



Off to MEETINGS

IT'S all about MEETINGS New Zealand this week as I wing my



way across the ditch enfolded in the warm embrace of the show's principal sponsor Air New Zealand.

It's a week that promises lots of exciting news during the event from our New Zealand cousins and later in the week from a much looked forward to Wellington famil.

On another note, it's about time I gave a heartfelt thankyou to all the wonderful comments we get from readers about **BEN**, both verbal and written.

How it is hitting the mark with readers, the perfect length, informative, engaging, fun and a must read.

However, when that praise comes from Business Events Australia, then we really feel we have hit our stride.

Business Events Australia ceo Penny Lion dropped us a line last week, which I quote verbatim:

"A quick note to say how much we enjoy reading **BEN**.

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

"Keep up the good work!"

Inspiring words indeed and ones much appreciated by the hard working team at **BEN**.

We thank youse all! Jill

Fly free to Lord Howe

LOOKING for a cool season retreat – Capella Lodge on Lord Howe Island has a deal that is hard to pass up.

Stay for seven days and pay for six and you take advantage of their Fly Free Stay package, then get into the swing of island walks, wine by the fire and all the delights that Lord Howe has to offer.

Dates are from 3 August – 30 September and are inclusive of Capella's stylish suites - for details see www.baillielodges.com.au

Roll up for MEETINGS 2013

MEETINGS 2013, taking place this week, is set to become New Zealand's biggest ever business tourism industry trade show.

Organised by Conventions and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ), it is being held at Auckland's SKYCITY Convention Centre and on the floor will be 180 New Zealand exhibitors promoting their products and services to a record number of more than 400 day buyers and 185 hosted buyers.

These influential decision making buyers represent companies and associations from throughout New Zealand, Australia, China, Malaysia, Singapore, and India.

"MEETINGS is a chance for them to see under one-roof just how much New Zealand has to offer as a conference and incentive travel destination and as such is a very powerful marketing tool," says CINZ chief executive Alan Trotter.

"Every year millions of dollars worth of new business leads are generated as a result of the connections that are made at MEETINGS and I'm sure that will be the case again this year."

Tourism New Zealand and Air New Zealand are also providing assistance for the Chinese and South-East Asian buyers, allowing them the opportunity to sample first-hand New Zealand's diversity through a series of briefings by the country's regional convention bureaux.

Win with Luxperience

BUSINESS Events News readers this week have the opportunity to win a three night stay at the luxury Six Senses Qing Cheng Mountain China, courtesy of Luxperience and Six Senses.

Luxperience takes place 02-04 Sep in Sydney, and aims to give MICE professionals inspiration for boutique events and high end incentives across the globe - see the competition box at **right**.



"If we want to compete on the international stage we have to show these buyers that not only do we have standout destinations but that we also offer great value for money.

"MEETINGS give us an opportunity to do just that," Trotter says.

The two-day exhibition will open with a special welcome function at Auckland's Museum of Transport and Technology.

About 600 people are expected to attend that event while a similar number is also expected at the farewell dinner at Shed 10 on Auckland's waterfront.

"These two social events will allow us to showcase some of the unique venues and event suppliers we have in Auckland, and will also provide a great opportunity for people attending MEETINGS to get to know each other in a relaxed social setting," says event manager Jeanette Stanton - www.meetings.co.nz.

Four pages today

TODAY'S issue of *Business Events News* has four pages of the latest industry news, including a full page of photos from the recent Accor Great Race in Melbourne on **page four**.

Rydges rises again

RYDGES Hotels & Resorts has successfully secured the management contract for the new Latimer Hotel in Christchurch, the first new hotel to be built in the city since the devastating earthquake of 2011.

The landmark building, to be branded Rydges Latimer Christchurch, will feature 138 guest rooms and extensive banquet facilities with a capacity to cater for up to 360 people.

The largest hotel function space in Christchurch, it is scheduled to open on 1 October.

"We are excited to be involved in this project which will not only provide Christchurch with a brand new hotel product but also send a positive message in regard to the re-development of the city and the strong future ahead for tourism and commerce in the region," said Norman Arundel, gm of Rydges Hotels & Resorts.

