



## Red faced!

THE evening's proceedings were moving along nicely at the Parkroyal



Darling Harbour's 'Customer Connection Event,' last week.

The assembled guests had just watched a video of Patrick Imbardelli, president and ceo of Pan Pacific Hotels Group, of which the Parkroyal is a brand, welcoming everyone from their new hotel in Singapore and sending his apologies for not being able to attend the event.

Afterwards, Keren Southgate area director of sales Oceania, standing on the dais, posed the question to the guests, for a prize, "Does anyone know the name of the hotel where Patrick.....?"

My hand shot up, "Yes," I said confidently, "he used to be with the InterContinental."

Puzzled eyes turned to me.

"No Jill, we didn't need to know that," said Keren with a fixed smile, "I was about to ask from what hotel was he speaking?"

Was my face red! - Jill.

## Witton-Smith joins the ATPI Group

LEADING business travel and events company the ATPI Group is boosting its client services team with the appointment of Jeanelle Witton-Smith as account manager and a member of its management team in Australia.

Located in Sydney, Witton-Smith, with a 15-year track record spanning corporate and marine travel in the UK, South Africa and Australia, is charged with leading the client services team in Australia as the business continues to build its profile in the travel management and events sectors in the region.

## A multi million \$ Mirage

A \$26 million refurbishment to the Sheraton Mirage Resort & Spa Gold Coast has also resulted in the unveiling of its new MICE facilities.

Stage one of the \$20 million refurbishment was finalised in April 2012 and incorporated all 295 rooms and suites, accommodation corridors, lobby, reception desk, guest lifts, Porte Cochere, pool furnishings, Link@ Sheraton, Terraces Restaurant and Pearls Bar.

With Stage two completed, an additional \$6 million was spent on upgrading the meeting venues which also included two new meeting spaces - the Garden Terrace & Chairmans Boardroom - and selected resort areas.

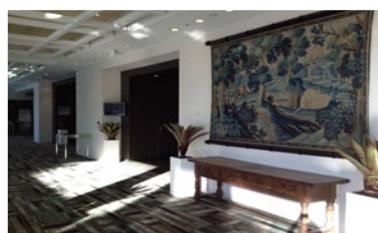
Its transformation features environmentally beneficial technology, new high traffic paths, and neutral coloured wall surfaces, high acoustic ceilings and dramatic lighting effects.

Within the Mirage Grand Ballroom, in-house audio-visual systems have been upgraded and are one of the first in Queensland to offer High Definition Panasonic projectors and digital cable network.

The latest in webcasting technology and attendee engagement tools, includes the IStageEvent phone app.

Speaking to **BEN** last week, Leon Thomson, director of sales and marketing said the hotel is in the process of opening an additional space just off the lobby that can cater for up to 20 people theatre or boardroom style.

The resort is also about to undertake a major refurbishment of its Pandanus Room (previously Rolls Nightclub) that will see the



removal of the north wall and installation of a glass wall with doors to let in the natural light, new signage to the venue, the installation of a three metre wide projection screen & much more.

The transformation of this space is expected to be finished in late December.

The Gold Coast property can also cater for sole use events.

**Pictured** above is Leon Thomson seated on one of the new chairs on the Poolside lawn and behind him is the south beachside lawn.

The resort has five outdoor venues for events in addition to its 15 spaces in the hotel.

The poolside lawn can cater for events of up to 350 people banquet style while the southside beachside lawn can host 550 pax.

## An EPIC opening event in Canberra

EXHIBITION Park in Canberra (EPIC), the city's largest conference centre, linked to two other EPIC venues, Budawang Pavilion and Coorong Pavilion, officially unveiled its new elegant spaces for industry and social events last week, at a ribbon cutting ceremony performed by the Minister for Tourism and Events, Andrew Barr, MLA.

"The newly refurbished conference centre provides event planners with an extraordinary opportunity for hosting remarkable business and social gatherings," said Liz Clarke, EPIC general manager.

"The new interior design creates a contemporary and stylish space that includes operable wall, allowing event planners to create enclosed rooms for conferences, or broad open spaces for exhibitions and breakout sessions."

"The spacious foyers are perfect for catering or small trade exhibitions and the two additional break out areas on the first floor offer the convenience of maintaining all delegates in a small yet functional facility," she said.



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## Monaco's more grit, less glitz

A FOCUS away from the glitzy images of Monaco as a leading luxury leisure destination to that of professional delegates ready for work, is all part of the Principality's new MICE campaign.

Particularly targeting the medical, information & communication technologies and the finance and environmental technology sectors, the campaign uses phrases such as: "In Monaco, technology doesn't only drive formula one cars"; "In Monaco, surgeons don't operate on blackjack tables"; "In Monaco, when it comes to banking, there is no bet on red or black"; and "In Monaco, green isn't only at play at the golf club".

Sandrine Camia, director of the Monaco Convention Bureau, commented "Finance, health and information & communication technologies represent 50% of our MICE business and they are also the pillars of Monaco's industrial base.

"But, we do not think that our expertise in these sectors and our convention centre infrastructure and assets, are as well known in Europe as they should be," Camia added.



"Monaco should be a top of mind destination and the new campaign is designed to make us memorable."

The eco-certified Grimaldi Congress Centre, which can accommodate up to 2,000 delegates, is easy to reach on foot, as are Monaco's 15 other MICE venues, hotels and restaurants.

See - [www.visitmonaco.com](http://www.visitmonaco.com).



### WHAT lies beneath?

St Pancras Station in London is not just a key destination for Eurostar and high-speed rail in the UK and one of the greatest Victorian buildings in London - beneath its historic floors a Pacific walrus was found.

