



Busy times ahead TODAY

I am attending a first on the Australian tourism calendar – TravMedia's International Media Marketplace (IMM). Being held at the Hilton Brisbane, it brings together top-flight Australian and international media with key tourism destinations and brands for a full-day exhibition-style event.

A sequel to IMM held in March at The Dorchester in London with a sellout 88 exhibitors and 250 registered media, TravMedia, the travel industry press release aggregator, has joined forces in Australia with destination partners, Tourism and Events Queensland and Brisbane Marketing, and event sponsor, Hilton Worldwide.

Welcoming the news the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Graham Quirk said, "The decision to host the International Media Marketplace confirms our appeal as a destination of choice for international business events with an array of world-class venues and event services available."

By Monday I will be winging my way to Bali on a Club Med famil trip.

As I said, there will be much to report - Jill.



Invitation to Port Stephens' AITO conference

THE Australian Institute of Tourism Officers (AITO), a leader in tourism professional development for tourism professionals has chosen Port Stephens to host their conference 31 July - 2 August.

Building on digital strategies and destination management planning, all tourism professionals are invited to this intensive development opportunity delivered by leading tourism professionals.

"Attending this conference myself for many years I see the value for all tourism professionals in attending this event.

"I am pleased I am able to showcase Port Stephens to my colleagues at the 2013 event," said Destination Port Stephens, marketing manager Tars Bylhouwer.

"The ability to attract events like the AITO Professional Development Conference to Port Stephens is a clear indication of the growing Port Stephens meetings, incentive, conferences and events market.

"Following on from the successful Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW (LGSA)



Tourism Conference held in March this year and a strong bid to attract the Australian Regional Tourism Network Conference in 2014, Port Stephens has shown its commitment to make any size conference a huge success," he said.

More online - www.aito.com.au.

Fiji Airways creates Wellness Clinic

THE soon to be named 'Fiji Airways' has formed a partnership with Zens Medical Centre in Nadi, aimed at providing Fiji with the nation's first-ever preventative medicine clinic.

The new 'Fiji Airways Wellness Clinic', on a referral basis, intends to offer a range of health and wellness checks designed to achieve the goal of early detection and prevention of Fiji's most common causes of death, namely heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and strokes.

"As Fiji's national airline, we are committed to improving the lives and well-being of not only our staff, but all Fijians, said Dave Pflieger, Air Pacific managing director and ceo.

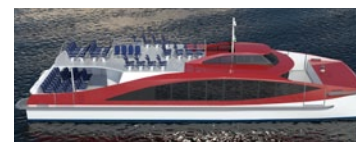
Seen as a fitting way to commemorate the rebranding of Fiji's national airline from Air Pacific to Fiji Airways, the free medical clinic service commenced on 22 April and is located at 40 Lodia Street, Nadi Town.

Cairns to host ATE '14

THE announcement that Cairns is to be the first regional destination to secure the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE), has been described by Tourism Tropical North Queensland chief executive officer Rob Giason as an extraordinary coup.

One, he said, that reflects the quality of the destination and its tourism infrastructure as well as the strong participation at ATE by the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef region over the past 13 years.

Sealink Rockets ahead



THE Sealink Travel Group, comprising of SeaLink and Captain Cook Cruises is investing \$11 million into developing and improving its Australian Tourism infrastructure and fleet throughout Australia - including New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland.

Sealink Travel Group's managing director, Jeff Ellison said an investment of \$3 million would be injected into Sydney Harbour with the building of a new high-speed passenger boat - a sleek Rocket - the first addition to the fleet since the *MV Sydney 2000*.

The eco-friendly, fuel efficient Rocket, which is due to commence services in October and operate as a ferry, transfers and hosts sightseeing cruises, features two passenger levels with indoor and outdoor seating for up to 200 passengers.

In addition, an investment of \$1 million will be spent on a refurbishment and engine replacement program for the *MV Sydney 2000*.

Further large investment by Sealink includes South Australia where a total of \$5m is being spent on two very important regional tourism destinations.

Murdoch joins Moreton Hire

REBECCA Murdoch has joined the Moreton Hire team as national corporate sales manager.

Murdoch who comes to the business with more than 25 years experience in management, has returned from working overseas to manage the custom stand department and head up a corporate platform within the company.





Metro's Darling Harbour upgrade



THE Metro Hospitality Group's Darling Harbour property has completed a major renovation.

