



Out & About

LIKE sands through the hourglass, the team from **BEN** and our sister publication



Travel Daily is scattered across the globe today.

BEN is in Bali on a Club Med famil while *TD* staff are in Dubai, Singapore and Central Australia, where IT firm Travelport is hosting a major conference.

Meanwhile, back home in Epping our great support team is beavering on.

TravMedia's inaugural International Media Marketplace (IMM), held in Brisbane on Friday proved to be a resounding success, creating one-on-one opportunities for the media and travel industry operators to meet face-to-face.

Keith Bellows, senior vice-president and editor-in-chief National Geographic Traveler was flown in from the USA as guest speaker.

His thought provoking topic on "The Power of Travel" considered the question of travel trends to destinations such as Bhutan, Cuba, Myanmar and Mongolia and the fine balance that needed to be addressed between tourism growth and sustainability.

What, he questioned did it mean for the next generation?

Enjoy reading about SCEC's 25th anniversary and so much more in today's issue - *Jill*.

What the doctor ordered

BESTCITIES

Global Alliance is showing international medical associations it's just what the doctor ordered with partners hosting some of the world's most

prestigious medical conferences over the next three years.

BestCities destinations in Australia, Asia and the Middle East all have considerable investment in medical-related infrastructure, which is paying off with international medical conferences bringing visitors and economic benefit to the cities.

Melbourne will hold three of the world's most significant medical conferences less than eight months apart starting with the prestigious 22nd World Diabetes Congress in December for approximately 12,500 delegates and including the 20th International AIDS Conference in July 2014 which, attracting over 14,000 delegates, will be the largest medical conference ever held in Australia.

Karen Bolinger, ceo of the Melbourne Convention Bureau, said, "International associations bringing conferences to Melbourne have indicated that



the strength of their discipline's local research community and the size of the wider academic community were major factors in their decision to choose the city as the host destination."

Singapore has become a major draw for international medical meetings, hosting the 2013 World Health Summit (WHS) regional meeting in April, the first time this took place outside Berlin.

Jeannie Lim, executive director, Conventions & Meetings and Exhibitions & Conferences, Singapore Tourism Board, says, "Singapore's unique strength is its ability to integrate infrastructure, technology and research successfully.

"Some of Singapore's upcoming biomedical and scientific congresses include the 6th International Singapore Symposium of Immunology in June 2013 and the 9th World Congress on Cosmetic Dermatology (WCOCD) 2014.

Dubai's standing as a world-class host of medical meetings was firmly established when the World Diabetes Congress, which the city hosted in 2011, attracted an unprecedented 15,100 delegates.

BestCities' managing director Jane Vong Holmes summarises "We are certainly seeing an upward trend in the number of international medical associations who are choosing more than one BestCities partner to host their congress."

Starwood Expo's final places up for grabs

STARWOOD Hotels and Resorts' annual Expo will take place in Australia this week.

The sales mission will kick off in Melbourne on 7 May following on in Sydney and North Ryde on 8 and 9 May respectively and ending in Brisbane on 10 May.

Featuring more than 30 hotels from across the Asia Pacific and North America regions, the local travel trade and the business events industry, it will showcase Starwood Hotels and Resorts nine distinct lifestyle brands; St Regis, The Luxury Collection, W Hotels, Le Méridien, Westin, Sheraton, Aloft, Element and Four Points by Sheraton.

All attendees will be entered into a prize draw featuring a range of luxurious and international travel prizes.

Places are limited so register online for your spot at one of these events - www.starwoodexpo.com/australia_expo.html.

SCEC celebrates its 25th anniversary

THE Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre marked its 25th anniversary over the weekend.

The silver anniversary was a milestone for the Australian events sector and a cause for celebration said Centre chief executive, Ton van Amerongen.

"With a million people passing through our doors each year, the Centre has formed part of the economic and social fabric of our nation."

During the Saturday event van Amerongen thanked his staff for their contribution to the Centre's success, saying that their skills and professionalism had kept the venue at the cutting edge of the industry since its opening in 1988.

BEN today has a special two page spread featuring the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre - see **pages 4** and **page 5**.

Team building. More fun in the
Philippines

facebook.com/itsmorefuninthephilippines
 Visit morefuninthephilippines.com.au

Organize the Philippines



Meet in Poland

SHOULD Poland be under consideration for a congress or incentive, the VII edition of Polish incoming Tourism Workshop - Meet Poland - being held in Warsaw 26-28 September, provides the ideal vehicle to gather first-hand information.

