



Digital tourism trends

THE 2013 National Tourism and Events Excellence Conference at the Melbourne Cricket Ground 22-23 July is described as an opportunity for travel industry members to exchange knowledge, form business relationships & gain digital expertise.

The conference offers insights from Michele Levine, ceo at Roy Morgan Research and Rodney Payne, at Think! Social Media.

New GainingEdge office

CEO and founder of Julie King Associates, Julie King (right) is to head up the new Sydney-based dedicated Australia/NZ office of strategic management consulting firm GainingEdge, specialists in the international business events industry.

Making the announcement, GainingEdge ceo Gary Grimmer said, "Although our global headquarters is in Melbourne, GainingEdge is an international company, and most of our work has been in other parts of the world.

"So, to expand our work in Australia and New Zealand, we needed a partner who could help us to devote more attention to this part of the world.

"Julie King has very strong credentials and an excellent reputation in both the convention and tourism industries and is a familiar and trusted face here and internationally.

"This partnership is a win-win that serves our business development and client servicing goals," he said.

In response King said, "Gary and I have known each other and worked together over the past twelve years, he is a well-respected member of our industry and our combined strengths in the meetings and leisure industries will allow us to further strengthen the GainingEdge brand in this part of the world."

GainingEdge, currently the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau's representative in the Australian and New Zealand markets, will offer services such as convention centre consulting and feasibility studies; convention bureau consulting and establishment, education and training; organisation and project management; research and benchmarking and marketing and sales support, including market representation.

Julie King Associates is also the Australasian representative for the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing.



Bon Accor-d

IT'S been something of an Accor week. The big one was a night at the



Novotel Darling Harbour in tottering distance to the SCEC's 25th Anniversary bash. My hotel room also provided an early morning office before a meeting at Sebel Pier One and a lunch at the Harbour Rocks Hotel - both Accor hotels!

At the Novotel Darling Harbour I caught up with David McDonald, Accor's director of sales & marketing and area director of sales & marketing NSW.

The harbourside hotels, which rely for much of their revenue on the MICE market, have challenges ahead when the SCEC closes at the end of the year.

"It will be difficult," he said, adding more positively, "We're still the closest accommodation to the Glebe Island Expo and we have lots of ideas and plans, including a greater focus on the FIT market, sporting and special interest groups."

Prior to this, the Sofitel Wentworth was the venue on Tuesday night for a glamorous 'So Hot Right Now' cocktail party which showcased some of the experiences that can be created in Sydney's largest pillarless ballroom to many of Sydney's event and conference organisers.

Looking for a change?

Williment Travel Group are one of New Zealand's premier sporting and incentive travel companies. Based in Wellington, we are looking for someone to join our team who has travel and event experience. Please contact us if you have amazing attention to detail, enjoy forming lasting client relationships and have a passion for finding solutions.



[Click here for more information](#)

A TROPICAL PLATTER OF EVENTS

Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef invites you to attend our annual showcase and get a taste of events Tropical North Queensland style

MELBOURNE

Tues 30 July 2013, 12-2pm Eureka 89
7 Riverside Quay, Southbank

SYDNEY

Wed 31 July 2013, 5:30-7:30pm
Ivy Sunroom, 330 George Street

BRISBANE

Fri 2 August 2013, 12-2pm
Brisbane City Hall, King George Square

A cocktail lunch and tropical tasting display will be served at each event

[CLICK HERE TO RSVP](#)

BUSINESS EVENTS
CAIRNS & GREAT BARRIER REEF
The natural place to meet

Oh what a night!

WEDNESDAY night at the Sydney Convention Centre saw 400 business event leaders from around the nation enjoy a world-class evening of celebration as the venue marked its 25th anniversary.

It was an evening filled with surprises including entertainment from popular singers a superb meal and great company.

Destined to become a YouTube hit' see the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre 25th



Anniversary celebration in a flash by [clicking here](#).

Also check out Monday's issue to see some of the fab images from Sydney's night of nights.

Jill is pictured with Ton & Francoise van Amerongen.



Sofitel Sydney's offer

SOFITEL Sydney Wentworth has announced an extension to its current winter day delegate offer to 30 September.

Priced from AU\$95 per person and half day delegate package at AU\$85 per person, clients can choose two complimentary value-adds of their choice of: 10% off audio visual for all meeting room packages, a 10% reduction on food and beverage catering, Nespresso coffee machine for office/reception area, double Le Club meeting planner points and complimentary wifi for up to 20 guests.

