



## Great Scott Fitzgerald!

I WAS invited to lunch at the Royal Automobile Club of



Australia (RACA) in Macquarie St Sydney this week and to look at the conference and event rooms they offer to non-members.

Seriously impressed by the old world charm and period décor, the Club has a broad range of rooms to meet individual and company function needs.

For instance, the Macquarie Room has a capacity for up to 300 and would make an ideal venue for a Great Gatsby themed event.

Right now the RACA is on a membership drive with the joining fee of \$250 waived.

Membership includes special rates on C&I events, the use of the Club as an office or home-away-from home, a business centre with computers and free wi-fi, two dining venues to entertain or meet with clients, a fully equipped gym, parking at rates from a bygone era and 29 accommodation rooms with double glazing on the windows, with rates that start at \$110/night.



### GOING the extra mile.

In Brisbane recently I was keen to see the refurbishments at the Pullman King George Square (formerly the Sebel).

As I waited to be shown around, the chief concierge Stuart Cook asked if he could help.

He explained that as it was a busy morning, he would take me around.

A delightful and engaging man, I learnt that in the three years he had been at the hotel he had risen up the ranks from porter to chief concierge - it's easy to see why. Enjoy the read- Jill.

## MCI acquires Off-Site Connections

### EXCLUSIVE

MCI has today announced a significant expansion of its local creative services resources, with the new acquisition of Off-Site Connections Event Solutions Australia (**BEN** breaking news).

The move brings a team of 16 to MCI Australia with event solutions skills ranging from technical production, creative event design and styling, event and brand communication, through to overall event program design including graphic design, and all destination and event logistics management.

OSC's creative and technical event solution specialists have been operating in Australia for 18 years, producing high end events for a variety of local and international corporate clients and industry sectors.

Nick Millis, general manager of Off-Site Connections (OSC) will join MCI in Australia as director of corporate & creative events, working closely with MCI md Australia, Stephan Wurzinger.

OSC's managing director, Peter Kinnane will join MCI as director of creative events, Asia-Pacific, tasked with driving the MCI creative events and brand experiences to corporate and association clients throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Wurzinger said "MCI Australia has found in Off-Site Connections Event Solutions Australia a creative partner who matches our client-centric ethos and constant quest to provide outside of the box solutions."

"A major milestone for operations in Australia, this acquisition will transform our corporate events offering."

## Last chance for VIPs!

IF you want to attend the breakfast launch of the all new 2013 VIP Buyer Program for the Australian Events Expo and benefit your business, you need to do so today.

The event is free to attend and is being held on Tuesday 21 May at Dockside, Balcony Level, Cockle Bay Wharf, Darling Park at 8am for breakfast, followed on at 8.30am with a number of presentations.

Get in quick and confirm your attendance with Sarah Beggs no later than close of business today by email to [sbeggs@etf.com.au](mailto:sbeggs@etf.com.au).

## PWV not PWT hosts...

THE PWT to host AFAC story (**BEN** 15 May) was incorrect.

Positively Wellington Venues (PWV) is the host of the Emergency Services Authorities Council conference (AFAC), and not Positively Wellington Tourism (PWT) which is the city's Regional Tourism Organisation.

## ACEM master classes

PAUL Gudgin, former head of Edinburgh Fringe Festival director and newly appointed director of the London Festival has been announced by The Australian Centre for Event Management (ACEM) as host of a two day Festival Management Master Class in Sydney from 13-14 June.

The course is designed for festival management professionals and tourism and economic development executives and will cover the key tasks and challenges faced by festival organisers including marketing, media, programming, managing festival infrastructure and much more.

Following the Festival Management Master Class, ACEM will also host a series of niche one-day event management workshops, from 1 - 4 July, led by event management industry leaders.

## Tasmania running hot

HELEN Logas, ceo of Luxperience - the luxury travel event, spoke to **BEN** this week after returning from New York, where Tasmania, she said, is the latest hot news.

It's all because three Tasmanian luxury properties won Conde Nast Traveller (UK) Reader's Travel Awards 2012, out of a potential fifteen awards.

So yesterday's news announced by Tasmania's Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, Scott Bacon, that conferences around Hobart this week has seen hotel occupancy reached more than 90%, appears to bear out the overseas buzz.

"We're expecting nearly 3,000 delegates will head to Tasmania this month as a result of conferences that are going to be held around the state," Bacon said.

"This week, Hobart is hosting



the Alzheimer's Association of Australia conference for 2013 - bringing some 840 conference delegates to Hobart."