Supported by the main Polish tourist organisations, they offer plenty of reasons to attend, including tourism suppliers from all Polish regions coming to Warsaw to meet their international business partners.

Top representatives, such as hotels, SPA, tour operators will offer their products and services and the new way of approaching Poland.

Leading international tour operators have previously taken part in incoming workshops.

The attractiveness of Poland is increasing due to the growing standards of its tourism industry.

Visit www.meetpoland.pl for more information.

Meet at their place

FROM 1 May - 31 August, meet at Langham Place, Mongkok and enjoy exclusive summer offers such as special room rates from HK\$1,400 and up to HK\$1,650, both with complimentary internet access and daily buffet breakfast for two per room, full day summer meeting packages starting from HK\$650pp and the half day summer meeting package at HK\$550pp.

An array of other privileges exist for groups of over 30 rooms including, one hour welcome drinks and canapés, one complimentary room throughout the stay, room upgrade for one guestroom, Ying welcome amenities, Dream Big turndown gifts and a special discount at Chuan Spa.

In addition, Double take the lead or mileage points will be offered to groups confirmed between 1 May and 30 June, who stay between 1 May and 31 August - see www.hongkong.langhamplacehotels.com.

Funding Victoria's sizzle

WITH tourism and events contributing nearly \$16 billion to Victoria's economy each year and employing more than 200,000 people, Victoria's peak tourism industry body has welcomed the announcement of \$11.7 million in Victorian Government funding to renew Federation Square.

It will, says Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) chief executive Dianne Smith, help maintain Federation Square as the prime meeting place for Melburnians and visitors.

Free Traders Nespresso machines

TRADERS Hotel, Brisbane by Shangri-La on Roma Street, who by the way offer free wi-fi throughout the hotel, have an unbeatable offer.

For just \$298, Stay Connected with "U" guests who stay and play on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday night before 30 June will receive a brand new Nespresso "U" machine and Aeroccino3 milk-frothing device (RRP \$299).

The overnight stay in one of the Traders' revitalised rooms also includes the added convenience of early check-in and late check-out, plus a \$50 return credit voucher.

What is even more incredible, conference organisers can take advantage of the offer - pay the \$298 per night, per delegate weekend rate and every delegate receives the brand new Nespresso "U" machine.

Traders Hotel general manager Bruno Cristol said being adjacent to the Brisbane Transit Centre on the CBD fringe meant the hotel was perfectly situated as a base to explore the city and connect with all the wonderful cultural activities on offer around town.



"We congratulate the Victorian Government on having the foresight to maintain this iconic Melbourne site which adds a sizzle to our already fabulous tourism experience," she said.

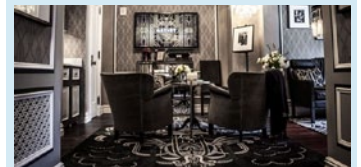
"We encourage the Government to continue investing in proven tourism products across the entire state and urge further investment in improving tourism products and experiences," she said, adding that it must include the extension of the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre and appropriate investment in places like Point Nepean and Phillip Island Nature Parks.



WITH Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald fever about to engulf the world with the premiere of Baz Luhrmann's movie The Great Gatsby this week, Oscar-winning Australian costume designer Catherine Martin has designed The Fitzgerald Suite, at The Plaza Hotel in New York.

It is a tribute to its author F. Scott Fitzgerald who with his wife was a patron at the hotel.

The 200sqm suite is filled with 1920s-inspired Art Deco furniture, bedspread and towels embroidered with a Jay Gatsby and Daisy-inspired monogram, as seen throughout the film, portraits of the film cast and photos of Fitzgerald and his wife featured on the walls.



IMM's memorable dinner

THE International Media Marketplace's (IMM) Brisbane farewell dinner commenced Riverside at Pony for drinks and canapés and continued on to Brad Jolly's award-winning Alchemy Restaurant & Bar that overlooks the Brisbane River and Storey Bridge.

During a taste tour of Queensland, via a five course degustation dinner, guests were entertained by a pastiche of upcoming Brisbane events which included ballet dancers representing the Bolshoi Ballet season, jockeys and punters cheering on at the Carnival of Winter Racing and a rowdy mob from the much anticipated launch of the British and Irish Lions tour.

The following day delegates

departed on various Queensland family components, sponsored by Tourism and Events Queensland and Brisbane Marketing.

