



Fingers crossed

IT'S a bet each way as to whether Bali's new Ngrurah Rai International Airport,



being built at a cost of US\$206.5 million and the Nusa Dua-Benoa-Ngurah Rai (NBD) toll road, both currently under construction, will open in time for the APEC Heads of Government Summit in October.

Optimistic plans for the NBD toll road, which will reduce traffic congestion and cut the current travelling time from the airport to Nusa Dua, from one hour to six minutes, bodes well for the flow of tourism to the Nusa Dua and the Sanur areas.

Bali is also constructing a new underpass at the Simpang Siur intersection at an estimated cost of US\$25 million.

The construction of the toll road will ease the effort of transporting large groups to resorts like Club Med Bali where the rent-a-resort concept for 300-1000 people can be implemented for two days, a week or a month.

Not only will it mean getting there in double-quick time, but also they offer the opportunity to personalise every detail of an event.

Our groups and incentive families this week opened our collective eyes to what a great concept the all-inclusive nature of Club Med is – accommodation, food, alcohol, entertainment and team building, in purpose built spaces, gardens and theatres.

I honestly can't think of a more perfect place for a team to not only bond but to have a whole lot of fun - Jill.



Jill Varley is pictured with Brendon King, Joey Templin and Illana Den.

MEA winners announced

25 years on and many awards later, the management and staff of the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre had good reason to celebrate this week by collecting four awards at the annual Meetings & Events Australia's national Industry Awards of excellence.

Held for the first time, in the Northern Territory, the event attracted a record number of submissions.

Prime convention and exhibition centres in Brisbane, Adelaide and on the Gold Coast also collected major awards, highlighting the nationwide quality of finalists at the Darwin event.

Aurora small ship cruising

IN cruise news, Aurora Expeditions, pushing the boundaries of adventure travel, are expanding their program of small-ship voyages to include Alaska in 2014.

The inaugural 'Ultimate Adventure - Alaska's Inside Passage' will depart in May 2014 and will offer the same style of exploration as their other polar expeditions.

On board the locally-based Wilderness Adventurer, just 60 passengers will have the chance to enjoy the camaraderie of this small-group adventure as they travel from Ketchikan to experience all the wilderness, wildlife, exploration and tranquillity of Alaska's Eastern and Western Coasts.

The inaugural 17-day 'Ultimate Adventure, Alaska's Inside Passage' will depart from Seattle on 29 May to 14 June 2014.

Prices start from US\$7,500 per person, twin share - see www.auroraexpeditions.com.au.



As many as 33 awards were presented at the gala event, other notable winners including Verve Creative Events, which collected two major crowns, ExpoNet, Victoria Park, Stadium Events – Delaware North and Business Events Sydney.

The annual Platinum Award for the highest score of all submissions (except individuals) went to IML while Emma Rutledge (pictured) of the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, took out the Meetings or Events Profession of the Year for the highest individual score.

Honoured with the prestigious Outstanding Contribution Award was Peter Jones of Melbourne-based Peter Jones Special Events.

Victories for the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre came in the categories of Banqueting and Catering, Event Manager of the Year Emma Rutledge and In-House AV Services.

"As in previous years, the latest awards will reward those who achieved outstanding results," said MEA chief executive officer Linda Gaunt.

"In the end, the winners will enjoy a considerable profile within the meetings industry and with the general buying public.

For full details go to www.meetingsevents.com.au.

AITO invites sponsors

SPONSORSHIP opportunities are being offered by Destination Port Stephens for the hosting this July of the 2013 Australian Institute of Tourism Officers (AITO) conference.

The three-day event to be held in Port Stephens from 31 July to 2 August is expected to draw hundreds of tourism officers from around Australia, with this year's meeting to focus on technology, digital strategies and destination management planning.

Destination Port Stephens marketing manager, Tars Bylhouwer said, "This event will attract tourism executives from around Australia so the occasion presents fertile ground for new ideas, products and collaborations in the tourism sector.

"We look forward to hearing from businesses locally and nationally who would like to partner with us in hosting AITO in Port Stephens this year," he invited.

For information on sponsorship, contact event organiser, Lori Modde, on 0415 279 822.

Pimms and Croquet

AT the historic Camden Valley Inn at Macarthur, just outside of Sydney, groups can play out their favourite Downton Abbey fantasy at posh 'Pimms and Croquet' afternoons on its manicured gardens.

Built in the 1930s on land once settled in 1805 by pioneering pastoralist John Macarthur, the Inn's afternoon tea is just \$20 per person and is available for a minimum of 20 guests.

A perfect idea for corporate or social groups keen to turn back the clock, play croquet on the lawns of the rambling, Tudor-style inn, sip a traditional Pimms cocktail and graze on chicken and cucumber sandwiches as well as dessert, tea and coffee.