As a bonus, guests who spend more than AU\$5,000 will receive a half hour cocktail reception including beer, wine, soft drinks, mineral water and canapés.

Offer applies to a minimum of 16 guests.

For further details email sofitelsydney@sofitel.com.

NSW reaps the rewards

THE largest, large-scale Chinese corporate incentive and leadership seminar arrived in NSW this week with more than 3,000 Chinese delegates, to attend the Perfect China's Leadership Seminar.

Secured by the State's convention bureau, Business Events Sydney (BESydney), in partnership with Destination NSW, Perfect China, a leading health and personal care direct selling company is in town from 9-17 July, arriving in three overlapping waves.

Delegates will explore iconic Sydney attractions and take part in shopping and food tours, and they will also journey into the NSW regions for sightseeing and a country farm experience.

Acting NSW Premier Andrew Stoner said the Seminar is expected to inject approximately \$21 million into the NSW economy.

"Business visitors are an important component of our tourism industry, with nearly two thirds of those who visit our state for a business event, reporting they will return to Sydney in the next five years for a holiday.

"A third plan to return for another conference," he said revealing further that NSW welcomes around 50% of all international business arrivals to Australia for conferences and conventions, a sector that is growing at a rate of more than 4% year-on-year.

BESydney ceo, Lyn Lewis-Smith said China is a vital source market, remarking that in 2012/13 financial year, BESydney secured 11 Chinese corporate incentive events, which will see over 31,000 delegate nights spent in Sydney and throughout the



NSW regions.

"These events represent over 50% of the total economic impact the organisation secured for the overall corporate incentive market.

The Government recently announced that its 2013-14 budget would continue to support the activities of BESydney, as well as build on its already strong strategy for engaging with China and promoting NSW as a destination for business and leisure travellers.



THEY may not all fit the conference market criteria but incentive wise Australia's top hotels as surveyed by News.com make for rather nice corporate retreats and luxury places to consider for a holiday.

10. Simpsons of Potts Point Hotel, Sydney, NSW
9. Coconut Grove, Port Douglas, QLD Coconut Grove, Port Douglas, QLD
8. Bali Hai Resort and Spa at Cable Beach in Broome, Western Australia.
7. Kewarra Beach Resort, Cairns, QLD
6. Windmills Break, Yallingup, WA
5. Summit Apartments, Airlie Beach, QLD
4. Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa, Blue Mountains, NSW
3. Martinique on Macrossan, Port Douglas, QLD
2. Southern Ocean Lodge, Kangaroo Island, SA
1. Akama Resort, Hervey Bay, QLD

WIN tickets to see the BLUE MAN GROUP



This week **BEN** and **BLUE MAN GROUP** are giving you the chance to win a double pass on 11 August to their wildly popular theatrical production.

Enjoy the stunning visuals, live band and comedic party atmosphere for an unforgettable night out.



It opens 10 August at the Sydney Lyric Theatre - book at ticketmaster.com.au.

To win be the first to email the correct answer to: comp@businesseventsnews.com.au

Is this **BLUE MAN GROUP's** first time in Australia?

Hint: www.bluemangroup.com.au

Giason to step down from TNQ

ROB Giason, Tourism Tropical North Queensland ceo, who many people will have had 'touched' in some way or other during his 39-year career in tourism, marketing and management roles, is stepping down from his role in December.

Giason, who plans to have a decent break before pursuing interesting project management roles nationally and abroad said, "It is with a heavy heart that I have made this decision to cease my full-time tourism career, but there comes a time to look at the world in a different light and enjoy the lifestyle I have been so passionately selling for the past eight years, starting with moving my morning bike ride from 5.30am to 7am and stopping



for a relaxing coffee or three afterwards.

TTNQ chair Stephen Gregg said, "Rob is leaving this chapter of a remarkable career knowing that the tourism industry he led through tough times is now forging ahead with strong growth," he said.

"We will begin recruiting for a new chief executive officer immediately so someone is in place before he departs on 20 December."



MEA's Mentor program

THE MEA Mentoring Program, now entering its fifth year, has announced that BENCHMARK Hospitality and Event Recruitment has continued as a sponsor for the NSW Mentoring program 2013.



This specifically industry-based pairing mentees with mentors from different organisations provides an enhanced learning environment.

