



Mea Culpa

IMPRESSED by Air New Zealand's economy class leg room on our flight from Auckland to



Wellington, it caused one NZ local to exclaim, "You can travel all around the world with your legs up near your neck and then come 'home' to this level of flight comfort.

"Why can't international airlines replicate this?" she asked.

Talking about Air New Zealand, I need to publicly confess to writing the airline's Lynn Simmonds name (Crumbs **BEN** 1 July) as Lynne Sutherland (a famous fashion model by all accounts).

He cuts a dashing figure at industry events and that I had been reading a fashion magazine sometime earlier, is no excuse.

So mea culpa Lynn, my apologies.

Oh, and on the subject of pet gripes comes this one from a hosted buyer at MEETINGS.

"What annoys me on famils is that certain someone who at every turn, haughtily proclaims that they have been there or done that before.

It's especially annoying when they are travelling with people who also have done their own fair share of travelling.

"Keep your remarks to yourself – it's so boring!" she proclaimed - Jill.

Skycity update

SKYCITY Entertainment Group (SKYCITY) has agreed with the New Zealand Government to extend the timeframe to formalise the agreement for SKYCITY to design, build, operate and own the New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC).

The date for the full agreement to be signed has been extended by five days to 5 July.

The Perks of Wellington

IT'S the capital of New Zealand as well as being famed for its block buster movie making industry and its one David Perks (**pictured**) chief executive of Positively Wellington Tourism describes as 'The coolest little capital in the world.'

The fact that the latest Hobbit film was released here recently and two more films are in production, "there is so much here to leverage an event," he said.

An incredibly compact city, Wellington is set on the peninsula between the Cook Strait and Wellington Harbour, where the central business district and about half of Wellington's population of 395,600 live.

"We are city people," says Perks about the population.

"Everything here is in close proximity, which means when there's an event or big convention in town, it touches everyone.

"In fact there are more bars and restaurants per capita in Wellington, than in New York.

With everything in walking distance, getting around in Wellington is a breeze (no pun intended).

"If you are going to a conference, we say, give yourself five or 10 minutes to get there."

Perks explained that the top 10 films in the world have been made or partially made in Wellington so its no surprise that the city's biggest growth areas are in everything from creative digital to movie-making.

"It's become a significant part of the city's economy and it's these things that conferences and events can plug into," he said.

At Peter Jackson's Weta Cave, which is available for private bookings for up to 60 people

after 6pm, the workshop can provide creative ideas tailored to individual events, take their team offsite and give presentations and demonstrations in the art of movie making.

Food and wine is a large part of the Wellington scene, one that sees 110 food events held throughout the year, including their annual Wellington on a Plate 9-25 August.

"In a unique twist, this year's food festival will see six prisoners plate up a \$70-a-head

four-course meal for 70 people, to be served in Rimutaka Prison grounds.

"It's already a sell out and its something that can be replicated for an event," explained Perks.



New team at Sofitel Wentworth

WITH the appointment of Sofitel Sydney Wentworth's new general manager Erkin Aytekin in May, this month welcomes three new senior executives to the hotel.

Geoffrey Webb joins as director of sales & marketing, responsible for both the business and leisure sectors, as well as the marketing and the reservations teams.

Jenifer Dwyer-Slee takes on the role of director of sales – MICE.

A highly experienced executive who has worked for Accor for more than eight years, she was most recently director of sales - business events Australia, based at Accor's Corporate Office at Angel Place.

Also joining the MICE team in the role of business development manager is Stephanie Humphries who most recently worked as business development manager - events, at Luna Park Sydney.

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John Morris, gm, RACV Queensland Resorts said, "from the positive community benefits, there are commercial benefits as well, as more and more conference organisers are choosing venues with a strong track record in sustainability."

Swissotel's new appointments

TWO new appointments at Swissotel Sydney include Ross Buchanan and Martin Yeo who both bring years of hospitality experience to their roles.



Ross Buchanan with 30 years in the industry commenced with the Swissotel in 2011 as director of sales and marketing and now becomes executive assistant manager.

In his new role he will continue to manage the hotel's sales and marketing teams, overseeing the hotels marketing initiatives and sales strategies.

Martin Yeo, the newly appointed director of food and beverage brings with him many years of food and beverage operations experience, including roles as conference and events operations manager at Novotel Manly Pacific and most recently as food and beverage manager at Sofitel Wentworth Sydney.



Tasmania is tops for service delivery

RUTH Lilian, director and conference manager, L&R Contract Business Services was so delighted by her recent three-day Hobart famil, she wanted to share her experience with **BEN** readers.

