



## Blown away

AS they say, half the fun is getting there and the journey to remote Berkeley



River Lodge, described as luxury on the Kimberley Coast of WA, lives up to the rhetoric.

It began with an overnight at Rydges Darwin Resort, a tropical oasis a stone's throw from the airport.

That it rained is neither here nor there – warm rain was welcoming after the cold squall we had left in Sydney.

Next morning, the sun shone brightly and after a short flight to Kununurra, followed by a one hour flight on a Kimberley Air Tours floatplane, we lifted skywards from the runway of the Ord River, flying across a green, patchwork landscape of every imaginable type of fruit tree and vegetable crop you care to name.

We learnt that the Kimberley is one and a half times bigger than the UK - a stunning landscape of ragged escarpments, snaking rivers and watery plains that run off into the blue sea of the Cambridge Gulf.

And we also flew along the mountaintop that actor David Guipilil (King George) stood when he showed young Nullah his land, in Baz Luhrmann's film 'Australia' and where Faraway Downs had been built.

We are now at the Lodge in something of a dream, the wind blowing a cross breeze through the louvres of my luxury cabin that looks out over vegetated dunes to the Timor Sea.

Can it get any better?

I suspect this is just the beginning - Jill.



## MEA seeks govt support

**MEETINGS & Events Australia (MEA)** has made a grim prediction that a \$2,000 cap on work-related self-education expenses, set to be implemented by the Federal Government (**BEN 17 Apr**), threatens a decline in skills in the events industry and will disadvantage Australia on the competitive global marketplace.

MEA is fighting to have the controversial budget measure overturned, because of serious implications for the sector across the country.

"We are deeply concerned this policy will affect the viability of pco and event management businesses throughout Australia," warned MEA chief executive officer Linda Gaunt (**pictured**).

"This policy will hinder an industry already threatening a skills shortage," she added.

"Furthermore, it will adversely affect the competitiveness of Australian workers in the global marketplace."

The introduction of the \$2,000 cap and its impact from July



this year on the events, not-for-profit and education industries, MEA says, will also severely impact the financial viability of non-profit organisations who provide work related educational programs for a fee, impact the sustainability of the not-for-profit sector, lead to a decline in skills in the events industry, hindering an industry already threatening a skills shortage and adversely affect the competitiveness of Australian workers in the global marketplace, Gaunt said.

MEA has called on "concerned industry practitioners" to send in feedback as part of a strategy to have the policy overturned.

Email [mea@mea.org.au](mailto:mea@mea.org.au) to have your say on the topic or go online to the Meetings Events Australia website [meetingsevents.com.au](http://meetingsevents.com.au) for more information.

## Check out the Deck



**AS** the financial year draws in sight, The Deckhouse at Woolwich, Sydney with its spectacular Parramatta River waterfront views, has a winter venue hire incentive for all corporate events held before the end of August.

It's an offer which includes complimentary room hire in a range of flexible spaces and complimentary AV.

For more details email [info@deckhousewoolwich.com.au](mailto:info@deckhousewoolwich.com.au)

## Govt refutes Glebe Island has fallen over

**FURTHER** to the lead story in (**BEN 24 May**), the Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner, has reiterated the NSW Government's commitment to delivering interim exhibition facilities on Glebe Island in time for the 2014 exhibition season.

They say the reports that the project has fallen over are untrue.

"Plans for the temporary exhibition facility on Glebe Island remain on track," Stoner said.

"Our Government's commitment remains to ensure an interim facility will be ready in time for the 2014 exhibition season, so there is no disruption to our events industry while the new world-class convention, exhibition and entertainment facilities at Darling Harbour are built."

## Interactive catering

**VICTORSFOOD** has introduced a new catering format that is sure to engage your delegates and help them mix and mingle.

Interactive Catering lets guests get involved with the hands-on preparation and creation of their canapes or main courses.

The interactions are 10-15 minutes long which allow constant change in the action and the chance for people to "pop in and out" to network with others.

"People love getting involved instead of passively standing around and being fed or talked at", said Victor Pisapia, founder.



Victoria's Natural Conference Destination



## Sunshine Coast hosts NZ



**BUSINESS** Events Sunshine Coast (BESC) held a famil program recently with the aim to educate a group of prominent New Zealand professional conference and incentive organisers on the range of opportunities that exist on the Sunshine Coast.

In addition to the BESC, the group were hosted by Tourism Australia.