Experience Six Senses Resorts with Luxperience



This week **Business Events News** and **Luxperience** have teamed up to give one lucky reader the chance to win a three night stay for two people at **Six Senses Qing Cheng Mountain China** plus daily buffet breakfast.

Six Senses Hotels Resorts and Spas can be discovered in some of the world's most unique and beautiful places.

To be eligible for this prize answer the three daily questions in **BEN** this week with all answers due in by Friday 28 June.



Q1: How many networking events are included in the Corporate Connect Buyer Program offered during Luxperience?

Email lux@businesseventsnews.com.au

Terms & Conditions apply

Hint: luxperience.com.au



A healthy diet of brawn & brains

DESCRIBED as a veritable melange of brawn and brains with the British Lions and their fans in the ACT, the Australian Local Government National Assembly conference being held and Parliament sitting, these events saw Accor's Canberra hotels reached their highest demand levels since the US Presidential visit in November 2011.

Novotel Canberra saw 6.3% growth across the four-day period from 16-19 June and Mercure Canberra saw growth of 26.9%.

The nightly rate at both Novotel and Mercure Canberra averaged \$330, which is approximately \$190 higher than the average daily rate, and inbound room contribution was up 400%.

Sydney integrated resort

A PROPOSAL unveiled yesterday by the owner of Sydney's Star Casino could see the creation of "the world's first connected, integrated resort".

The plan includes a 500 new rooms in a "six star luxury hotel" and another "five star premium hotel," as well as 50 world-class restaurants and bars.

Echo Entertainment's proposal also includes extensive convention and meeting spaces and a full range of resort facilities - along with a "city link" pedestrian and cycle bridge which would connect Darling Harbour with the Barangaroo precinct.

The Echo plan urges the NSW govt to give it an exclusive casino licence until 2034, but also

includes a possible compromise which would see the rival Crown proposal for Barangaroo also proceed, but with gaming exclusively limited to VIPs.

"This project will make The Star a 3 billion 'downtown' resort - in the heart of Australia's global city - on the shores of the world's greatest harbour," said Echo chairman John O'Neill.

He said the project is estimated to deliver an additional 330,000 international and interstate visitors every year, with the complex set to be a "huge magnet to overseas visitors," O'Neill added.

OCEC gm sought

A GLOBAL search has begun for a general manager for the new Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre in Muscat.

The recruitment process by venue manager AEG Ogden was announced by group director, convention centres, Geoff Donaghy, to ensure the best possible candidate is selected for the venue which is due to open in 2016.

"This is a unique opportunity to oversee a pre-opening team in a 'greenfield' destination.

"The Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre offers both a rewarding and challenging experience and the opportunity to work with a number of internationally credentialled professionals," he said

"The beauty and diversity of the Sultanate of Oman has not only gained strong interest from international organisations to host future congresses and exhibitions at the Centre, but has also attracted strong interest in career opportunities on a global scale," Donaghy said.

The Oman & Convention Exhibition Centre is being built in two phases, with the 22,000 sqm of Exhibition Halls completed in 2015 and auditorium, banquet halls and meeting rooms scheduled for a late 2016 opening.



AUSTRALIA, you may not be aware, has a cache of relatively undiscovered activities.

Such things as city tunnels, plane graveyards and a destination where aliens are thought to visit!

It's true. The Northern Territory town of Wycliffe Well is considered the UFO capital of Australia and an apparent hotspot for sightings.

You can go underground and explore streams that run through tunnels underneath Sydney's CBD with Sydney Living Museums - formerly the Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

Australia has a number of pink salt lakes - one in the Murray Sunset National Park, Victoria, in South Australia and another in Western Australia, caused by an algae in the water, turning it pretty pink.

At Alice Springs Airport the arid landscape is home to an outback plane graveyard of retired aircraft.

You can take weekly yoga classes from the lofty heights of the observation deck of Sydney Tower Eye.

A visit to the remote Aboriginal community of Nyinyikay in East Arnhem Land, in the Northern Territory includes digging for wild yams or turtle eggs.

