



## A festive tipple

IT was an intimate afternoon of canapés and champagne on Thursday at the Pullman Circular Quay's ECQ Bar when Accor held celebratory drinks with their marketing and communications crew.



Chief operating officer Simon McGrath remarked, "We come to the end of another tremendous year in the wonderful world of Accor hotels."

He went on to introduce Bridie Commerford as the group's new director of marketing and communications Australia.

She's pictured below left with fellow Accor communications team member Sally McCann.



McGrath also confirmed that Accor is taking over operations of Qantas Domestic Lounges across Australia, to be run under the auspices of the nascent five-star Pullman brand.

McGrath said the deal brings together the two biggest names in tourism and hospitality in Australia to provide the best possible service to Qantas Frequent Flyers.

"Both Qantas and Accor put the customer first in their operations and we are proud to introduce Qantas flyers to the Pullman standards of hospitality."

The Qantas Club move extends Accor's relationship with the airline, where Sofitel already operates first class and business class lounges. *Jill*

## Women build new world



**THIS** all-female build team created a piece of history over the weekend of 7-8 December, when Moreton Hire put them to the test at the inaugural helloworld "Frontliners Conference," held at the Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Helloworld is a new travel agency brand which will replace Harvey World Travel, Jetset, Travelworld and Travelscene, and the conference for the first time brought together more than 600 consultants from across the brands.

The conference build was led by project manager Sharon Thorp, who was responsible for transportation, delivery, set up and execution of 20 booths as well as feature areas.

Thorp, who has more than 12 years experience working across key Moreton Hire events and exhibitions, including Brisbane Truck Show, Gold Coast V8s and Bridge to Brisbane, said she was honoured to lead the group of women, looking at it as a celebration of Moreton Hire as an equal opportunity workplace.

Peter Morahan, prominent Gold Coaster and Moreton Hire's director said, "The girls took on the tasks that are seen as more traditional, male operational roles.

"It is our goal to have a balanced workforce, which allows for many benefits including increased operational efficiency, innovation and attracting top talent in the industry."

A delighted Adrienne Readings, general manager, Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre said, "It is great to see Moreton Hire actively encouraging more women to work in the events industry, especially in an operational capacity."

The build team comprised Sharon Thorp, project manager; Trudi Flemming, Queensland Exhibitions manager; account managers Catherine Pippas and Justine Chakalakis; operations manager Belinda Evans; and operations staff Bec Taylor, Danielle Hall, Laura Murrell and Belinda McCormack.

## Bentley turns Blu

**THE** fundamentals of Sydney's renowned Bentley Restaurant and Bar, synonymous with its Surry Hills roots, "will remain," assured chef Brent Savage, as he announced Bentley's reopening on Tuesday 17 December at the historic Radisson Blu CBD hotel.

The new eatery will take the place of the former Bilson's restaurant at the Radisson Blu, which closed in October 2011.

Savage promised that he would continue to offer "serious food and wine served in a relaxed, modern and informal environment, but the beautiful new space will enable us to take Bentley to the next level."

For Savage and co-owner sommelier Nick Hildebrandt, the new restaurant is the crowning achievement in their eight year partnership.

Savage's menu will deliver cutting edge a la carte dining, as well as a separate bar area for up to 30 drinkers and diners.

The 80 seat dining room also features a private dining and event space for up to 40 people.

## Japan made easier

**JETSTAR** has announced the first direct flights from Melbourne to Tokyo in more than five years, with new non-stop services to operate from 29 April 2014.

To enable the new international route Jetstar will suspend its three times weekly flights from the Gold Coast to Osaka.

## Senior Leadership Opportunities

Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) is a business development organisation that promotes Melbourne as the premier business events destination in Australia by bidding internationally to host meetings, incentives and conferences.

Reporting to the General Manager - Business Development and Bids, MCB now has two unique senior leadership opportunities available to head up the Business Development and Research departments of the Bureau.

If you are looking for an exciting, fast paced role within a dynamic organisation and would like more information on either of these roles please [click here](#).





## Indians score at Dreamtime



**THIS** group of incentive agents from cricket-mad India had some of their sporting dreams come true in the lead-up to Tourism Australia's *Dreamtime* conference last week, when they were hosted by the Adelaide Convention Bureau to see some of the unique opportunities afforded by South Australia.