The conference, he went on to say, is contributing 3000 room nights, with an estimated direct economic impact of more than \$2.5 million.

"Through Business Events Tasmania, we continue to fund the Meet in Tasmania Incentive Scheme, which offers cash incentives to organisations looking to host a business event in Tasmania between May and August," Bacon said.



## Business upgrades for QantasLink

**QANTASLINK** is to upgrade the interiors of five Boeing 717 aircraft to include Business Class and in-flight entertainment for all passengers.

QantasLink executive manager John Gissing said, "QantasLink will introduce a full business experience on these aircraft, including market-leading seats, premium food and drinks and exceptional onboard service."

The first aircraft will be used on Sydney-Canberra, Brisbane-Canberra and Melbourne-Canberra, with the B717 aircraft size and configuration ideally suited to these routes.

The first service is due to begin its Business service in late 2013.

## Joburg jumps up

**THE** International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) rankings just out have revealed that South Africa's Johannesburg has improved its rankings by an astonishing 92 places since 2012.

Joburg Tourism's Convention Bureau team is celebrating the city's momentous climb, with Phelisa Mangcu, acting ceo, Joburg Tourism saying "We were ranked at 234 last year, so this is excellent news for us."

The rankings, which are announced annually, are based on the number of rotating international association meetings hosted in a particular destination.

"Joburg's dramatic improvement in its ICCA rankings is thanks to a collaborative effort with our industry partners, peers and stakeholders," says Mangcu.

"Last year our Convention Bureau embarked on an intensive consultation with the industry during the course of refining our strategy related to hosting business events in Johannesburg.

"This has resulted in better understanding, collaboration and sharing of information crucial to the ranking process," Mangcu enthused.

## Cruise the Harbour for Vivid



**WHEN** Vivid Sydney comes alive from 24 May to 10 June, Captain Cook Cruises is creating specially designed cruises to give passengers the best vantage point to view the more than 60 interactive light installations that can be seen from Sydney Cove, through The Rocks to Walsh Bay.

Sure to create great interest is the 3D projection of BBC time traveller Doctor Who onto the grand facade of Customs House at Circular Quay (pictured), as he travels through space and time, pursued by some of his greatest enemies.

According to Captain Cook Cruises head of sales and marketing, Richard Doyle, "The best place to see the full canvas

of lights and projections including Fort Denison, Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Opera House and landmark buildings along the foreshore from Sydney Cove to Walsh Bay is from the water".

Cruises are priced from \$85 per person for The Vivid Twilight dinner; \$109 for the Starlight dinner and \$139 for the Captains dinner.

For further details of the cruises or to make a booking visit - [www.captaincook.com.au](http://www.captaincook.com.au).

## Cotai Strip IMEX offer

**IN** celebration of their new destination brand, the Cotai Strip Macao, formerly known as Sands Cotai Macao and exhibiting at IMEX Frankfurt on May 21-23, are to launch a Meet for Free offer.

Natasha Tomé, executive director of MICE marketing for Cotai Strip Macao said, "We are also co-hosting a breakfast with the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) for hosted buyers interested in Asia.

"The new offer is a collaboration of all of the Cotai Strip stakeholders and is indicative of a joint effort in anticipating our clients' needs," she said.

The offer provides a rebate for a maximum of two full days of meetings with a minimum of two nights' stay and 50 rooms booked per night and applies to meetings held at any of Cotai Strip Macao's five international-brand hotels - The Venetian; Sheraton Macao Hotel, Cotai Central; Conrad Macao; Holiday Inn Macao and Four Seasons Hotel Macao.

## Böckeler relocates to Sydney

**JÖRG T** Böckeler has joined the InterContinental Sydney as general manager.

Formerly general manager of InterContinental Melbourne The Rialto, Böckeler, who brings more than 27 years' experience in hotels and hospitality has also been appointed as area general manager of Mulpha Hotels Australia – owners of InterContinental Sydney and InterContinental Sanctuary Cove Resort.



**RICHARD** Branson is planning to make his heart-shaped Noosa River Island hideaway, Makepeace into a boutique hotel.

Currently guests can only stay on the 10-hectare island, on Queensland's Sunshine Coast if they book it out for a minimum of \$8000 per night.

Under the plan, which is subject to council approval - guests will pay around \$850 per person per night with a minimum three-night stay.

The price will include meals and transfers, but alcohol is extra.

Branson said he wanted to make the island accessible to more people and hoped to be taking bookings before Christmas.