Included is the installation of new kitchens in all of the apartments, new Sealy beds, refurbished lifts, and the introduction of free high-speed wifi throughout.

According to George Bedwani, chief operating officer of Metro Hospitality Group, this particular property will maintain its high occupancy because of the strong Sydney MICE and leisure markets as a result of the many events, concerts, trade shows and conferences which will take place this year.

"The Sydney Convention Centre will have its busiest year this year before its closure, to build a new convention, exhibition and entertainment precinct which will be ready at the end of 2016.

"Metro Apartments Darling Harbour is located in the heart of Sydney overlooking Darling Harbour so this will result in strong occupancy by not only MICE delegates but business and leisure visitors to the city," Bedwani said.

A Star studded ATE farewell

SYDNEY bid farewell to its hosted buyers, exhibitors and media from Asia, Europe and America, when ATE ended on 30 April with a Last Shout 'thank you' party at The Star.

Tourism Australia managing director, Andrew McEvoy, commenting on the finale of a fantastic week for Australian inbound tourism said, "The Australian Tourism Exchange is and has always been an essential component of our growth strategy for the Australian inbound tourism market, bringing together international delegates and Australian suppliers.

"The Last Shout at The Star was the perfect evening to bring to a close a very successful ATE in Sydney.

"The celebration was designed to show-off Sydney in a fitting farewell, and to leave a lasting impression on the largest travel and tourism buyers and influencers in the world," he said.

The balcony of the recently completed \$100 million Event Centre was transformed by BelleLaide Events, who showcased the best of Australia.

From the outback to the rainforest, enthralling imagery of Australia was projected onto the walls of the Event Centre, lighting up the night with colours of the Australian outback.

Moving images of Uluru were projected onto life sized lettering of the 'OUTBACK' to provide a real 'wow' factor.



Whilst enjoying the views of Sydney's lit up skyline, guests dined from food station to food station on Singapore noodles, roast lamb, individual chocolate tarts with raspberry mousse, and Spanish churros with chocolate sauce.

A seafood station in the pre-function space inside The Star Event Centre was piled high with fresh Australian seafood.

Chatman joins JC Travel Professionals

JC Travel Professionals, based in Baulkham Hills, has appointed James Chatman e-Marketing executive.

Coming from an agency background, Chatman is a newcomer to the travel industry and brings with him valuable experience in online marketing.



IN San Diego and missing home?

Hop along to the San Diego Zoo where their Conrad Prebys Australian Outback exhibit – Koalafornia Dreaming, opens on 26 May.

At the entrance you will be met by aboriginal style totems, representing a range of recognisable Australian animals.

Then venture through a eucalyptus grove to encounter wombats and wallabies to kookaburras and cockatoos.

The Koalafornia (we love the name) exhibit ends at a Queenslander house-style care centre that overlooks a forest for the Zoo's Queensland koala colony - the largest koala colony outside of Australia.

Macau Grand Prix expo

THE Macau Government Tourist Office (Australia) is to host a free exhibition – Macau Grand Prix: 60 years of Motorsport History that focuses on the upcoming Diamond Jubilee of the globally famous event.

Being held 23-26 May in the Lower Exhibitions Hall at Sydney Town Hall, on display will be a series of historic photographs, video coverage of Macau Grand Prix meetings, fascinating posters from yesteryear and other forms of motor racing memorabilia.

In addition, Macau maps, guidebooks and details of the various attractions will be available.

Adding a splash of local colour, three Australian-based racing cars of different vintages will take pride of place within the exhibition, open each day from 10am until 4pm.

Visitors will also have the chance to win a coffee table book on the history of Formula Three racing at the Macau Grand Prix, signed by two Australian motor racing legends.

See - www.macautourism.gov.mo.

Oscar winner prompts Taiwan events

TAIWAN Tourism Bureau has seized the opportunity to follow up with the winner of the 'Best Director' Oscar for local boy Ang Lee for his film the 'Life of Pi', by introducing a 'Time for Celebration' calendar of special events.

Taking place this year, the events include the Dragon Boat Festival on 6 June, in Lukang Township.

The Festival began as an occasion to drive off evil spirits and to find peace in life and today it is a key event raced to the sound of beating drums and the winning rowers grabbing the flag at the end of the course.

The calendar will also feature the Ghost Festival on 9 September in Keelung where traditionally, it is believed that ghosts haunt the island of Taiwan for the entire seventh lunar month.