The discovery, along with 1,500 human bodies, was part of excavations amid the renovation of the station into the Eurostar terminal.

Bones of the 4 metre long animal were found with eight other sets of human remains, including three skulls, dating back to around 1822.

The bones were found in 2003 but studies and zoological searches have not been able to identify who put them there.

The most plausible reason is that the creature was brought to the city by whalers and sold for medical research or as a curiosity, experts say.

## Sofitel's playful transfers



A custom-designed, 4-door MINI Cooper Countryman has been added to Sofitel So Bangkok's fleet of luxurious limousines.

Providing guests with a stylish way to explore the city, it can be used for airport transfers,

sightseeing trips, travel to and from business meetings, or visits to a string of shopping and leisure destinations around the capital.

"As the city's first truly urban lifestyle hotel, we wanted to showcase the Sofitel So signature 'playful luxury' concept in our limo fleet as well.

"Along with the convenience of being chauffeured by an experienced autopilot who is well-versed in navigating the roads of Bangkok, we offer our guests a stylish, pleasurable way to travel from point A to point B.

"Time is a luxury that we can help optimise by allowing our guests to make the best use of theirs while on the road," says general manager, Gilles Cretallaz.

## Events boost S'frica

SOUTH African Tourism has secured 38 bids in 2013 that will contribute R680 million to the economy, a number of twitter posts this morning said, adding that business events over the next 5 years will contribute more than R2.6 billion to the country.

"South Africa has done exceptionally well. But there's still much to do" said South African Tourism's ceo Thulani Nzima.

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# business events news

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## Sheraton 'Feasts' on success

**SHERATON** on the Park's signature restaurant 'Feast' with its popular international seafood buffet and five star service, was awarded 'Metropolitan Brasserie/Café of the Year,' at the 2013 TAA (NSW) Awards for Excellence, last Wednesday.

Having won the award in three consecutive years the hotel was inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Sean Hunt, Sheraton on the Park's md and regional vp Starwood Pacific Hotels, said, "Winning these prestigious awards is the culmination of many years of hard work and investment in our facilities and people.

"Through an unprecedented string of awards, Sheraton on the Park has firmly positioned itself as the hotel of choice in the competitive 5 star Sydney market."

# Pan Pacific's roadshow

**WITH** the Pan Pacific Hotel Group's (PPH), Parkroyal brand now re-established in Sydney, Parramatta and Melbourne and new PPH properties being built across Asia, PPH's Customer Connections Event rolled into Perth, Melbourne and Sydney last week.

Today, it's Brisbane's turn, followed on Wednesday by Auckland.

With three new properties in China on the drawing board and a new golf resort planned for Java, Keren Southgate, the group's area director of sales Oceania said, "The Java resort will bring a second golf resort to the Group, while in Bali a new Parkroyal is due to open in 2014, near Nusa Dua."

The general manager of the group's flagship golf hotel, the 5-star Nirwana Bali Resort, which underwent a US\$10 million refurbishment in November 2011, Ivan Casadevall, said of the 103-hectare resort with its breathtaking views of the Indian



Ocean and Tanah Lot, "I like to call this place Bali without the disappointment."

Set in 103 hectares of land, it has a stunning 18-hole Greg Norman designed golf course and some very challenging cliff-to-cliff tee shots.

Adding to the beauty of the challenging golf course are terraced rice paddies, from which Polito proudly said, "We produce 9,000kgs of rice a year."

**Pictured** above at the Sydney event are: Ivan Casadevall, general manager of Pan Pacific Nirwana Bali Resort; Keren Southgate area director of sales Oceania at PPH and Craig Bond, area general manager of Oceania.



## Getting to Know: Auckland, New Zealand

by: Jill Varley

**IF SKYCITY** Auckland Conference Centre is where your event is being held and being in close proximity to it is a priority, there are some 6000 hotel rooms within walking distance. None are closer than the SKYCITY's own Grand Hotel while across the road the Crowne Plaza Auckland has 10 versatile conference spaces of its own with capacities from 10 to 500 participants.

It's from SKYCITY's Sky Tower, the tallest building in the Southern Hemisphere, that the brave throw themselves off into the abyss from SkyJump, and those so inclined SkyWalk around its exterior on a narrow walkway 192 metres above the ground.

Auckland is the world's largest Polynesian city so for a true Maori experience the Auckland Museum is a must where daily and private cultural performances are held.

There is an array of unique event centres including the Classic Flyers NZ in Tauranga - an aviation themed function centre that can take 500 in its largest room, the Hangar. City Works Depot in Auckland's Wellesley Street is something different too. Home to several new food, wine and brewery ventures, they include the eclectic Dry & Tea salon where you can enjoy a high tea or have a cuppa whilst having your hair done.

There's also Mike Van de Elzen's Food Truck Garage for a different bite to eat, and Al Brown's Best Ugly Bagel.

Auckland Viaduct Harbour, set around the harbour foreshores, has an endless array of bars, restaurants and cafes. It also has a marina where past America's Cup superyachts can be chartered for team building events.

Here too is the Viaduct Events Centre, Auckland's newest purpose-built venue. Offering seven rooms, the Centre has central Auckland's largest banquet space capable of seating up to 1,200 guests.

Then, after a \$1.4m refurb, there's the newly configured Shed 10 on Queen's Wharf, available for major public events and as a cruise facility. As a leisure activity on any program, a visit to Auckland should include Waiheke Island - a picture postcard blend of rolling farmland, beaches, vineyards and olive groves, and home to some of New Zealand's best red wines.



Sail Auckland Harbour



Dry & Tea, Newmarket - blow wave & tea house



Waiheke Island looking towards Auckland