Pictured above at the International Media Marketplace from left are: Anne-Maree Moon, Brisbane Marketing; Bruce Wallace, Tourism and Events Queensland and Katie Mills, Brisbane & Southern Queensland Country.





Rafter opens French Quarter



TENNIS legend and Mantra Ambassador, Pat Rafter, officially opened the newly refurbished and rebranded Mantra French Quarter Noosa (formerly BreakFree French Quarter).

In keeping with the Sunshine Coast, beach side venue, a signed surfboard was unveiled for the resort's new and improved lobby.

Rafter gratefully accepted a "key" to the hotel's Hastings Street car park - a coveted permanent spot on Noosa's busy premier strip.

Pictured above with Pat Rafter is the Mantra Group's Ibrahim Saad and Susan Ewington and Juanita Bloomfield from Tourism Noosa.

Right: Pat Rafter is pictured

holding the plaque for his permanent car park at the resort and Mantra French Quarter general manager Justin Cave is seen next to the signed surfboard.



Abu Dhabi's double digit growth

100 high achieving travel agents from an Australia-wide educational sales incentive run by Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi) from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, left the six-day tour even more motivated to sell the emirate as both a point-to-point and stop-over destination.

Jointly arranged with Etihad Airways and Virgin Australia, the family comes as TCA Abu Dhabi figures reveal double-digit growth in the number of Australians staying in the emirate's 141 hotels & apartments.

In the first three months of this year, 7,987 Australians booked into Abu Dhabi hotels - a 17% increase over Q1 last year.

This resulted in 30,199 guest nights - an increase of 21%, and extended the average-length-of-stay by 3% to 3.78 nights.

"The upward trend is encouraging and we want to maintain the momentum by letting these top sellers know just how much more there is to see and do in the emirate" said director promotions and overseas officers Mubarak Al Nuaimi.

"We want these agents to be our mouthpieces in the Australian market, encouraging Australians to stay here even longer."

Unleash your creativity

VIVID Sydney, which takes place between 31 May - 2 June at the Overseas Passenger Terminal, will present The Digital Playground, offering a range of exciting exhibits, talks, workshops and pop-up events celebrating the visual arts and digital lifestyles.

Highlights will include award-winning blogger, author and professional photographer, Rachel Devine and her young daughter Gemma, YouTube sensation ThatNikonGuy, portrait photographer Matt Granger will run a number of workshops, freelance sports photographer, Delly Carr will talk about his lifetime list of subjects, while Australia Geographic photographer, Chris Bray will speak about his adventures.

Information online at - www.thedigitalplayground.com.au.

Kingfisher bonus deal

HEAD north to Mercure Kingfisher Bay Resort Hotel on Fraser Island if you are after a warm winter conference.

Celebrating their 20th year of operation with a major refurbishment and event refurbishment, business development manager Leonie Belbin said, "The refurbishment program - with high-tech equipment, soft and hard furnishings - will bring Kingfisher Bay Resort in line with current industry standards and expectations," she said.

Kick starting the refurb, the resort is offering Residential Packages from \$135 per person, which includes twin share hotel accommodation, buffet breakfast and delegate day package.

Book and host a meeting up until 31 August and be rewarded with a one-hour sunset experience package; return passenger ferry transfers or a 15% discount on spa treatments.

Contact - leonie_belbin@kingfisherbay.com for more details on the offer or to make a booking.



Lafayette's ooh la la focus on Paris



FRANCE is regularly featured on top of the incentive destination pops and Lafayette Travel, a French specialist for the organisation and operation of conventions, meetings, congresses and incentive programs say last year they hosted groups from all over the world and from many diversified industries, including pharmaceutical, automotive, IT, finance, F&B, bar associations and special interest groups.

"You name it, they came to France," they said.

The most popular places were Paris and the French Riviera (with Monaco), but also less known regions were Aquitaine, Brittany, Normandy, Burgundy, the Champagne region and Provence.

This season, they are zooming in on Paris and the French Riviera.

It's on the French Riviera that since April the Hotel Martinez in Cannes and the Mediterranean Palace in Nice are now managed by the Hyatt Hotels Corporation, as is the Concorde Lafayette and the Hotel du Louvre in Paris.

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Sydney's 25 Inspirational Years

AUSTRALIA'S events industry today celebrates 25 inspirational years since the opening of the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, a landmark not just for Sydney but for the entire events sector.

Centre Chief Executive Ton van Amerongen marked the 4 May silver anniversary, saying the past 25 years had seen a remarkable development in Australia's business events landscape.

