



## Sparing no effort

or expense the Sunshine Coast Destination Ltd,

managed to get a clip of the 'Sunshine Safari' famil, filmed by the Sunshine Coast's local Channel 7 News team that aired last Friday evening.

This has now been posted on BENs website -

[businessesnews.com.au](http://businessesnews.com.au).

A word of warning, don't be alarmed by the Crime Stoppers opening seeking a tanned caucasian aged in their 20s, it isn't **BEN!**

The famil content follows on soon after.

While you are at it, take a look at our Facebook page - we'd love you to LIKE us and tell us how much you enjoy the issues - Jill.



## Accor swallows Mirvac Hotels

IN a deal that is set to change the face of Australian and New Zealand hotel industry, Accor have announced the purchase of the Mirvac Group's hotel interests in Australia and New Zealand.

The purchase will add a total of 43 hotels across Australia and New Zealand.

In the first phase of integration, Sydney Marriott Hotel was re-branded yesterday as Pullman Sydney Hyde Park, and Sebel Newcastle Beach will be re-branded to Novotel Newcastle Beach in June.

The previously Mirvac-managed Sydney Marriott Hotel will receive a \$7 million refurbishment to align the hotel to Pullman's 5-star standards.

The major refurbishment program will include renovating all remaining rooms as well as significant upgrades to the hotel's lobby and public areas.

While the majority of Mirvac's hotels will remain under their existing brands – Quay West

Suites & Resorts, Sea Temple, Sebel Hotels, Resorts & Residences and Citigate Hotels – in the short term, a major priority for the integration will be to re-brand a number of the hotels under Accor's upscale Pullman brand – one of Asia Pacific's fastest growing 5-star brands.

"The settlement of this deal will fundamentally re-shape the hotel industry in Australia and New Zealand," said Michael Issenberg, coo for Accor Asia Pacific."

The deal makes Accor the first group in the Asia Pacific region to exceed 500 hotels and strengthens their position in the upscale sector, in Australia and New Zealand, building on Accor's current leadership position in the mid-scale and economy sectors.

## Above & beyond

A global research initiative by members of Future Convention Cities (FCCI) - *Beyond Tourism Benefits*, is being distributed to Toronto and following that to Durban, London, Seoul and San Francisco.

The FCCI group of member cities, described as the 'new generation' of convention leaders, collaborate to shape and accelerate the strategic development of their business events industries.

FCCI chairperson, Lyn Lewis-Smith (ceo of Business Events Sydney) said, "This global research is essential for us as an industry to comprehensively understand the legacies of business events, and how these may differ across borders."

"Sydney has completed two phases of research – the first qualitative, the second quantitative.

"Now we are progressing the global phase of the quantitative study.

"I know that the FCCI members are keen to see their city's results," she said.

## Cedar Creeks Special

A Winter Christmas Conference Special, with a \$219 per person rate is being offered by Cedar Creek Lodges, less than an hour from the Gold Coast CBD.

In this rainforest and rural setting the winter special includes tea and coffee on arrival, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea, a stand-alone conference room with natural light, including full set-up of your choice, conference equipment - data projector, screen, whiteboard, flip chart, free high speed wireless internet connection in all conference rooms, two course traditional Christmas dinner at the resort's Rainforest Restaurant & Lounge Bar/twin share accommodation etc - [cedarcreeklodges.com.au](http://cedarcreeklodges.com.au).

## Lord Howe beckons

LORD Howe Island, widely regarded as the most beautiful island in the Pacific and one of four islands inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list for global significance, makes an idyllic location for a small conference or corporate retreat.

Somerset Lord Howe Apartments have launched a new conference product which Somerset's general manager Gai Wilson said is in response to the demand experienced in the past.

"Our team work closely with the conference organiser throughout all preparations and ensure that their event runs smoothly.

"We can offer a fully equipped function room with state of the art conference and projection facilities in addition to tasty treats prepared by our chef."

Somerset Apartments are perfectly situated between Neds Beach and the Lagoon, on a level area of the Island, allowing easy walking and biking to nearby shops, restaurants & the Visitor Centre - [sales@somersetlordhowe.com.au](mailto:sales@somersetlordhowe.com.au).

## Services suspended

SUSTAINED weak performances of their Abu Dhabi and Athens routes have caused Singapore Airlines to suspend services to both these destinations.

The decision, described as a difficult one as Athens has been served since 1972 and Abu Dhabi since 2006, will see the last flights to both cities depart Singapore on 26 October.

The suspensions are in line with Singapore Airlines' policy to match capacity to prevailing market demand.

Customers holding confirmed tickets issued prior to 16 May for travel to and from Abu Dhabi and Athens after 26 October (27 October for the return Abu Dhabi-Singapore service) will be eligible for refunds, without administrative fees or penalties.