Further opportunities are also provided for participants to meet each other and analyse and develop a strategic perspective to address the issues and challenges we face.

Pairing 15 Mentees with

15 Mentors from within the various industry sectors over a six month period, it provides an effective solution to addressing skills shortages, professional development and attrition within the meetings and events industry, resulting in significant improvement of the industry's overall competitiveness on the domestic and international stage.

Mercure's winter warmer

MERCURE Melbourne Treasury Gardens has special travel agent and PCO rates this winter, available from AU\$99 for a City View room, and valid for stays from now until 26 September.

To take up the offer you need to quote 'Industry Rate' at the time of booking, and a travel industry ID must be provided on check in.

Room rates are subject to availability and terms and conditions apply.

For more information telephone +61 3 9205 9999 or email H2086@accor.com.

Unique Vietnam offer

UNIQUE Venues has a special MICE industry offer of US\$179 for three nights at one of Vietnam's premier five star resorts, Furama Resort Danang.

Included in the price are domestic roundtrip fares on Viet Jet from either Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City, airport transfers from Danang plus breakfast.

Valid from 5 Sep to 19 Dec.

The offer is only for people employed in the MICE industry and must be pre-qualified by DMS/Unique Venues.

Contact Marissa Fernandez at - unique.venues@uniquevenues.com.au.

Get rewarded with Toga Hotels

A new conference rewards initiative, which allows conference bookers the chance to earn an extra \$1000, is being offered in Toga Hotels new conference Event with Benefits rewards program.

Book an event for more than \$5,000 and choose from a \$500 prepaid VISA card, Myer gift card or Tiffany card.

For bookings over \$10,000 - clients can select either a \$1,000 prepaid VISA card, Myer gift card or Tiffany card (events to be booked prior to 30 September).

Toga Hotels is also offering free Internet access, as well as other benefits.

To be eligible for rewards, events must be booked before 30 September for use before 31 January 2014.

Valid for new bookings only, event bookers must also be a member of Toga Hotels' Events with Benefits – a free rewards program.

For more information visit at - www.togahotels.com/benefits.

Pacific International spends \$20M

THE Pacific International Cairns, the first international standard property in Cairns, is putting the finishing touches on a \$20 million transformation.

The unveiling of its new look, which takes place this month, includes the porte cochere, foyer, lobby, Sugar Cane lounge, and public areas, as well as extensive work undertaken to the front facade of the hotel.

No longer is there the 1982, opulent gilded windows and heavy timber balustrades, these have been replaced by classic stainless steel, modern lighting, floor to ceiling frameless glass, trendy wallpapers and stunning furniture.

Paul Kamsler, executive director of the Pacific International Cairns, said that three quarters of the \$20 million had been spent in the last 18 months.

The refurbishment project, which commenced in 2008 and had been undertaken in six stages, was integral to the hotel's plan of enhancing guest experience and offering state-of-the-art conference and events facilities", he said.



Dallas, a richly diverse city built by passionate people with big dreams and an attitude that all things are possible, is experiencing a renaissance.

As the ninth largest city in the country and the southwest's leading business and financial center, Dallas offers meeting planners an array of amenities, including more than 70,000 hotel rooms, flexible meeting space and unparalleled customer service.

Dallas is centrally located with two major world-class airports offering more domestic nonstop flights than any other U.S. city.

In 2014, the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Light Rail will connect to the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, providing visitors direct access from the airport to downtown.

As one of the leading convention cities in the country, Dallas offers the best shopping in the southwest, a cutting-edge culinary scene led by celebrity chefs, 14 exciting entertainment districts, impressive accommodations, five professional sports teams and a leading business environment.

Dallas is the city where big things are happening with more than \$15 billion in new development, including the new Klyde Warren Park and the Perot Museum of Nature and Science.

With more than \$650 million in hotel renovations during the last five years, Dallas offers quality accommodations ranging from five-star to boutique to family-friendly.

Connected to the Dallas Convention Center via skybridge, the one-and-a-half year old 1,001 room Omni Dallas Hotel meets the U.S. Green Building Council LEED Gold Certification standards, placing it on the forefront of environmental awareness and conservation in the city. For more information on meetings in Dallas go to DallasMeetings.com.

CONTACT US:

Publisher Bruce Piper **Editor** Jill Varley **Contributor/Coordinator** Chantel Housler

For advertising enquiries email Christie-Lee or Chantel email: 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 & Pharmacy Daily.

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