"The opening of the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre in 1988 represented much more than just a Bicentenary project and a rejuvenation of Darling Harbour," van Amerongen said.

"It was also the catalyst for the growth and development of the entire business events industry, right across the country.

"The opening of the Centre created a completely new environment and gave us the opportunity to expand, innovate and mature," he said.

"It introduced us to international markets that we hadn't moved in before, and allowed us to develop new capabilities and expertise. Ultimately, all of Australia benefitted, not just Sydney."

van Amerongen paid tribute to the people of the events sector who had been responsible for creating Sydney's excellent reputation on the world stage, in



particular the Centre's own staff.

"I can proudly say there's none better," he said.

"Many of our team have been at the Centre for more than 10 or even 20 years, and they are leaders in their fields.

"Sydney's success as one of the world's top events destinations has been born out of the dedication of its people, and it's our people who will ensure our city's success in the future."

Pictured above with Chief Executive, Ton van Amerongen (**middle**) are: Dale King, Manager Events; Simon Lomas, Director of Operations; Amanda Anker, Director of Marketing and Sales and Uwe Habermehl, Executive Chef.

A big year for events

THIS year not only marks the Centre's 25th anniversary, it also represents one of the busiest years in Sydney's business events history.

Right through to the end of 2013, when the Centre will close to enable the development of Sydney's new events precinct, the venue is working to a packed schedule of conferences, exhibitions, incentives and other business events, bringing more than a million people through its doors.

Some of the most prestigious meetings on the world calendar this year will be held over the coming months, including the World Congress on Lung Cancer for 5000 delegates in October, the Perfect China corporate incentive for 3500 delegates in July, and the World Congress on Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynaecology for 1500 delegates in October.

The Centre will also become part of colourful public celebrations across Sydney Harbour when it hosts the Pacific2013 International Maritime Exposition and Seapower naval conference for 1000 delegates in October, coinciding with the spectacle of an international fleet review to mark the 100th anniversary of the Royal Australian Navy's first arrival in Sydney.

"With so much still to accomplish in 2013, we're working hard to make our 25th anniversary year one to remember," Centre CEO Ton van Amerongen said.

And so say all of us...

IT'S not just the Centre celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

Darling Harbour itself turns 25, along with other Sydney landmarks from the Bicentenary era including the Powerhouse Museum, the Chinese Garden of Friendship, Metro Monorail, Sea Life Sydney Aquarium, Bicentennial Park at Homebush Bay and Sydney Football Stadium.

Top 10 famous visitors to the Centre

1. The Queen - opened the Centre in 1988 and returned on a royal tour in 2000.
2. George Clooney - the actor and director attended the Global Leadership Forum in 2011.
3. Bill Clinton - the 42nd US President visited twice in 2002, for a congress on China and a fundraising dinner.
4. Neil Armstrong - the first man on the moon gave a rare appearance at a CPA Australia event in 2011.
5. Tony Blair - the former British Prime Minister came in 2011, as part of his Tony Blair Speaking Tour.
6. Dalai Lama - the Tibetan Buddhist leader came twice, in 2007 and 2009, for spiritual events.
7. Christopher Reeve - Superman actor and activist attended the NSW Premier's Forum on Spinal Cord Injury and Conditions in 2003.
8. Diana, Princess of Wales - attended the Commonwealth Day Council Charity lunch in 1997.
9. Condoleezza Rice - the US Secretary of State was a high profile face at meetings held at the Centre during the 2007 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit.
10. Archbishop Desmond Tutu - the Nobel Peace Prize winner came in 1995 for the Global Cultural Diversity Conference.

Other big names include UN Secretaries General Boutros Boutros Ghali and Kofi Annan; IOC Present, Juan Antonio Samaranch; US entertainer, Sammy Davis Jr; singer, Gotye and many more.

Big events & numbers

- **THE** Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre is Australia's busiest, hosting an average 600 events each year.
- **THE** Centre welcomes more than 900,000 visitors through its doors annually.
- **MORE** than 220,000 hotel room night bookings are generated from international convention delegates annually.
- **THE** biggest exhibition to be held at the Centre is the biannual Australian International Motor Show, which has attracted close to 150,000 people in some years.
- **THE** total estimated expenditure of all delegates and visitors to the Centre is about \$500 million per year.
- **THE** Centre employs approximately 240 full-time and 560 casual staff.