This also applies to KrisFlyer redemption tickets.

## Everyone a good wine



This week, **Business Events News** is giving readers the chance to win a 750ml bottle of Veuve

Clicquot Champagne courtesy of New Caledonia Tourism.

There has never been a better time to send your clients to New Caledonia, a touch of France in the Pacific and less than three hours from Sydney.

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

### Who designed Tjibaou Cultural Centre?



Hint: visitnewcaledonia.com



business events news



### NZ adds a little Sunshine

**THE** first-ever international, scheduled passenger flights to and from the Sunshine Coast will begin 01 July when Air New Zealand operates the service as part of its Trans Tasman alliance with Virgin Australia.

Two flights a week to and from Auckland will commence on a seasonal trial, connecting seamlessly with the extensive domestic and international networks of Virgin Australia and Air New Zealand.

Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business Minister Jan Jarratt in welcoming Air New Zealand to the Sunshine Coast, said the new flights are a massive confidence boost for the region and an economic shot in the arm for local tourism operators.

“This is a red-letter day for tourism on the Sunshine Coast and it shows this region has well and truly come of age,” she said.

“It is estimated these seasonal flights will add another 50,000 new room nights and an expected \$1.5 million cash injection over the winter months.

“Connecting with American flights out of Auckland will also present opportunities for growth.”

Acting Mayor Tim Dwyer said, “Not only will this flight connect the Coast with our biggest international market in New Zealand but also offers the opportunity to connect via Auckland to markets in the US and beyond.

“We are truly entering a whole new chapter for tourism and economic activity,” he said.

### Hawaii winner

**THE** lucky winner of the major competition to Hawaii in **BEN** last month will be announced on Fri.

Remember this month we are giving away a trip for two to Vanuatu, courtesy of Air Vanuatu and the Grand Hotel and Casino.

All the questions, to date, are on our website, so get your answers in for a chance to win - [businessesnews.com.au](http://businessesnews.com.au).

### SKYCITY Darwin redefines

**AFTER** a \$40 million dollar tropical resort development, an award winning infinity pool and extensive restaurant upgrades, SKYCITY Beach Resort is looking at a mid July opening.

Redefining ‘Top End Luxury,’ the development which has taken almost 22 months to complete, promises to introduce a new level of luxury accommodation to Darwin and represents SKYCITY’s commitment to the Territory’s projected growth strategy over the coming years.

The resort which is centred on an extensive man-made lagoon with a swim-up bar and 30 metre white sand beach, features 32 luxury rooms and two outstanding superior villas.

Also featured is a decadent day spa, managed by Australian operator, endota spa which will be available for use to the general public, in addition to a brand new bar and restaurant.

The existing 5-star property has also undergone a significant facelift, including some of the



hotel rooms and two of its popular restaurants.

The award winning restaurants EVOO and Dragon Court, which were relaunched this month, have undergone a modern update to the existing decor and introduced brand new menus that reflect the Top End’s fresh seasonal produce.

For business travellers seeking a luxury tropical escape, it has an unrivalled range of luxury accommodation, meeting and event facilities, restaurants, bars and personal pampering.

### ATS Pacific Fiji offer

**ATS** Pacific one of Fiji’s leading inbound travel management companies and experts in the provision of ground arrangements for international groups, have an exclusive offer for **BEN** readers.

Mention **Business Events News** when you book for any program of 50 people or more that includes land transfers, three theme night events or two theme night events and one off site exclusive day tour, all with ATS Pacific, ATS will provide one of the selected theme set up at no charge.



**AUSTRALIA’s** Melbourne (Avalon) Airport is among the world’s most misleadingly named airports a flight comparison site *Skyscanner* has revealed.

With ‘Melbourne’ listed in the booking name, unfamiliar travellers might expect the airport to be located in the vicinity of the Victorian capital. However at 55 km from Melbourne’s CBD, *Skyscanner* says that it’s far from being the only misleadingly named airport out there.

How about *Paris-Vatry Disney* which airport is 150km from central Paris and 112km from Disneyland Paris, setting a new record in misleading airport nomenclature?

Oslo Torp is 110 km from central Oslo and London’s Oxford airport is 97 km out of London.

### WIN A TRIP FOR TWO TO VANUATU



During the months of May and June, **Business Events News** is giving one lucky reader the chance to 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/Mel to Port Vila, and five nights accommodation in a Harbour View 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.5: What is the average flight time to Port Vila from Sydney?

