



I dips me lid

CONTRARY to what might be considered a fair guesstimation that I have been travelling for the past few weeks, it's not the case.



Rather than going into the finer details, let's say I have been on sick leave – well, not so much sick as in recovery.

Suffice to say if you have any lump or bump on you that doesn't seem normal, get it checked out.

I didn't and for this I ended up having major surgery and under local anaesthetic!

I can now be seen with head swathed in turban-style headscarves and the occasional hat.

Thanks to Travel Daily publications' crack journalist Alex, she did a splendid sit-in job for me.

Now I am back in harness, I look forward to catching up with you but with my propensity to take up invitations with alacrity, in the belief that networking is paramount to being kept informed and up to date in this industry, I may take things a bit easier for the time being.

Not that you need an excuse to hold your conference or event in Melbourne - the fact that British-based Heston Blumenthal will move his Michelin three-star Fat Duck restaurant, staff and kitchen wizardry to Crown for six months next February, makes Melbourne even more appealing.



The Fat Duck is not entirely lost to Britain - when the six months is up it will return to Britain and group executive head chef Ashley Palmer-Watts will open Dinner by Heston Blumenthal at the Melbourne site. Jill

("I dips me lid" - courtesy C J Dennis's 'The Sentimental Bloke'.)

NZ events tax break



TOURISM New Zealand (TNZ) has confirmed that Australian companies can claim back the goods and services tax for business events held in New Zealand.

The Goods and Services Tax Act was amended to allow non-resident businesses to register for GST as of 01 Apr, TNZ said.

Businesses which qualify will need to meet a list of criteria on the Inland Revenue Department's website.

Australian conferences were an example of organisations which could qualify and TNZ saw the initiative benefiting the associations market as well, TNZ Australia business events manager Helen Bambry said.

She said the initiative had been in the works for quite some time and the idea was introduced to the industry in December.

The move would put New Zealand on more of an even playing field when Australian conference organisers were looking at holding domestic and NZ conferences, given the exchange rate, she said.

TNZ international business events manager Bjoern Spreitzer said the organisation was encouraging Australian companies to hold conferences in NZ and the change would make it even more accessible to Australian businesses.

"Our key objective is to educate business about the advantages of conferencing in New Zealand and in doing so we've implemented new staff to cater entirely for the Australian market.

To read more, [CLICK HERE](#).

Joint network boost

MARKING the first year of the Qantas and Emirates partnership, Qantas has announced new inbound tourism data for regional Australia with Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory among the winners.

Outside city gateways, international customers have purchased an average of five times more fares to the top regional centres including Cairns and Hobart.

Qantas International ceo Simon Hickey said the joint network has delivered on its promise to boost inbound tourism for Australia and its regional cities in particular, with Emirates customers booking on Qantas Domestic services as part of their journey.

"The partnership with Emirates has opened up 32 destinations on the Qantas domestic network, making travel to and within Australia easy for visitors and providing tourism operators with new opportunities from international tourists visiting the country."

Targeting North Asia

BUSINESS Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef will be chasing leads in the Chinese and Korean markets at Tourism Australia's North Asia Showcase.

The region had seen incentives for three Chinese groups with more than 800 delegates this year and the showcase was an opportunity to target North Asian buyers, Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef director Rosie Douglas said.

Ibis is no joke

BRISBANE accommodation is now that much more affordable with the opening on 01 Apr of the Ibis Budget Windsor Brisbane hotel – the rebranded Formule 1, after a closure of more than four years.



Located on the busy Lutwyche Road in Brisbane's northern suburbs, the hotel was forced to close in 2009 due to construction and its noise and access issues associated with the inner city bypass connecting the CBD to the Brisbane Airport precinct.

The hotel has undergone an extensive refurbishment with all 50 guest rooms now converted to the latest Cocoon style room, designed for the Ibis Budget Brand worldwide, offering up to 25 Queen rooms, 10 King rooms, 13 Queen rooms with overhead bunks and two special access rooms.

Chris Sedgwick, vice president operations Queensland & Northern Territory for Accor, said despite the hotel's April Fool's Day relaunch, Accor was "nothing but serious" about showcasing the hotel in a new light after so many years of being closed."

Inspire EX reg open

VISITOR registrations are now open for Inspire Ex.

Held from 18 to 19 Aug at the Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island, registrations can be submitted by [CLICKING HERE](#).