Ten of the best

OVER the past 25 years, the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre has hosted close to 15,000 events. Here are 10 of the most memorable:

1. The Australian International Motor Show - the largest public exhibition in Australia, the motor show has featured on the Centre's calendar since 1988.
2. The Reed Gift Fairs - the largest exhibitions in the country based on exhibitor numbers.
3. The Sydney International Boat Show - held at the Centre since 1988, the Boat Show occupies more space than any other exhibition.
4. Lions Convention 2012 – this spectacular event attracted 12,000 international delegates.
5. The 2002 World Congress of Cardiology - one of the largest events held at the Centre in a decade, the congress attracted more than 7000 delegates.
6. The 2002 International Congress of Ophthalmology – held just two weeks before the Cardiology World Congress, this event drew close to 5000 delegates.
7. The 1996 World Congress of Anaesthesiologist – the largest international congress to be held at the Centre, this event attracted 9000 delegates and 400 speakers from 114 different countries.
8. 1995 Global Cultural Diversity – featuring global figures such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu.
9. Sydney 2000 Olympics - Darling Harbour was the second largest Olympic precinct for the Sydney 2000 Games, with the Centre hosting five Olympic sports – weightlifting, wrestling, judo, boxing and fencing.
10. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit 2007 - the Centre was a key venue for this significant meeting, hosting a range of high level bilateral meetings and briefings as well as a media centre for 1500 international journalists.

Centre of Innovation

FROM the moment it opened its doors, the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre signalled its intention to be a leader in the events industry.

While other international venues were still outsourcing services such as catering and audio visual, the Centre made the bold decision to bring these skills in house, creating internal teams of experts to handle all its clients needs.

Radical for the time, the move was just one of many ground-breaking initiatives implemented by the Centre over the past 25 years.

In an era of rapid technological change, the Centre continued to invest in new infrastructure to ensure it offered world-class services to its clients.

In 2006 it unveiled one of Australia's largest digital screen display systems, while in 2009 it became the only convention centre in Australia to hook up to the Digital Video Network (DVN).

The venue's award-winning culinary offerings also made their mark.

In 2006 the Centre launched a new concept for Australian convention centres – a stunning waterfront business lounge for visitors, known as the Bayside Lounge.

Centre Chief Executive Ton van Amerongen said while the Centre had overseen a wide range of initiatives, its environmental leadership had been a stand-out.

"Over the years, our team has embraced the issues of waste reduction and recycling not just with passion, but with vision.

"Their determination to do the right thing for the environment has been absolutely inspirational," van Amerongen said.

After introducing its Ecowise



program in 2004, the Centre's staff set out to cut waste in both the convention and exhibition facilities, whilst also reducing the venue's energy and water usage.

The changes have been wide-ranging, from the introduction of intelligent lighting and waterless urinals, to recycling food scraps to produce green electricity and organic fertilisers.

In 2007, the venue became one of only two convention centres in the world to achieve accreditation as a Green Globe Benchmarked Convention Centre – an accolade which was upgraded to the prestigious Silver certification just two years later.

Always a winner

THE Centre has earned many accolades over the past 25 years from international awards for creative event delivery, through to national awards for corporate social responsibility.

In 2011-12 it hit a new high with a record 14 awards recognising everything from the efficiency of its management team to its ongoing green initiatives.

The current year is also looking strong for the venue, with award wins including the prestigious International Special Events Society (ISES) Esprit Award for Best Event Design and Décor, as well as a record five Meetings and Events Australia State Awards.

Centre Chief Executive Ton van Amerongen said the Centre's many awards were testament to his team's dedication to providing a world-class service for its clients.

"From our first year of operation to our 25th, the Centre's team has always worked hard to deliver excellent results, and we are very appreciative of the recognition we have received," van Amerongen said.

A 25-year culinary journey

FROM the 80s to the present, few things chart the evolution of events more vividly than the way we dine.

At the Centre, the past quarter century has been like a 25-year degustation - a succession of extraordinary dishes mirroring the rise of Sydney's dining scene.



From the time it opened, the Centre was quick to bury outdated perceptions of event catering, introducing the same levels of quality and creativity expected of a fine restaurant.

Today, Executive Chef Uwe Habermehl and his award-winning team have worked with local producers and the Centre's Certified Sommelier William Wilson to deliver an exceptional dining experience, featuring fresh local produce and outstanding wines.

Together they are not only igniting the appetites of international delegates, they've created a culinary spectacle that continues to earn praise from a who's who of Australian foodies.