Visiting the Adelaide Oval was a key highlight, while the group also went to the brand new Scool restaurant as well as to Kangaroo Island where they enjoyed the countryside and getting up close and personal with wildlife.

Dreamtime delegates also

experienced other parts of the country, including regional Victoria and Melbourne where they enjoyed a behind the scenes tour of the Melbourne Cricket Ground led by none other than Aussie cricketing legend Merv Hughes.

A total of 85 international business events decision makers from 12 countries attended *Dreamtime*, with a key focus being local cuisine in a series of events where top chefs showcased Australia's culinary offerings (**BEN** 09 Dec).

## Orient-Express Bali rebranding

**THE** owners of the Ubud Hanging Gardens in Bali have announced they will manage the resort as an independent property, meaning that it's no longer part of the upmarket Orient-Express Hotels collection.

The move will allow the hotel to "introduce a bespoke, personalised luxury service," according to a statement issued last weekend.

The 30-villa retreat is intriguingly balanced on top of wooden pillars set among the rice terraces of Ubud, with each villa offering its own private pool, Zen garden and outside day bed.

It was formerly known as Ubud Hanging Gardens by Orient-Express, but following the change has now been renamed the Hanging Gardens Ubud.

## AIPC discounts

**DISCOUNTED** registration rates are being offered for Australians who want to undertake AIPC Academy courses, with 50% off in recognition of the costs of long-haul travel to the Academy near Brussels, Belgium.

AIPC is the International Association of Congress Centres, and has just released details of a new 'Issues Based' curriculum for the 2014 Academy which will take place 09-14 Feb.

The program addresses the full spectrum of convention centre management responsibilities, but is now applied in a way "that encourages and supports a focus on the most immediate challenges and opportunities facing managers."

This new approach also lends itself well to returning participants who will find a significant change in content and approach, given the emphasis on current industry issues.

As well as the discounts for long-haul travellers, a limited number of AIPC Academy scholarships are available through the support of corporate partner IMEX and AIPC members.

For info see [www.aipc.org](http://www.aipc.org).

## Work's a beach at Crowne Coogee

**BOASTING** the closest beachside conferencing hotel to the Sydney CBD, the Crowne Plaza Coogee Beach has completed a \$1.1 million upgrade of its key meeting and event spaces and pre-function areas.

Revitalised with a fresh coastal design and facilities to complement new AV systems installed last year, the redesign was created by architecture and interiors firm, Rothe Lowman.

The Crowne Plaza's pre-function and breakout areas have been enhanced, with the introduction of a new lounge space for breaks and informal meetings, and a permanent registration area and event organiser's office opposite the hotel's main entrance.

"For the first time, our meeting spaces truly reflect our location," said Crowne Plaza Coogee Beach general manager, Kate Gerits.

The new space offers capacity for up to 350 guests for a cocktail function or theatre-style presentation in the newly refurbished Oceanic Ballroom.



**MOVIES**, stage shows and now a hotel...

Baz Luhrmann and Catherine Martin, the Australian husband-and-wife movie director and costume/set designer duo are to collaborate on the design of a new 168-suite hotel; one part of the Faena Group's huge Miami development project.

They will handle the interiors, uniforms, and 'cultural programming' for what was originally called the Saxony Hotel.

Said to be fully immersing themselves in the project, "just like we would deal with a film"; going so far as to interview the sons of the hotel's founder, George Sax.

The two will tap into the hotel's glamour-soaked history as one of the first luxury hotels in America, playground to Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Marilyn Monroe.

The property will feature multiple restaurants, a 16,000-sq ft spa, a cabaret, and a cinema.

Although it's definitely going to be great (*Gatsby*), there's no confirmation at this stage of whether it will also feature a ballroom - strictly or otherwise.



## MEA awards webinar

**MEETINGS** and Events Australia is hosting an online webinar from 2pm this Wednesday 18 December, showcasing the opportunity afforded by entering its National Awards program.

The webinar will provide plenty of information about the benefits of the awards including past winners, judges and young professionals along with details of how to write and submit a winning application.

The closing date for submissions is 10 February 2014, with categories including venues, products & services, destination marketing and more.