Instead of breakfasting each day in hotels, they chose instead to dine in the many delightful cafes around Hobart.

"What I really want to talk about is the service delivery in Tassie," she began.

"No matter where we went, what we did, what we ate or drank, the delivery of service was exemplary.

"Each person delivering the service, had a smile on their face, they meant what they said, and if they couldn't deliver straight away, they let you know when.

"Part of our weekend included a visit to MONA on the Moorilla Winery site (**pictured**) – wow – the likes of which I have not seen before in any country I have visited.

"It is certainly unique, both from the antiquities, and the amazing structure of the building - totally underground, except for the floor you enter by.

"The gallery exhibits start at the very bottom, down what appears to be an endless flight of stairs and the other amazing feature is that there are no



windows.

To get to the winery "It was a 20 minute sail on an amazingly decked out catamaran - and apart from the 99 step trek up from the water, it is a perfect destination for a conference or incentive event," she said.

Lilian remembers, as

many other readers will too, Moorilla Estate Winery.

"Over the years I've taken many conference dinners there when it was a few upmarket accommodation "dens", a small museum housing the owners unusual antiquities, and a good space for dinner - which is still part of the site.

"Now there is an amazing gallery (housing more than 400 exhibits), restaurants, wine bar, theatre, space and so much opportunity for members of our industry to explore.

"Tasmania is one of the most beautiful spots on our planet and it deserves to do well and they will, because they know how to look after people.

"We could all learn something from our neighbours".

Wetland Garden event space

BANYAN Tree Hangzhou in China has recently launched the only outdoor event space in Hangzhou Xixi - the Wetland Garden.

Described as an idyllic retreat for corporate meetings and groups, the Garden provides a perfect venue for cocktail parties, weddings, team building and other outdoor activities.

Located on the west side of the resort, surrounded by unique gardens and a nature reserve, it is able to accommodate up to 150 people.

It can be used all year round as an open-air backdrop for all types of company events and team building activities, complementing the resort's superior indoor meeting facilities.



A focus on recruitment



THE changing landscape of travel recruitment was the topic of the inPlace Recruitment conference held at the Palazzo Versace on the Gold Coast recently.

Managing director, Sandra Chiles emphasised valued recruiters of the future will be extremely good at what they do.

"They will be individuals who are trusted and referred by their clients and candidates.

"They will have exceptional personal recruitment skills and use technology effectively to meet the growing need for talented people in new emerging roles", she said.

Pictured above are the inPlace team enjoying the winter sun on the Palazzo Versace Marina, from left are: Kelly Wellsmore, Sandra Chiles, Marlene Lane, Kristi Gomm, Peter Jackson and Ben Carnegie.



Face to Face with...

Helen Logas, Chief Executive Officer Luxperience



Business Events News recently caught up with Luxperience's chief executive officer, Helen Logas. Prior to starting her own high end experiential travel trade event company in Australasia and the Pacific region, Logas owned and ran Travelcorp Australia for 17 years. This company was successfully sold in 2010.

Luxperience is being held, for the second consecutive year, over three days from 2 - 4 September in Sydney.

What does your role entail?

My job as ceo of Luxperience is to ensure that the event is better than the year before.

It's about having the right mix of exhibitors and buyers, holding key networking events and showcasing the wonderful host city of Sydney.

What's the first thing you do when you get in the office?

I don't go into the office much. By having the latest technology, I first go through my emails, then address any outstanding issues.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

I wouldn't call it challenging, but with Luxperience being a new global event, an important element of my job is selling Luxperience to exhibitors and buyers, to convince them that this is the bespoke B2B travel event to be at.

How do you inspire your team?

Luxperience is very much a team effort. With the success of the last Luxperience, it came down to their contribution. I use that as a team building tool for the next event.

Dealing with new technology - bonus or headache?

Definitely a bonus.

You can be almost anywhere in the world and connect with the office and your clients, no

matter where you are or what the time is.

What would you be doing if you weren't ceo of Luxperience?

Since being a little girl, I have always wanted to be a leader and run my own company, which is how my professional career has turned out.

As long as I was the boss, I wouldn't mind.

Who has inspired you?

Martha Stewart. She is an amazing business woman who at the age of 72 is still making business decisions that are ahead of the game. I saw her speak at a conference, her story is amazing.

How do you relax?

I love to travel. When I travel, it educates and relaxes me.

What makes a great conference?

A great conference is ensuring that you have the right mix of people, the latest technology and networking events.

What's the most inspiring conference you have been involved in?

I'm a firm believer that if you can take one new thing away from a conference then it has been a great investment. Of course the inaugural Luxperience in 2012 has inspired me to make it a bigger and better show each year.