It's a festival that combines the Buddhist Ullambana Festival and the Taoist Ghost Festival, both of which honour dead spirits.

Other calendar highlights include the Taiwan Cycling Festival on 11 November taking place in Yilan, Hualien and Taitung countries.

A full calendar of events can be located at eng.taiwan.net.tw.



business events news

3rd May 2013

JW Marriott's grand designs

JW Marriott Hotels & Resorts is celebrating the acquisition of a new luxury hotel in Manhattan, the JW Marriott Essex House New York.

The grand opening of Essex House comes on the heels of the JW Marriott Marquis Dubai, which debuted in February as the world's tallest hotel.

509-room Essex House with its inimitable Art Deco sign set atop the 40-story building, first opened in 1931, hosting a glittering array of dignitaries and celebrities alike.

Today, the hotel features world-class amenities including a full-service spa and fitness centre, a fine-dining restaurant and well-appointed meeting and event spaces.

Offering commanding views



of Central Park, the hotel underwent a comprehensive \$90 million renovation in 2007 and is among the most luxurious and recognised hotels in Manhattan.

Johannesburg meetings special

THE Emerald Resort & Casino, less than an hour's drive from Johannesburg, on the banks of the Vaal River, has an industry conference and accommodation special.

Book a minimum two night stay and receive a 50% discount on the third conference day or receive a complimentary welcome gift for in-house accommodation delegates.

Valid Sunday to Thursday and available until 31 July, the fully inclusive conference rate, excludes specialised equipment and beverages.

For further details on the special email - eddyr@emeraldconference.co.za.

Crowne Plaza Duqm

WITH the coast town of Duqm fast becoming a hotspot for travel and business within Oman and with three existing Crowne Plaza hotels located in Oman's major cities - Muscat, Sohar and Salalah - as well as the InterContinental Muscat, IHG (InterContinental Hotels Group) has reinforced its presence in the country with the opening of Crowne Plaza Duqm.

The hotel's 213 spacious guest rooms feature elegant decor inspired by Omani architecture and are all designed to offer expansive, uninterrupted views of the Arabian Sea.

Corporate functions and events are catered for in its state-of-the-art, 780 square metre event centre, which includes four meeting rooms, two ballrooms, a boardroom and a business centre.

To celebrate the opening, Crowne Plaza Duqm is offering a special opening rate of AU\$200 per room, per night for stays from now until September.

Info at - crowneplaza.com.

GCCEC appoints three new staff



LUCA Marino, who relocated from Melbourne, has been appointed as the Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre's new information technology manager.

His 12 years in the field have seen him manage IT solutions for the QLD Government, Jefferson Ford, Melbourne City Mission, Latrobe University and various media and creative agencies.

In addition, Paul Wilson, instrumental in launching a full in-house AV service last year, has been appointed as audiovisual manager.

While Russell Baker

(pictured below), an integral part of the initial development of the Centre's internal Audio Visual department, has been appointed as audio visual sales manager.



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NEWPORT Beach is fast becoming one of California's most popular meeting destinations.

The city's near-perfect weather, year-round, allows for the greatest variety of unique meeting venues – both inside and out, on land and sea.

In addition to an abundant selection of upscale hotels with a wide variety of meeting spaces to accommodate all sizes and types of meetings, planners may select to host memorable meetings on yachts, in waterfront ballrooms, seaside restaurants, golf course clubhouses and more.

And, now a foodie destination, Newport Beach also offers more than 400 restaurants to choose from for off-site banquets & gatherings.

Perhaps best of all, Newport Beach boasts a convenient location and is served by three major airports including Los Angeles International Airport, only an hour's drive away.

Visit Newport Beach has been in existence for more than 20 years, specialising in small to midsize meetings and offering a streamlined process as a meeting planner's 'one source' for all the hotel and resort venues in this coastal community.

"Our dedicated conference sales team offers a very personalised service and have the destination expertise to help you find the perfect venue.

Better still, we can connect you with the right people to assist with transport, activities, spousal programs, destination collateral, and more!" says Michelle Donahue, vp of Sales at Visit Newport Beach.

"Meeting planners are rewarded through our fantastic rewards and incentive program and if you want to think outside the box, we're always willing to help make that big idea a reality.

"This year we saw conference attendees having a cook-off in a hotel's secondary kitchen!"