**CLICK HERE** for webinar rego.



# business events news

16th December 2013

## CONTACT US:

Publisher  
Bruce Piper

Editor  
Jill Varley

Advertising:  
[advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au)

P: 1300 799 220

F: 1300 799 221

PO Box 1010 Epping, NSW,  
1710 Business Events  
News

is part of the Travel Daily  
group of publications  
which also include: Travel  
Daily, Cruise Weekly and  
Pharmacy Daily.

Disclaimer: While every care has been taken in the preparation of *Business Events News* no liability can be accepted for errors or omissions. *BEN* takes no responsibility for the opinions of its contributors/columnists. Information is published in good faith to stimulate independent investigation of the matters canvassed.

## Trippas treads the boards

A **STYLISH** new café and bar, The Social, located at the Illawarra Performing Arts Centre (IPAC) in Wollongong, home of the Merrigong Theatre Company, has announced Trippas White Group as its caterer.

Merrigong artistic director/ceo, Simon Hinton said, "For us to have an operator of the calibre of Trippas White working with us to offer a contemporary, welcoming, social dining experience, both in the Centre and outdoors in the Arts Precinct, is exciting not only for IPAC patrons, but for the city as a whole".

Joseph Murray, Trippas White group managing director, said they too are excited to enter the Wollongong market and work with a cultural institution such as IPAC.

## Electrifying evening with the GCCEC



**GREASE** was the word when the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC) recently took this lucky group of PCO's and representatives from some of Australia's leading industry associations, to a summer night production of *Grease* the award-winning musical at The Star Sydney.

Prior to the show they enjoyed cocktails and canapés at The Star's one-hat Sokyo Lounge.

The event highlighted an extraordinary 12-month period for the Centre, including recognition of its environmental commitment when it became the

first convention centre worldwide to receive a Gold EarthCheck Certification.

The GCCEC is also excited at the prospects afforded by the Gold Coast's new light rail network which will have a stop right outside the front door, increasing its accessibility and appeal to the domestic and international business events market.

One of the major events at the centre for 2014 will be the World Conference and Youth Forum, with 1500 delegates expected.

The GCCEC is represented in Sydney by Tourism Portfolio - see [www.tourismportfolio.com.au](http://www.tourismportfolio.com.au).



## Getting to Know: Norfolk Island

by: Jill Varley

**NORFOLK** Island isn't for everyone, although you will be swept away by the 360° outlook from the top of Mount Pitt; the unique history of heritage buildings that spiral you back to the days of the Pitcairn islanders and its convict settlements; and the pleasures of duty free shopping.

However, for the meetings and conference market it poses both delights and problems. High-end conference organisers may find it a bit too colloquial, and much of the accommodation is something of a 1970s time warp.

That there is no air conditioning on the island is an environmental bonus, especially with their temperate climate, plentiful ceiling fans and gas fires.

Yes, there is wi-fi but it's very slow and dodgy at best, although I was assured moves were afoot to rectify this - they certainly need to!

The largest accommodation with meetings facilities can be found at places like the Governor's Lodge with 55 one-bedroom cottages, a meeting room for 86-theatre style and a garden marquee for up to 160. Across the road is the Paradise Hotel & Resort with 55 rooms, six of which have recently been refurbished, while the South Pacific Resort is doing a much-needed upgrade to its rooms and has a few new Penthouse suites. In general, you can't set your sights too high, that is, unless it's for a small corporate retreat. Then there are stylish places like The White House, The Tin Sheds and Forrester Court to name a few, which will delight even the most fastidious client.

What NI lacks in 'star' quality it makes up for in genuine hospitality and natural attributes. It's the perfect place for team building exercises - for sea kayaking, for playing on the most picturesque of golf courses, for snorkelling, fishing and boat trips. There are some delightful restaurants tucked away like the Bedrock Café where they also do great massages, or the Norfolk Blue Restaurant Grill & Bar + Farm Tours can do 100 for an event. A cooking class at Hilli Restaurant where they grown their own vegetables, is not to be missed. You can take part in a Murder Mystery dinner, dine with the locals in their own homes and have experiences like no other.

And no, NI is not about to sink into oblivion. Sure it's got its economic problems but everyone is so upbeat you'd never know. Quite charmingly everyone has two or three jobs, so the person who drove your coach might be the Immigration officer at the airport or the woman who gave the ghost talk, pulls your beer in a local pub. My advice is go take a look and decide for yourself, especially if your group is looking for a real experience.