Calling all ID ex-staffers

ID Events Australia (ID Tours) who most famously won the Tourism Australia tender to bring Oprah Winfrey to Australia in 2010 and was a lead supplier for the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games is putting out a call to all ex-staffers.

Bill Wright ID's chairman has made it his mission to track down as many of the 700+ people who have worked for his events company since it began in 1973.

"This year is ID's 40th birthday,



Bill Wright starting out 40 years ago

and we thought it would be wonderful to get as many past and present staff as possible together to relive old times and say thank you for helping us to get to where we are today," Wright said.

"Managing touring and entertainment programs for up to 3000 delegates at a time requires a very high degree of commitment and dedication from our staff, and it is these wonderful people my wife Suzie and I want to thank at a fun-filled reunion on Sunday, 14 July at Bar 100 in The Rocks here in Sydney."

Past members are urged to register and if you know a former ID-er let them know too, Wright urged.

Ex-Staffers visit - www.etchouches.com/64031 or [facebook.com/ideventsaustralia](https://www.facebook.com/ideventsaustralia) asap.

AKL's gay wedding

AUCKLAND'S first gay wedding, which takes place on 19 August, the day the same-sex marriage bill becomes law, has become an Auckland event with two key Council bodies offering support.

Content director of radio station ZM, Christian Boston, organisers of the ZM Fabulous Gay Wedding, says it's fantastic to see the Council getting into the spirit of the occasion.

Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) is providing an exclusive Auckland Destination package for the couple, and the chance to stage their wedding breakfast at The Cloud on Queens Wharf in conjunction with Waterfront Auckland.

"The support has been overwhelming and the Council's involvement is a great example of the spirit we're seeing," Boston said.

Brett O'Riley, ATEED chief executive, endorsed ZM's initiative saying "Auckland is proud to add its support alongside our investment in the annual Auckland Pride Festival.

"The gay community brings so much vibrancy to our region, and contributes mightily to our vision of making Auckland the world's most liveable city," he said.

BEA hosts UK fami

AS part of its educational program to promote business and major event experiences, Business Events Australia (BEA) welcomed buyers and media from the United Kingdom to Sydney, and Tropical North Queensland, earlier in June.

During their Sydney stay a private dinner was held at the Museum of Contemporary Art during the arts festival, Vivid.

While In Queensland, buyers experienced the incentive product on offer around the Great Barrier Reef.

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business events news

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Going for Gold

WHEN the newly badged Gold Coast Business Events (GCBE) invited a group of pcos and **BEN** to discover all that is new, reinvented and sensational about this year-round playground, every form of transport was put at our disposal to whisk us from one venue to another.

They had lifesavers (**pictured right**) from 'another planet' escort them across the Gold Coast Highway from the Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre to the Sofitel Gold Coast, while vintage and hot rod cars drove the group to Movieworld.

Other forms of transport include a sparkling stretch limo, a boat ride from the Marriott to Marina Mirage, a helicopter to McLaren's Landing and a roar of Harley Davidsons did a spin around the Spit and onto the Sharks Events Centre.

All in all, an exhilarating few days in an exhilarating destination.

Pictured left at Marriott Gold Coast Resort and Spa are: Jill Varley; Eileen Merriman, GCBE; Peter Dunn, GCBE; Michelle Bye, EECW; Erin O'Shannesey, American Express Meetings & Events; Jessica Truscott, Eden Corporate Travel; Sarah Sanders, Head Marketing; Terri Growcott, ICMS Australasia; Jim Fawcett, ASN Events; Kristy Winning O'Brien, arinex; Peta Freeman, GEMS Event Management and Anna Boyes, Conference Design.



Above are: Jackie Rouleston-Stuart, Solution RED; Robbie Turner, Hilton Surfers Paradise; Anna Case, GCBE; Alex Cotterill, Hilton Surfers Paradise and Janelle Willson, Solution RED.



Above: The thoroughly modern yet retro QT hotel in Surfers Paradise has a great outlook to the Hinterland and Nerang River.

Above right: Enjoying the view from McLaren's Landing on South Stradbroke Island.



Above is Sheraton Mirage Resort and Spa Gold Coast's beautiful pool area.



Above: Kirsty Winning O'Brien and Anna Case with the Joker and the Jester from Movie World.



Above: Enjoying a coconut cocktail on the beach at McLaren's Landing from left are: Peter Dunn, GCBE; Jim Fawcett, ASN Events; Kirsty Winning O'Brien, arinex; Anna Boyes, Conference Design.



Above: The group enjoyed dinner at Movie World's Hall of Justice.