Or you can join in on the longest mail run in the world, a 2500km round trip by plane, from Port Augusta, SA to Glengyle Station, Queensland.

Marriott's sales mission

WITH so many new properties opening up in Asia as well as a portfolio of established hotels throughout the Australasia region, Marriott International annual Australia Sales Mission was held at the



Melbourne Marriott Hotel on 18 June and the Marriott Sydney Harbour Hotel on 20 June.

The mission allows customers the opportunity to consolidate their business planning and meet property representatives from many of their global brands,

Among the many Marriott properties, the new JW Marriott Hanoi Hotel (above), scheduled to open in summer this year, was a particular standout.

Its arresting design inspired by traditional Dragon folklore and imagery that reflects the Vietnam coastline, is the work of the Carlos Zapata Studios.

Located at the heart of Hanoi's new Central Business District, it will have 450 luxuriously

appointed guestrooms, six food and beverage outlets and more than 2,400 sqm of flexible meeting space.

The hotel's director of group sales Melanie Schilling, newly arrived to China from Germany brought with her a delightful array of Chinese Zodiac characters intricately made out of paper by local disabled people, as gifts for the guests - see below.





Blue is just our cup of tea

RECENTLY BEN had the pleasure of dining with Taj Hotels & Resorts Thushara Liyanarachchi and Sanjay Unmashankar, general manager Blue Sydney at Aki's Indian restaurant.



The hotel, set on Woolloomooloo's heritage listed finger wharf, just happens to be the longest timber-piled wharf in the world, with 4,000 piles.

It was constructed in 1911 as a wool and cargo handling facility, however as container terminals and flight became a more popular mode of transport it fell into disrepair and faced demolition.

It was through the 1991 Union Green Bans and the efforts of forward thinking protesters that it was saved.

Now this 100-room business hotel wins worldwide accolades for its stylish design and accommodation and full marks

for its meeting facilities, of which there are five different event spaces for up to 70 people, including at the centre of the hotel, in a cathedral like chamber, the WaterBar, one of Sydney's finest cocktail lounges and event spaces.

ABEE register for free

IF you haven't already done so, it time to register for ABEE – the Australian Business Events Expo.

It's on 14-15 August at Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre.

This free industry event allows registrants to have access to all the latest in event technology as well as find and talk with a wide range of new suppliers.

See www.abeexpo.com.au.

Amora Sydney's offer

THE Amora Hotel Jamieson Sydney is offering a Deluxe Day Conference Package from \$99 pp.

Included in the offer is: freshly brewed coffee and tea on arrival; morning and afternoon tea, each break served with two types of catering item from their Coffee & Tea Extra Menu; a working lunch on the conference floor; relaxing mini shoulder massages from a qualified Amora Spa therapist during the lunch break; mineral water and orange juice with lunch; note pads, pens, iced water and mints; and room hire.

The offer is subject to availability and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer - www.sydney.amorahotels.com

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Face to Face with...

Alan Trotter,
Chief Executive Officer

Conventions and Incentives New Zealand



Business Events News recently caught up with Alan Trotter, ceo of Conventions and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ). During his time at CINZ he has grown the membership from 20 to 350 and established a sales and marketing office in Sydney. He also inaugurated the MEETINGS Exhibition, held each year in June, which is now recognised as one of the best business event tradeshow in Australasia. Trotter also introduced the Conference Assistance Programme (CAP) in New Zealand.

What does your role entail?

My role involves taking the leadership of the C&I sector in NZ and acting as the spokesperson for the industry to both national and international media delivering business opportunities to our membership and encouraging investment into the sector as well as "talking up" the sector to all sections of society.

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

We have a wonderful café right on the beach five min from our office so I try and meet the staff there each morning shout them a coffee and scope out the day's activities.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

Like most jobs a large proportion of my time is spent on dealing with external petty politics and personalities which if left alone will develop into a toxic growth on the progress of CINZ and the sector as a whole.

How do you inspire your team?