Hint: [airvanuatu.com](http://airvanuatu.com)

Email your answers to: [vanuatu@businessesnews.com.au](mailto:vanuatu@businessesnews.com.au)

[Click here for terms & conditions](#)







## Horsing around at Yas

**THE** heritage-rich Sir Bani Yas Island in the Western Region of Abu Dhabi has launched an impressive state-of-the-art horse riding facility, the Sir Bani Yas Stables.

The facility, located next to Desert Islands Resort & Spa by Anantara, has capacity for 30 horses, and is home to a range of highly-talented horses of different breeds from Arabia and around the world.

Purpose-built, and designed with a strong focus on protecting the environment, it features sustainable lighting and irrigation.

The five-star equestrian experience consists of two stable barns, six sand paddocks, two large grass paddocks, a lunge ring, a covered riding arena and a training ring and riding ring.

Guests will have the opportunity to

learn about the horses and the heritage of Arabian horses within the UAE, and experience a unique perspective of the island's Arabian Wildlife Park - home to an array of wildlife species including Arabian Oryx, Sand Gazelle, Cattle Egret and Peacocks.

Equestrian competitor in eventing and dressage, coordinator Laura Jane MacLucas, joins Anantara with thirteen years experience in the equestrian arena.

Adding another twist to the exhilarating adventure awaiting guests at this unique resort, there is also a range of activities including walking through wadis, kayaking, snorkelling and sailing.



## The Slap!

**DESCRIBED** as a slap in the face for both the Australian and New Zealand tourism industries, Norm Thompson, chairman of the Tourism Industry Association

New Zealand (TIA), spoke about the Australian Government's recent budget decision to increase its passenger departure tax by 17% to NZ\$71.

"The increase will be a barrier to the almost 1.2 million Australians who travel to New Zealand annually," says Thompson.

"Australia is our largest and most valuable visitor market and our aim is to encourage travel here."

The increase in the passenger movement charge (PMC) from 01 July by A\$8 to A\$55 comes at a

time when TIA and the Tourism & Transport Forum Australia (TTF) have been lobbying for the tax to

be cut.

The result of the PMC increase, Thomson went on to say will give the Australian government an additional NZ\$23.8 million in 2012-13.

While acknowledging that some of the money will go towards Tourism Australia, he said, ".....the experience with the UK's airport departure tax shows unfair tax grabs such as this disappear into the government coffers."

The TIA and TTF, he said will continue to fight the PMC increase.



## Grays' Say

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



### WHEN A LEADER BECOMES A FOLLOWER

There are very few weeks when Qantas is out of the news...and none of what is reported seems to be good!

Today's headline predicts QF will slash 500 engineering jobs; not many days ago Choice magazine informed us that, according to RBA figures, the airline is recovering far more than it costs - to the tune of some \$100 million last year - when a credit card is used to book a flight.

We are told that QF's international operation is hemorrhaging money and yet Alan Joyce still seems intent upon setting up an ultra premium airline in Asia.

Rebuffed by Malaysian he is looking for another partner. But why?

Qantas should be the airline all Australians are proud to fly

but it most certainly isn't and at the hands of Joyce it's not going to regain that position any time soon.

In keeping with his predecessor, Geoff Dixon, I have never heard Joyce talk-up the airline he leads.

Unlike John Borghetti, CEO of Virgin Australia, who takes every opportunity to praise his airline.

Qantas has become a follower not a leader; it is outclassed by many of its competitors because, unlike Qantas, they invest in their product and service...and their people.

*Peter Gray is Managing Partner of Motivating People and General Secretary of The Incentive Association.*



## Race around Accor's Melbourne hotels



**MORE** than 50 of Victoria's established professional conference organisers, corporate meeting planners and event finders gathered at The Swanston Hotel Grand Mercure for the start of the second annual 'Accor Great Race', with a series of challenges over two days.

The race, set out to showcase the diversity of Accor's city conferencing product saw 10 teams from six Accor hotels, sprint and busk their way around Melbourne's CBD and face a series of challenges along the way.

Teams untangled themselves from the 'handcuff challenge' and

set off for the first day's series of stations dotted across city locations including the Eureka SkyDeck, Sidney Myer Music Bowl, Rod Laver Arena, Queen Victoria Markets, The Block Arcade and Flinders Street Station, in between hotel visits to Ibis Melbourne, Novotel Melbourne on Collins & Mercure Melbourne Treasury Gardens.

**Pictured** above are: Belinda Lee, Mercure Caroline Springs; Steven Bracchi and Andrew Miles, Mercure Melbourne Treasury Gardens; Luke Alexander, Rob Marletta and Peter Kennedy, FCm Travel.



## Pineapple icon reopens

**ONGOING** improvements to the Sunshine Coast's Big Pineapple Function Centre including the securing of a professional events management team, has led to its reopening this week.