They attended the Noosa International Food and Wine Festival and visited several destinations across the Sunshine Coast including Sir Richard Branson's Australian home, Makepeace Island.

Business events manager, Lauran Hofman said, "Business events visitors spend up to five times that of a leisure traveller so it's important we prioritise the famil program and include as many exclusive activities and innovative partner program options as possible.

"Our business events team showcases the region beautifully, ensuring that business events organisers are able to include the Sunshine Coast in their programs. The seven organisers stayed at Caloundra's Rumba Resort, Noosa's Outrigger Little Hastings Street Resort and Spicers Clovelly Estate.

During their time on the Sunshine Coast, they experienced a VIP animal extravaganza at Australia Zoo, stand up paddle boarding, a cruise in the Mooloolaba bay and a helicopter ride over the Glasshouse

Mountains.

**Pictured** above from left at Australia Zoo are: Australia Zoo representative; Ruth Scott, Travel Inc; Hayley McIntyre, Williment Event Management; Frances Boortman, Driving Force Incentives; Andrew Malcolm, Extra Mile Company; Suzanne Baker, Eventionz Ltd; Lauran Hofman, BESC; Amanda Hall, Tourism Australia; Jade Taylor, Dynamics and Catherine Lowe, BESC.

## SMW 2013 - Shed's light

**STRONG** interest in new Wellington waterfront venue Shed 6 has seen more than 200 buyers already registered for Show Me Wellington 2013, with over half of these new to the expo experience.

Positively Wellington Venues say they are enthused that the buyers registered are from their target audience of corporate, associations, and Government agency markets.

"It is really pleasing to see the calibre of buyers that are already registering for this year's event.

"We've been working hard with our exhibitors and industry partners to make sure that we're attracting key decision makers to Show Me Wellington, and really validating why hosting events in Wellington is a great business decision.

"Combined with the opening of Shed 6, I think we've got a pretty compelling story," said director of conventions and events Jo Darby.

## Mercure Portsea Golf Club & Resort opens

**MERCURE** Portsea Golf Club & Resort is about to be the first Accor branded hotel in the Victorian coastal resort town of Portsea when it opens on 1 June.

The newly built property is part of a multi-million dollar development by the Portsea Golf Club that will also include a new Club house, accommodation and function complex.

The hotel will offer conference facilities that can cater for corporate events, meetings and weddings for up to 300 people.

"By partnering with Portsea Golf Club it has enabled us to add to Portsea's tourism offering and cater to the growing demand for premium accommodation by leisure travellers," said Mercure Portsea general manager, Duncan Mars.

"The Mercure will also provide new opportunities to build the meetings and events market in the region, which is already on the rise with a number of weddings and conferences booked at the hotel before it has opened, which is very encouraging".

## ABEE VIP Buyers

**VISITORS** to this year's Australian Business Events Expo have the opportunity to become a VIP as part of an all new VIP Buyer Program (**BEN 22** May).

The benefits of which include networking opportunities by attending the event seminars program and meeting suppliers through a combination of scheduled appointments and social events.

Connect with suppliers of your choice through pre-scheduled appointments, eat to your heart's content and enjoy the opportunity to dine and to taste the very best in food and experience what Sydney has to offer in a three-day experience.

Email [abee@abeeexpo.com.au](mailto:abee@abeeexpo.com.au) to register your details or to find out more information.



**IF** you are a lone, smartly dressed male in your 30's the chances of getting a flight upgrade are pretty good, according to a recent Skyscanner survey.

The survey carried out among 700-cabin crew Skyscanner members revealed that roughly six out of 10 workers admitted to giving out a free seat upgrade, with single male passengers receiving the majority of the offers - 58% of the time.

Young teenagers dressed in revealing clothes and travelling in groups, not surprisingly were the least likely to get upgraded.

Advice on some of the things to keep in mind if looking for a flight elevation include mentioning you're part of the airline's frequent flyer program, travelling with an injury, being friendly and polite to crew - and of course, flying during non-peak travel periods.

## Garuda's BNE service

**GARUDA** Indonesia has announced complimentary limousine service for Executive Class passengers arriving and departing from Brisbane airport, following the airline's announcement that it is relaunching its services to the Queensland capital.

The Indonesian carrier will re-introduce non stop services from Brisbane to Denpasar, Bali from 1 August.

Bagus Y. Siregar, vice president, Garuda Indonesia Australia said "With a chauffeur service to and from their home and a very generous 40 kilo baggage allowance, Executive Class passengers will enjoy a reliable alternative to organising taxis to and from the airport.