See - www.camdenvalleyinn.com.au.



Victoria's exhibition industry overlooked

DISAPPOINTMENT has been expressed by the Exhibition and Events Association of Australasia (EEAA), following the announcement that the Victorian Government has not committed to expanding Melbourne's exhibition facilities in the 2013 State budget handed down on Tuesday.

EEAA gm, Joyce DiMascio, whose Association has been campaigning for the Government

to allocate the funds for the expansion said that when the new Melbourne Convention Centre opened in 2009, the industry believed the next stage of the expansion would be built within a few years.

However, competition for funding of other capital works and social infrastructure continues to put this crucial project back.

"While the Victorian Government has a history of support for the events sector, it risks compromising the growth of the Victorian industry and its flow-on economic benefits to the State," she said.

"Many events organised by EEAA members are venue-bound.

"The size and availability of space has reached capacity and Melbourne risks turning away new business and larger exhibitions," she said.

EEAA president, Matt Pearce who heads Diversified Exhibitions, one of the biggest exhibition organisers in Australia, says it is becoming increasingly difficult to squeeze into an under-sized venue.

"Melbourne leap-frogged the rest of the country in 2009 with the opening of the six-star green rated Melbourne Convention Centre. It's now disappointing that this momentum is not being maintained as events have a clear and direct impact on trade and the economic life of Melbourne and Victoria," he said.

"The site has been procured, the slab is down, now we need the ten to fifteen thousand square metres of exhibition structure to be built so that the project is completed as per the vision for Melbourne.

"We know the Victorian Government has a strong appetite for this infrastructure – our message is that it should continue to provide the necessary space for business to flourish."

Getting Cruise Mojo



A free cutting-edge iPad application called Cruise Mojo, has been launched by Australian cruise agency, Clean Cruising.

Developed to make searching for the perfect cruise more efficient, informative and enjoyable, one of the stand-out features is a scrolling calendar, which allows users to effortlessly view competitively priced cruises across 20 cruise lines in 23 regions around the world.

According to the general manager of Clean Cruising, Dan Russell, "There's no other cruise calendar on the planet that lets you scroll through thousands of cruises on the one screen."

The app also boasts an accurate interactive visual itinerary, which engages Apple Maps to provide one of the most advanced virtual mapping platforms in the industry.

Descriptions and port images accompany the itinerary, allowing users to virtually experience their cruise prior to departure.

Download Cruise Mojo here - <http://bit.ly/16KGrk2>.

Starwood update for the MICE industry

STARWOOD Hotels and Resorts is not only growing its network of hotels but also increasing its meeting spaces for the business industry.

The annual Starwood Expo took place in Melbourne, Sydney and North Ryde this week and finishes up in Brisbane today with some of the brands hotel representatives showcasing their properties to the industry.

The Le Meridien Koh Samui, Thailand opened a new conference space in December the floating Ocean Pier which can cater for up to 100 people.

The 224m outdoor space can be used for private dinners, cocktail parties and intimate receptions.

Also in Thailand the W Retreat Koh Samui does a lot of incentive groups "looking for a creative escape," said general manager Nicholas Downing.

With 500 metres of beach and villas on the hill as well as down on the beach, the top end property is perfect for people who want an escape and "works with companies who want a themed event".

Meanwhile, Malaysia has a lot going on for the MICE market including the introduction of the Four Points by Sheraton Sandakan, which opened last year along side the Sandakan Convention Centre.

The hotel is accessible to the Convention Centre from the 12th floor and offers nine meeting spaces and the convention hall which is able to be divided into two separate function spaces.

New Caledonia will introduce additional meeting facilities, with the opening of the Sheraton New Caledonia in Deva in March 2014.

The first Sheraton property in New Caledonia will offer a 350sqm ballroom that can accommodate up to 300 people cocktail style and the hotel staff are expected to have a close working relationship with local DMC's to organise activities, **BEN** was told yesterday.



WHILE pocketing toiletries from hotel bathrooms has come to be accepted by hotels worldwide, a recent study by Hotels.com found that 35% of guests pocket other hotel room amenities such as magazines, linens, clocks, lamps, and artwork.

Also revealed is the rate of theft and the top items stolen, based on individual countries.

In the U.S. its linens and towels, in China, it's furnishings, such as lamps and artwork and despite the rise of electronic readers, in most other countries, magazines and books are the items de jour.

In the States, 66% of people said they have never stolen anything from a hotel room.

Denmark is the most honest country with 88%, whilst Australia who ranked at 72% in the never stolen stakes, fell down when it came to books and magazines which were the most swiped by the light-fingered gentry.