Ensuring the venue's service excellence and to

create a remarkable experience every time, Annette Lasek and Sue Jackson, the Function Centre event managers, bring to their roles many years of experience in planning and delivering both business events and celebrations.

"As well as being a popular venue for weddings, the huge garden and rainforest areas give us the opportunity to deliver some amazing team building and recreational activities for conferences," said Lasek.

The Centre can cater from 50 to 600 people and is available for weddings, parties, business conferences, seminars and expos.



## Gaunt sleeps rough

**ALL** in a good cause, MEA's ceo Linda Gaunt will sleep rough for the homeless in the upcoming Vinnies CEO Sleepout on Thursday 21 June and she is asking you to support this great cause.

All money raised will go towards helping Australia's estimated 105,000 homeless men, women and children to find the warmth, safety and dignity.

Details at - [ceosleepout.org.au](http://ceosleepout.org.au).

## Granada hosts MITM

**THE** 16th edition of MITM Euromed, *Meetings and Incentive Travel Market*, is to take place this year in the city of Granada, Spain, from 3-5 Oct, at the Granada Exhibition & Conference Centre.

For the second time MITM will be held simultaneously with GSAR Marketing's other event CULTOURFAIR, *International Cultural Travel Fair*.

This means exhibitors of MITM will have the opportunity to meet, by individual prescheduled appointments, not only with top MICE – meetings, incentives, congresses and events – buyers but also with important worldwide tour operators and travel agents specialised in cultural travel, covering two very important travel niche markets.

## Shrink rap in Hobart

**HOBART** is taking things lying down this week as 1,000 psychiatrists converge on the city for The Royal Australian & New Zealand College of Psychiatrists' "Psychiatry and Mental Health Conference."

Being held until 24 May the august members are convening at the Hotel Grand Chancellor for the conference themed "Cells, Circuits and Syndromes" which features eminent international keynote speakers from the UK, Norway, USA, Canada and South Africa.

Highlights of the conference will take place in the Federation Concert Hall for the College Honours Ceremony.

A social program that includes a welcome dinner at MONA, a gala dinner at Princes Wharf 1, and faculty and special interest group dinners, are being organised at various restaurants around Hobart.

Business Events Tasmania ceo, Stuart Nettlefold, said "Business events delegates contribute substantially to the Tasmanian economy and community.

"When a conference of this size is in town everyone benefits. Taxis are full, restaurants are full, retailers do a roaring trade...it's not just the conference venue and conference suppliers that benefit.

"In addition, there is additional value contributed by partners and family members who often accompany the delegate, as well as the pre and post conference touring to other destinations within Tasmania.

The meeting he went on to say addresses the perception that Tasmania is a destination only for small business events when in reality they can host up to 1100 delegates.

"Business events held in Tasmania during this month will see more than 3,000 delegate arrivals; this is almost twice the number that visited in May last year.

Other major business events held during May include the 8th International Abalone Symposium with 350 delegates, Nurses for Nurses Network 2012 Conference with 100 delegates, and the Australian Vegetable and Potato Growers Federation," Nettlefold said.



## InterConti hosts PCOs



**SHOWCASING** Fijian culture and InterContinental Fiji's unique MICE and private VIP events InterContinental Fiji hosted a group of Australian PCO's and event managers on a signature 'Destination Natadola - Passport to Paradise' famil last weekend.

"The famil is designed to exhibit the InterContinental Fiji MICE experience in a memorable way" says conference & events manager, Louise Acreman.

"Fijian culture is at the core of our program and for this famil we chose to showcase the resort's locally inspired cuisine."

'Discover Natadola' passports containing 'visas' of uniquely Fijian experiences were issued to the PCO's on arrival.

On their journey guests met with Malomalo Primary school children and were treated to Indian and tribal performances by VOU; Fiji's premier contemporary dance group, and a special appearance by chef Gerard Marr.

Sunset canapés on the 4th hole of Natadola's championship golf course preempted the 'Taste of Fiji' experience at the resort's award-winning restaurant Navo.

"The 'Passport to Paradise' famil is our unique take on a site inspection and is designed to lead guests on a journey of culturally enriching experiences within the local community" says general manager Scott Williams.

"Australia's tourism business is invaluable to the Fiji tourism industry", said Williams.

"We are excited to showcase the unique MICE experiences and wonderful local culture the resort and Fiji has to offer."

## Dietitians choose Sydney

**THE** Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is to host the 16<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Dietetics (ICD2012) in Sydney from 5-8 September.

More than 2,500 delegates will hear the latest research in nutrition, and discuss the key issues affecting health on a national and international level.

For more info on ICD 2012, visit: <http://www.icd2012.com/>.

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