"This will provide an added level of convenience for high end and corporate travellers who travel regularly," he said.



# business events news

27th May 2013

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is part of the Travel Daily  
group of publications  
which also include: Travel  
Daily, Cruise Weekly and  
Pharmacy Daily.

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## New posts at Tourism Malaysia announced

**TOURISM** Malaysia  
has announced two new  
appointments for their Perth and  
Sydney teams.

Kamilia Hani Abdul Halim who  
has just completed a post as the  
senior assistant director in the  
International Promotion Division  
in Tourism Malaysia's head office  
in Kuala Lumpur.

She will replace Shukri Hanafiah  
as the new director for Tourism  
Malaysia Perth, while Yasmin  
Feazah Samsudin will be taking  
on the role of deputy director for  
the Sydney office.

Samsudin who joined Tourism  
Malaysia in 2002 as a tourism  
officer, has recently held posts  
as assistant director and senior  
assistant director.

Halim has worked for Tourism  
Malaysia since 2003.

## Emirates concerted reward



**CANBERRA'S** Llewellyn Hall at  
the ANU was the venue chosen  
when Emirates, the principal  
partner of the Sydney Symphony  
for eleven years, treated 70  
Canberra travel agents to a special  
concert last Wednesday evening.

The event was hosted by  
Emirates' regional manager for  
NSW and ACT, Tim Harrowell  
and sales executive for Canberra,  
Byron Caygill.

"Emirates is committed to  
nurturing our trade partnerships,"  
said Harrowell.

"It's the travel trade that  
delivers around 80% of our  
revenue in Australia, and the  
ACT continues to grow as an

important feeder-region for  
Emirates to Sydney, where we'll  
soon have a second daily A380  
service."

He said the special evening also  
allowed Emirates to introduce  
Byron in his new role, and outline  
the workings of the Emirates-  
Qantas partnership first-hand.

**Pictured** above at the event  
in Canberra last week from left  
are: Tim Harrowell, Emirates  
regional manager NSW and ACT;  
Ross Appleton, QBT regional  
sales manager; Henry Barrington,  
Qantas corporate account  
manager ACT and Byron Caygill,  
Emirates sales executive ACT,  
commercial operations.



## Getting to Know: JW Marriott Marquis Dubai

by: Bruce Piper

**THE** recently-inked alliance between Qantas and Emirates means Dubai is very much in focus for the Australian market, and it's a destination that is certain to gain in popularity for meetings, conferences and incentive groups.

One of the latest additions to the Dubai accommodation scene, the brand new JW Marriott Marquis Hotel has everything a meeting planner could desire, with more than 5000 square metres of meeting space, 684 luxury hotel rooms and 120 suites providing stunning views of the city.

Billed as the "tallest hotel in the world," the property takes up an entire 72 storey skyscraper tower - and that's just the start, with a second tower set to open next year which will double the size of the already huge hotel which offers all the mod cons including the convenience of a 24-hour Executive Lounge (for Executive Suite guests) where jet-lagged delegates can utilise the comfortable facilities around the clock, including free breakfast, internet and a wide range of business services.

The conveniently located hotel offers 27 meeting rooms, including the huge Dubai Ballroom which has a maximum capacity of over 1500, and there's also on-site exhibition space and up to 33 breakout rooms - all serviced by dedicated meeting, banqueting and events teams.

Interestingly, it's the first hotel under the premium JW Marriott Marquis brand to be built outside of the USA.

On a recent trip to Dubai **BEN** found the JW Marriott Marquis an ideal base to explore the many attractions of Dubai, with a huge variety of activities on offer for attendees including the famous desert safari, shopping at the Dubai Mall, water parks and even indoor skiing.

Incentive groups can also enjoy a wide variety of bespoke experiences - think seaplane sightseeing, swimming with dolphins, exclusive dining at upmarket restaurants and hotels, views from the top of the stunning Burj Khalifa and so much more.

But there's also plenty of variety available just within the hotel, with 14 food and beverage outlets, several rooftop bars and terraces, a huge spa and health club, retail outlets, swimming pool and a gymnasium.

The comfortable rooms offer the latest in technology, with secure high-speed internet access, large desks, 46-inch LCD HD televisions, marble bathrooms and gigantic windows to enjoy the amazing Dubai vista - for details see [www.marriott.com.au](http://www.marriott.com.au).