The 11-room property hosts a minimum of eight people and a maximum of 22.



## KL wins MEA 2014

**DURING** the closing ceremony of the MEA Annual Conference 2013, Kuala Lumpur was announced as the bid winner of the 2014 annual conference.

The four-day event from 15-17 May will be held at Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre and marks the first time the conference is taking place in South East Asia and only the second time outside of Australia.

The event is expected to attract more than 600 delegates and is estimated to generate RM 6.4 million in economic impact for the country.



## Seven Terraces open in Penang

**DESTINATION** Asia reports that a grand row of seven 19th century Anglo-Chinese terraces in Penang has been converted into a hotel.

The property, known as the Seven Terraces, is situated in the heart of the island's heritage zone and is next door to the 1810 Goddess of Mercy Temple.

On offer are 18 exclusive suites created by award-winning hoteliers Karl Steinberg and Christopher Ong - previous winners of the UNESCO Award of Distinction for Heritage Conservation.

Facilities include a lap pool, an Asian fusion dining room and a full bar.

All suites have four-poster carved Chinese beds, and exquisite gilded Peranakan antique furniture fills the living rooms.



**MEANWHILE** in other Destination Asia news, Hong Kong's Central Harbor area is being redeveloped to include the creation of a new park, promenade and several cultural institutions.

Scheduled to conclude in 2017, it includes the recent reopening of the Maritime Museum, which has undergone a multi-million dollar overhaul.

The relocation provides Hong Kong with another first-class museum and brings new life to the Central waterfront, an area that has been blighted by reclamation work.

## Kyoto opens kabuki houses

**MINAMIZA**, one of Kyoto's seven kabuki houses, is opening its doors to meetings, incentive travel and event organisers for business events including VIP tours and private kabuki performances.

"Many event organisers for business events choose Kyoto because it offers delegates the opportunity to enjoy traditional Japanese cultural activities alongside first class business facilities," said a spokesperson for the Kyoto Convention Bureau.

"The opening of the Minamiza theatre provides event planners with the ideal backdrop to showcase Kyoto's heritage in a business environment.

"The theatre has already been used successfully for an awards ceremony and we look forward to seeing many more organisations using it for business in future," the Bureau said.

## Sofitel art opening

**ONE** of Australia's most controversial and influential artists, Adam Cullen who shot to fame and prominence in 2000 when he won the prestigious Archibald Prize with his portrait of actor David Wenham, will be featured in a major retrospective opening tomorrow at the Sofitel Brisbane Central.



Being held in partnership with Muk Muk Fine Art, the exhibition showcases a collection of works painted over the past decade.

"We're very excited to celebrate the talent of Adam Cullen and offer our guests and the public the opportunity to admire the works at our Lobby Gallery" said gm Marcus Hanna.

"Art is an important element of Sofitel's heritage and we look forward to working with Muk Muk Fine Art," Hanna said.



**TUESDAY** evening and a few home truths were being discussed about 'opportunities in the lucky country – do we take it for granted and is it a blessing or a curse?'

Fronted by leading business people David Hutton, Lend Lease; Greg Hywood, Fairfax Media Limited; and Alex Malley, CPA

Australia, the panel was guided by Jenny Brockie (pictured) host of Insight on SBS, and was held during Business Events Sydney's 2013 Ambassador Dinner and Investiture.

"From the role of social media to the need to shift the 'Asian century' to the 'Australasian century', skilled migration and public policy and economic reform, discussion bounced between panellists before questions related to climate change and green energy were fielded from the audience," said Lyn Lewis-Smith, chief executive officer of Business Events Sydney.

The panel discussion was just one of many highlights in an evening that celebrated BESydney's Ambassadors and Future Leaders.

At the dinner, the Deputy Premier of NSW and Patron of the Ambassador Program, the Honourable Andrew Stoner MP, formally announced 20 new Ambassadors and four Future Leaders into the program.

Included among the ambassador numbers were Jon Hutchison AM, business events and tourism consultant, Dyland Pty Ltd; and former Tourism Australia md Geoff Buckley from China Ready & Accredited.

## Easterman represents Allied

**REBECCA** Easterman from PillowMint (right) will represent AlliedPRA in the Australia and New Zealand markets, as part of the AlliedPRA EMEA Global Sales team.



The global leader in the destination management company sector said Easterman will expand the company's marketing and sales efforts and destination offerings in the region.

In addition, Easterman will promote AlliedPRA destinations in North America and Europe.

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