



It's a wrap!

AS we head into our third year of publication, we reflect on a year that has been extremely kind and welcoming to **BEN**, as I hope it has been to you, dear reader.



We appreciate your encouraging emails and posts and positively leapt tall buildings when Business Events Australia sent a note to say how much they enjoy reading **BEN**.

"It's short, sharp, educational – the Business Events Australia team are always sharing information from it.

"Keep up the good work!"

It is our intention that you to continue to read, be informed and be challenged by our up to the minute news pieces, our insightful contributors; to tickle your funny bone on occasion and for new readers, that we become your must read industry newsletter.

It has been a year that has seen the closure after 25 years of the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre and the preparation work taking place in Sydney's Darling Harbour Precinct, including the planning of the new International Convention Centre.

We've seen the rapid fire construction of the Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island (SEC@GI), Adelaide going gangbusters in new development, Crown's move into Perth, the MCEC looking to extend again and ABEE/SES become Inspire X.

Today is our last issue for the year; we head off to family, friends and holidays, to return refreshed on 6 January.

Did someone say there's a Northern Territory Ghan fam in the offing?

Can't wait.

We wish you a very Merry Christmas. Jill

NSW is still the one



ACCORDING to International Visitor Surveys to year-end September 2013, NSW leads the nation in the number of international visitors and visitor nights, said NSW Minister for Tourism, George Souris, speaking at a gala farewell dinner for Dreamtime 2013, attended by 34 international event buyers and five media.

"This is a great result for NSW – half of all international business visitors visited NSW and spent a third of their nights in the state," he said.

"We're also pleased to see that for the second successive quarter, China tops the list of international tourists to our state.

"I'm told that a recent Chinese corporate client reported a 20% increase in sales activity and qualifying staff after announcing that Sydney would be their next incentive destination," he said.

As NSW continues to strengthen its relationship with the Asian markets, it is seeing the business results grow year on year.

In the last three years, 85 events from Asia have been held in NSW, contributing an estimated \$186 million to the economy.

This year to date, BESydney report they have secured 28 Asian incentive events, worth almost \$64 million.

These include the recently announced Pro-Health China Annual Conference in 2014 (**BEN** 11 Dec), which is estimated to

be worth approximately \$22.5 million and will bring around 4,500 delegates to the city.

Lyn Lewis-Smith, ceo of Business Events Sydney said, "For Dreamtime, we wanted to share things that are not necessarily in the event or tourism guides: we wanted to share our local experiences and Sydney secrets.

"And the feedback we've had from our guests is extremely positive."

The bespoke itinerary included a visit to Icebergs at Bondi Beach and one of Sydney's newest event spaces, Royal Randwick Racecourse, lunch at The Grounds of Alexandria, where celebrity chef Kylie Kwong cooked up a storm, a visit to watch the Sydney Dance Company rehearsing at Walsh Bay and, with shopping high on the list, a stop at Westfield Sydney.

On the final afternoon, attendees were split into groups and had the choice of three activity streams which included: Iconic Sydney: sailing on the harbour, BridgeClimb, and a tour of the city on a Harley Davidson; Adventure Sydney: horse riding, quad biking, kayaking and a sizzling Aussie BBQ lunch at Glenworth Valley plus an amazing helicopter flight; and Naturally Sydney: a relaxed hop on/hop off Harbour cruise, a hike along the beautiful North Head, lunch at Q Station at Manly, and a Wild Life and Sea Life experience.

Last gasp party ideas

IF YOU are looking for a festive event over Christmas and New Year's Eve, we've uncovered a few that could fit the bill.

"**Bridge @ Pier One**" at Sydney's Sebel Pier One, is a fabulous new venue that has just become available and will hold a NYE cocktail party from 7pm to 1am.

The totally redeveloped bridge has a transparent marquee allows views of the bridge.

Set up like a New York Penthouse Lounge with sofas and coffee tables, the bridge joins the second floor function room at the hotel to Lower Fort Street, crossing Hickson Road 15m up in the air.

On offer is great food such as a sushi and oyster bar, a six hour premium beverage package with French Champagne all night and a groovy dj and vocalist ("Lucid Disco").

Tickets are \$499 each.

The Beach Club at Watsons Bay Boutique Hotel, Sydney has an Hawaiian inspired Christmas Eve with a lei and complimentary cocktail on arrival.

There'll be performances from hula dancers and fire twirlers with a world-class backdrop as the sun sets over the city skyline - tunes courtesy of DJ Andy Mathers.

Mouth-watering pulled pork rolls and pig on a spit paired to \$5 beers and wines will be on offer.

In the hotel's Sunset Room there's a Christmas Day Lunch, with a refreshing seafood-inspired four-course feast created by Chef luminary, Pete Evans.

A glass of Moët on arrival will be followed by a specifically matched selection of Cape Mentelle.

Perth Crown Casino has a range of New Years Eve packages that include a Hollywood-style party with food and drinks that comes complete with showgirls, stilt walkers, Hollywood-inspired roving entertainment and theming.

You can dance the night away with Channel 9's *Mornings* host David Campbell and his band.



business events news

20th December 2013



crumbs!