My team do not need inspiring and in fact they inspire me. Most of my team have been with me for many years and they are the best in the business. My role is to ensure they have adequate resources to undertake their various roles and protect them from politics & external influences outside of their control.

Dealing with new technology - bonus or headache?

New technology is neither a bonus or a headache and can be defined as anything you want it to be. The fact is that it exists and constantly evolving and you need to have a team that understands it and how to harness the changes. From a

personal perspective my idea of social media is a pint in the pub with mates or customers but I am smart enough to understand that the world has changed for silver hairs like me.

What would you be doing if you weren't in your current role?

I would be a military historian based in Sandhurst UK and teaching students how history shaped the world and the lessons that can be applied to today's global challenges by thoroughly understanding the past particularly from a military perspective.

Who has inspired you?

I am inspired by people who have shaped our world by leading from the front and enduring terrible hardships and not letting bitterness consume them over how they were treated. Nelson Mandela in my humble opinion is the greatest living human being who not only transformed a nation but also avoided the bloodshed that could have resulted in transformational change.

What makes a great conference?

A great conference depends on many things but mostly it needs a group of dedicated passionate people who put together a great programme with just the right balance of seriousness, fun and professional development opportunities. Out of the programmes comes great speakers and the right amount of audience participation.

What is the one of the most inspiring conferences you've attended?

Some of our CINZ conferences have really hit the mark particularly our Nelson conference held in 2003.

The 'Race' was on for conference organisers at ACCOR'S Melbourne hotels

FLYING, kicking and dancing their way through Melbourne last weekend, conference organisers and corporate partners starred in the third annual 'Accor Great Race' around the city. Planned in conjunction with race partner BeChallenged, the event paid homage to the 'Amazing Race' TV series, with teams testing their stamina, knowledge, communication and team building skills throughout the event. Each exciting challenge was designed to incorporate and showcase the best of The Como Melbourne, Citigate Melbourne, Mercure Melbourne Treasury Gardens, and Novotel St Kilda's conference facilities.

Day one saw teams kick up a Storm with special guests, Melbourne Storm players Brett Finch and Gareth Widdop providing their expert advice on how to place-kick a goal. Featuring a surprise helicopter ride for one lucky team, the two day event encouraged the partners of Accor to participate in eating and memory challenges, including a few surprise bonus challenges thrown in for good measure too. However, it was the Federation Square 'Hurricane' flash mob routine learnt by the teams that was a definite highlight of the whole race.

The Black team, comprising of Steven Bracchi, Todd Macleod, Emily Kitto, Luisa Cuppari, and Alexandra Rolton from The Como Melbourne, reigned victorious, taking home the prestigious Accor Great Race trophy and overnight accommodation vouchers for the newly opened, multi-million dollar Mercure Portsea Golf Club & Resort.

Pictured **far right** is the winning Black team: Alexandra Rolton, The Como Melbourne; Steven Bracchi, Luisa Cuppari and Emily Kitto, FCm Travel.



Left is the lucky Blue Team who won the Fast Forward Challenge and were flown by helicopter to the next challenge. From left, Carly Menzel, Audrey Vignau, Rebecca Russell, Melbourne Convention Bureau; Edwina Mason, Pullman & Mercure Albert Park; and Jenna Lipshut.



Right: Gareth Widdop, Gabi Vincent, Regional Director of Sales, Accor Vic, Tas, SA; Gil Wong, Director of Sales, Ibis Melbourne and Brett Finch at the Melbourne Storm Challenge.



Above: Todd Macleod, Emily Kitto from FCm Travel in Acland Street about to undertake the Cake Eating Challenge.



Above: Orange Team taking a well earned rest. From left, Hanna Doherty, Ibis Melbourne; Jake McCoy, Andrea Sanchez, Natalie King and Andrea Pearson Voyager Travel.



Above: Group flash mob in Federation Square



Right: Melbourne Storm's Gareth Widdop kicks up a storm during the Melbourne Storm Challenge.

Pictured **left** is Kingsley Seale, Samantha Charlton, Sophie Bagnall and Fiona Gardiner from BeChallenged, the event organisers.

