescomp@businessesnews.com.au](mailto:voyagescomp@businessesnews.com.au)

The most creative answer will win this fantastic prize.

**In 25 words or less tell us what Uluru means to you**



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## Win Richard Branson's new book

virgin atlantic

This week, **Business Events News** is giving



readers the chance to win a copy of Richard Branson's new book: 'Screw business as usual' courtesy of Virgin Atlantic.

For over 26 years, Virgin Atlantic has been one of the world's leading long haul airlines. The carrier's dedicated Groups Sales team offers tailor made solutions to meet the needs and objectives of its clients.

For your chance to win, simply be the first to answer the following question to - [comp@businessesnews.com.au](mailto:comp@businessesnews.com.au)

**How many people make a group in Upper Class?**

Hint: [www.vsflyinghub.com](http://www.vsflyinghub.com)

virgin atlantic ben



## Palazzo Versace reward

**LOOKING** for an extraordinary conference or event deal?  
Palazzo Versace on the Gold Coast will reward you with 5% off the initial contracted price if confirmed within 14 days.  
In addition, there's one hour complimentary canapés and Sofibeverages and unlimited complimentary accommodation rooms and upgrades with reduced booking thresholds.  
To take advantage of this offer quote REWARDS to-  
[sales@palazzoversace.com](mailto:sales@palazzoversace.com).

## Club Med iapp

**CLUB** Med has unveiled a free iPad and iPhone application that allows users to look for destination ideas, best sales offers, a comparison function and more - [clubmed-app.com.au](http://clubmed-app.com.au).

## Sofitel's cause and effect

**THE** team at the Sofitel Melbourne On Collins were deservedly thrilled to receive the 'Cause Related Event of the Year' Award for its annual fundraising event, Eat Street.

The Eat Street event which has been going for 12 years, has raised well in excess of \$1million to help a number of children's charities including Very Special Kids, OzChild, and the Australian Childhood Foundation.

This year's event is planned for Tuesday, 12 June, and the beneficiary will be Redkite, an organisation which supports children and young adults who are suffering from cancer.

"It's wonderful to be finally recognised for all of the hard

work which goes into planning and organising this much loved event, and particularly for the contribution made by our suppliers and staff in helping to



make a difference to the lives of children in need", said Sofitel's director of conferences & events, Sharon Bretz.

Bretz is pictured above with Annie Dawson and Jacinta Shephard.

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## GETTING TO KNOW: Dallas/Fort Worth

Right now there is no better time and every good reason to consider Dallas/Fort Worth for your corporate conference or incentive.

Prime among them is the strength of the Aussie dollar against its US counterpart.

Qantas's decision to choose Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (the third busiest airport in the world) as its hub in the US is another reason to go and one that gives these markets unprecedented access to 13 new US and three Mexican destinations through its alliance with oneworld and American Airlines operated code share services.

Many companies in Australia have reason to choose Dallas for their events since it has the largest concentration of corporate headquarters in the US.

It is home to a slew of Fortune 500 companies such as Exxon Mobil, Kimberley-Clark, AT&T and Texas Instruments. Dallas also enjoys a reputation as one of the top convention cities in the US and the Dallas Convention Center is one of the nation's largest, with 93,000 square metres of exhibition space.

Boldly calling itself "the birthplace of shopping", Dallas can give your wallet a workout at massive malls such as Galleria Dallas and NorthPark Center.

The Texan city is also where the NFL's legendary Dallas Cowboys play in a new \$1.3 billion Cowboys Stadium. For the 'cowboy romantic within', Dallas's Western heritage goes back to pioneer days and today in the heart of downtown you can see the site where the Shawnee Trail Drive of the 1850s moved through.

A boot-scoot away in the West End historic entertainment district, groups can honour this Western past with a two-step around the dance floor at Cowboys Red Rivers, or at the Jack Daniel's Saloon at Gilley's, where they can ride the mechanical bull featured in the film Urban Cowboy.

So, saddle up partner, you'll find that some fine Texan hospitality is served on the grill - [visitdallas.com](http://visitdallas.com)