PEACE on earth in Bethlehem, one of Christianity's holiest of cities, especially at Christmas time, should be a given, you would assume.

Not so.

As recently as two years ago at the annual cleaning of the ancient church, built over the traditional site of Jesus's birth, it deteriorated into a brawl as dozens of monks from the three Christian denominations - Roman Catholics, Armenians and Greek Orthodox - feuded over sacred space at the Church of the Nativity, battling each other with brooms until police intervened.

And there's nothing new about that either.

Tensions between rival clergy at the church have been a fact of life there for centuries, such as in the 1800s when friction between the denominations at the church - each backed by foreign powers - became so fraught that Russian Czar Nicholas I deployed troops along the Danube to threaten a Turkish sultan who had been favoring the Catholics over the Orthodox.

This is King

THERE'S plenty of time to make a group booking for Opera Australia's 2014 production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's Broadway musical *The King and I*.

Soprano Jenny Liu will play the slave girl Tuptim, a gift to the King from the ruler of Burma, and in the roles of British Diplomat Sir Edward Ramsey and Captain Orton will be John Adam (*The School For Wives*, *Frost/Nixon*).

The King and I opens in Brisbane at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre in April, then moves to the Princess Theatre, Melbourne in June, followed by a Sydney season at the Sydney Opera House in September - see www.thekingandimusical.com.

Qld's sunny outlook

THE Sunshine Coast has been revealed in the Mantra Group's review of 2013 as this year's hot spot together with Sydney and Melbourne in the wake of international sporting events.

The review taken from bookings data across the Group's 114 Peppers, Mantra and BreakFree hotels in Australia also revealed a 35 per cent increase by consumers using mobile or tablet devices to research and make holiday bookings.

"Our Queensland resorts are set for a great season, but it's also pleasing to see sporting and cultural events having an impact on tourism and hotel bookings across the country," said Mantra Group CEO Bob East.

The latest National Visitor Survey revealed almost 18 million Australians spent more than \$14 billion on trips to Queensland in 2013 and the trend continues over the holiday season with record occupancies.

Wellington positive

POSITIVELY Wellington Venues (PWV) said 2013 was a huge success for them with more than 100 conferences and events, bringing around 20,000 delegates, 171 performances and over 315,000 attendees to the New Zealand capital city.

While the Wellington City Council's decision to merge the city's tourism marketing agency and venue management business final approval is still pending final approval, there is every good reason the planned merger will go ahead.

A case study on Wellington's newest convention and entertainment venue, Shed 6, revealed it had had more than 40 conferences and event bookings since opening in August 2013.

Ceo of PWV, Glenys Coughlan, said Wellington needed to be positioned to compete as effectively as it could if it was to win a greater share of business and leisure dollars on a year-round basis.

Logan Metro Sport Centre's double act



UNIQUE business opportunities exist in Logan City, located 30 minutes from Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Ipswich, one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, an area with an estimated 282,673 and a business base of more than 27,000.

Four years ago the Logan Metro Sports Centre was built to not only host international sports events, but to accommodate a wide variety of meeting, event and conference needs from 20 to 2000 people.

The 2398 sqm air-conditioned arena with retractable stadium seating also has a stylish lounge and balcony for functions, plus four meeting rooms.

Recently the Centre saw the venue at full capacity for the Mayor's Christmas Carols.

The Bendigo Community Bank also held their 10th Anniversary Dinner there while three days of World Cup Cheer attracted more than 1600 competitors.

And, when the Confectionery Tradeshow was held there, the flexibility of the floor space

confirmed that with more than 120 booths there was still ample space for foot traffic.

For more information, contact Sally Porteous, Program & Events Coordinator on 07 3412 5941 or SallyPorteous@logan.qld.gov.au.

Ben on BEN



Each month Business Manager for inPlace Recruitment, Ben Carnegie, writes his observations from the recruiter's perspective to help job hunters find the perfect job.

Ben has over 15 years working in 5 star hotels and the MICE industry and has worked on some of Australia's biggest events.

IT'S been

great to catch up with so many industry colleagues over the past month.



From everyone I've had the good fortune to speak with, 2013 has been a cracking year.

Enquiry levels have been significantly up and everyone has been busy for the entire year. Many commented that although Christmas is coming, the traditional slow down at this time really hasn't happened.

Event companies, whether PCO's, venues or agencies, are solidly booked up and 2014 is looking even busier.

The challenges this year have been a result of many people being time poor due to their workload and the difficulty finding new experienced staff members. The most highly sort after candidates have been BDM's, particularly those with strong networks they can leverage. With all these sales going on, I predict an increase in operational roles needed by many companies next year.

Merry Christmas and all the best for 2014!

Flag these specials

RADISSON on Flagstaff Gardens Melbourne is offering reduced rate upgrade Christmas specials.

For an additional \$10 per night, upgrade to a Premium Park View room with views of the Flagstone Gardens, rooms on the sixth, seventh or eighth floor, iPod dock and French press coffee.