QT takes to Victoria's ski slopes

EARLIER this month QT Hotels and Resorts, took Victoria's largest ski resort, Quay West Falls Creek into the group, rebranding it QT Falls Creek.

With the official launch in June the resort's sixty-three one, two, three and four bedroom apartments will all be given the QT style designer touch by renowned hotel designer Nic Graham, now synonymous with the QT brand.

"With very distinctive design this luxury 63 apartment complex represented the ideal opportunity to bring the QT Resort brand to Falls Creek and will join the newly launched QT Resorts in Port Douglas the Gold Coast and our flagship QT Hotel Sydney," said David Seargeant, group managing director AHL.



Herbalife China in Gold Coast

LAST weekend more than 1,000 Chinese Herbalife delegates arrived on the Gold Coast.

A global leader in nutrition, weight-management

and personal care products, the five-day Herbalife Leadership Vacation 2012, was to reward the company's top sellers.

Tourism Australia's Business Events Australia team, working in partnership with the Gold Coast Convention Bureau, a division of Gold Coast Tourism, had won the right for the city to host the Herbalife Leadership Vacation 2012 not only because of its close proximity to Asia, but thanks also to its sophisticated event facilities and beautiful natural environments.

"Winning the bid to host the Herbalife Leadership Vacation 2012 on the Gold Coast was a major achievement for the city, and provides an opportunity for us to showcase what we have to offer this important market," said Martin Winter, ceo Gold Coast Tourism.

Tourism Australia managing director Andrew McEvoy said, "China is a important market for Australian tourism, offering future potential for both business and leisure travel thanks to the nation's rapid economic rise.

"We know business events visitors in particular are high yielding and critical to helping the industry achieve our Tourism 2020 goals, which includes doubling the overnight expenditure generated by business events visitors to Australia to \$16 billion annually by the end of the decade," he said.

The number of Chinese visitors travelling to Australia for business



events is growing.

In the 12 months to February 2013, the number of Chinese delegates visiting Australia for a convention or conference grew by 11% to 15,400 visitors, whilst 66,900 Chinese visitors arrived for the purpose of business.

ENCORE joins arinex

ENCORE Incentives, established in 2001 by Paulette Crowder and Deb Saunders, are two well known & respected industry names and a leading DMC operator into Australia, Fiji and New Zealand has joined arinex, Australia's leading PCO, Destination Management Company (DMC) and Event Management Company.

arinex md, Roslyn McLeod said "The move is timely and an excellent fit for both ENCORE and arinex.

"The expertise of arinex and our strong international network will enable us to work together to grow the DMC business from the USA – the traditional market of ENCORE."

It is, Paulette Crowder said, "a strong next step for us.

"We love what we do and want to continue to grow.

"This is an exciting opportunity to strengthen our combined business for the future."

ENCORE's North American representation company The DMC Group has welcomed the move and will continue to represent ENCORE-arinex DMC in the USA and Canada.

Telegram of Borneo

NOW in its 7th year, the Sarawak Convention Bureau (SCB) recently launched its International Marketing Campaign - a 'Telegram of Borneo.'

An initiative of the Bureau, it has managed to transform a virtually unknown meetings destination to a potential global player that will open up more opportunities for the local industry in its quest for higher yield events and knowledge exchange," commented the Minister of Tourism, Sarawak, Zohari Tun Datuk Abang Haji Openg.

The marketing tools included during the launch were the latest edition of SCB's Meeting Planner's Guide (MPG), SCB's new brochure, and the 3rd installment of SCB's corporate video - Discover a New You, Where Business & Adventure Meet.

Targeted to associations the brochure features case studies and types of support available to association clients.

A separate brochure for corporate events is in the works, and will be launched in the near future.

In addition SCB has created an app for users to interact with the bureau and the services it offers.

These marketing tools can be downloaded from the Bureau's website - <http://sarawakcb.com/downloads/publications>.



Sydney scores green fingers



FOR the next three years Sydney is to be home to the Australian Garden Show Sydney, a new international expo.

George Souris, the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, in making the announcement said it would attract gardener enthusiasts and horticulturists from around the world.

"To be held in the surrounds of Centennial Park this September, it will herald the start of the 29 various floral and garden shows that take place each year throughout regional NSW," Souris said.

"The Australian Garden Show Sydney, being held from 5-8 September, will become a keystone event on the NSW Events Calendar and is estimated to contribute at least \$12 million to the State's economy over the next three years.

Exclusive to NSW, the new show was secured by Destination NSW and is expected to set a new standard for horticultural events.

Destination NSW ceo, Sandra Chipchase said, "The Australian Garden Show Sydney will set the benchmark for flower, landscape design and gardening shows in the Asia-Pacific.

Program information is available at - australiangardenshowsydney.com.au.

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