Alternatively, for an extra \$30 per night, upgrade to a Business Class room on the ninth or tenth floor and you get the iPod, bathrobes, French coffee plus 1,000 bonus Club Carlson Points per night, Nespresso coffee machine, complimentary buffet breakfast and welcome amenity.

Valid for 18 December to 12 January (excluding 31 December).

Rate based on accommodation for up to two people per night.

For info call 03 9322 8000 or email resmelb@radisson.com.



Accor looms large in Korea



A SIGNIFICANT partnership between Accor Ambassador Korea and Seobu T&D Co., Ltd. will see the development of four new hotels in one complex in Yongsan, Seoul.

The agreement will introduce three hotel brands new to Korea: upscale Grand Mercure, upper-midscale Suite Novotel and economy ibis Styles. The announcement also marks the brand debut of Suite Novotel in the Asia Pacific region.

The four hotels are: Grand Mercure Ambassador Seoul Yongsan, Suite Novotel Ambassador Seoul Yongsan, Novotel Ambassador Seoul Yongsan, and ibis Styles Ambassador Seoul Yongsan.

"We're ending 2013 with a big

bang, signing four new hotels with around 2,000 rooms in one go and introducing three new hotel brands to our South Korea network.

"This is the largest hotel project we have signed in Asia so far, which will strengthen our position as the largest international hotel operator in South Korea," said Michael Issenberg, chairman and chief operating officer of Accor Asia Pacific.

"This project would not have been possible without the great support of chairman Suh Jung Ho of Ambassador Group and the trust we have received from chairman Man-ho Seung of Seobu T&D for choosing to work with us and our strong hotel brands for these four properties.

A Cunning move

IN addition to his current role as managing director of Starwood's Fiji complex, Shane Cunning has been appointed as area general manager for Fiji and Samoa.

This will add three more hotels to his portfolio.

Cunning will now oversee the new Sheraton Resort and Spa, Tokoriki Island, Fiji and two new Sheraton properties acquired in Samoa.

Cunning has worked for Starwood for 28 years including completing several general manager assignments and six years in Fiji.

New SilverKris lounge

A NEW-concept SilverKris Lounge in Sydney has been unveiled by Singapore Airlines.

Designed and modelled after elements of a home by architectural and interior design firm ONG&ONG, the new design concept will be progressively introduced to all of SIA's SilverKris Lounges in 15 cities over the next five years at an estimated cost of around \$100 million.

Following renovation of the Sydney lounge, planning work is underway to upgrade lounges at London, Hong Kong and Singapore (Terminal 3) in 2014.

Sydney/Suva flights

FROM May 2014, Fiji Airways, Fiji's national airline, is to offer twice weekly direct flights between Sydney to Suva.

Operated by its B737-700 aircraft, the direct services will operate on Mondays and Fridays, with a midday departure from Suva and an afternoon departure from Sydney.

The airline will also launch the first Suva to Samoa (Apia) route, operated by subsidiary Pacific Sun, soon-to-become Fiji Link.

These new flights will allow better connections to intra-Fiji destinations, via the newly named Fiji Link subsidiary which will be rebranded in 2014.

The change in schedule will now mean earlier arrivals to Nadi from Auckland allowing New Zealanders to travel to the north and outer islands on the same day that they arrive.

Stefan Pichler, Fiji Airways managing director and ceo said: "We're excited about the introduction of these two new services from May next year, which will allow Australian travellers to further explore and experience all that Fiji has to offer."

The introduction of the direct Sydney to Suva flight will open up tourism for Suva, Pacific Harbour and islands such as Kadavu and Toberua, Pichler said.

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Hotel Highlight Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach

IT'S understandable that when Australians think of a Southern California event - which we are in ever-increasing numbers - lying by the beach isn't exactly high on the wish list.

Rather, celebrity-spotting in Hollywood, wandering Disneyland or shopping tend to be the first things in mind.

Hence **BEN's** surprise upon walking in to the Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach and seeing that a conference or incentive could so easily be mixed with stars' homes and famous theme parks.

Huntington Beach is nestled among the northern suburbs of Orange County, so in reality it's on the doorstep of LA's coastal outskirts.

Synonymous with the Hyatt name, however, is luxury, which is provided in spades.

The vast majority of rooms at the resort offer an ocean view of some degree with the few that do not instead boasting lush gardens.

Each is beautifully decorated and appointed in true five-star splendour, with marble bathrooms also rich in space.

The resort itself offers efficient meeting room space through to a Grand Ballroom, offers two pools, one of which is reserved for the exclusive use of adults, while the Pacific Waters Spa will cleanse body and soul.

Four restaurants and bars range from casual to the elegance & sophistication of The Californian.

Seemingly off-site but actually part of the resort are a range of stores selling groceries and everyday items, along with a bike rental shop.

Seasonally, the resort provides a twice-daily shuttle service to nearby Disneyland included in a resort fee (seat res required). With the resort also serviced by Supershuttle from LAX, the services negate the need for a car.

When dining at Pete's a must-try is his delectable fish tacos.

And only a short walk over the road via a pedestrian bridge is the famous California beachfront.