Four pages today

BEN has three pages of editorial plus a full page from: ([click](#))

• Tangalooma Island Resort



business events news

2nd April 2014

Developing Great Keppel



A GLOBAL campaign looking for investors to build and operate the largest fully approved tourism infrastructure project in Australia on Great Keppel Island was launched by Greg Norman in Brisbane yesterday.

Norman is the ambassador for the \$2m Tower Holdings development on the island.

He has engaged global agents JLL to source international investors while investment bank Moelis & Company will serve as lead financial advisor.

There had already been initial interest and a formal investment campaign was expected to start next month, Tower Holdings said.

Great Keppel, more than twice the size of Hamilton Island and a 50 minute flight from Brisbane, has government support for the delivery of 700 luxury villas, 350 luxury apartments, a five-star golf course, beachfront hotel, marina, airstrip and retail village.

Tower Holdings ceo Terry Agnew said the campaign came as Australia sought investment in five star tourism products to meet the demands and expectations of the "booming" Asian travel market.

MEA Awards

FOLLOWING on from our report on MEA winners (BEN 31 Mar), Pan Pacific Perth won the Meeting Venue for 500+ Delegates for WA, while EECW Pty Ltd won the Meetings and Events Management Organisation for 8+ Employees Award and National Wine Centre of Australia won the Specialty Event Venue and Specialty Meeting Venue Awards for SA.

The island has a casino zoning and Tower Holdings has lodged a submission to the Queensland Government for Integrated Resort Developments seeking a licence.

Queensland Tourism Industry Council ceo Daniel Gschwind said there had not been a development of this scale in Queensland for more than 25 years and five star tourism would allow the state to tap into the global tourism growth potential.

Watergate's new look

FOLLOWING a US\$3m investment, the Amari Watergate Bangkok has created a new look for its 948 sqm ballroom and new meeting room spaces.



The hotel has more than 20 event spaces and a capacity for up to 1500 guests, with a dedicated group lobby.

The ballroom was re-launched in the last quarter of 2013 to coincide with the hotel's 20th anniversary, following a full renovation, and is one of the five largest in Bangkok and offers an open pillarless space, 6.4 m ceiling height and accessibility for vehicles and heavy equipment.

The hotel, which is located adjacent to Bangkok's shopping and business district in Pratunam on Petchburi Road, has 569 deluxe rooms and executive suites, well equipped for business executives.

Eat for good!

Taste Food Tours present a Pop-up restaurant in a temple! Celebrate Lao New Year on Sunday 13 April with a feast of traditional Lao delights!

Call 02 9707 0800 or [CLICK HERE](#)

www.tastefoodtours.org.au

TASTE

Taste is a social enterprise, our profits are invested into community initiatives.

ACTEing Up

WITH a record 350 attendees at three ACTE Networking Receptions, 90 more from Melbourne's corporate travel and meetings and events community took time out from their Fashion Week cat-walk commitments to also attend ACTE's recent Melbourne Networking Reception.

Held at the Sofitel Melbourne on Collins, ACTE regional director Andrew Kelly (pictured below right) said that they had received excellent feedback and tremendous support from ACTE partners such as Concur, Business Class Transfers, Amadeus and Accor.



"Last year we saw over 1100 attendees to our ACTE events, a tripling of ACTE membership, and robust industry endorsement from some 45 sponsoring partners."

ACTE helped members to achieve corporate travel and meetings/events market objectives while making it enjoyable and stress-free, he said.

The next reception is being held on 08 Apr at The Pullman.

Pictured above from left are Sofitel Melbourne on Collins' Clive Scott, Business Class Transfers' Vanessa Malloy and Amadeus' Simone Court.

Privacy Act Webinar

A FREE MEA Webinar being held on 03 Apr at 2.30pm AEDT questions how the new Privacy Act will impact on how people do business.

Join the webinar with MEA legal eagle Matt Crouch (Hodgkinson McInnes Legal) and find out what you need to do to be compliant with these important new laws.

For more visit www.mea.org.au.



crumbs!



FOOD trucks, a popular part of the AIME 2014 welcome event, are set to be a permanent fixture of the City of Sydney food truck program after a successful two-year trial.

Strong support from Sydneysiders and enquiries from more than 600 potential operators will see the City of Sydney issue permits for up to 50 operators to take to the streets over the next two years, with a food truck design panel being established to assess the quality of applicants' vehicle designs and menus.

Lord Mayor Clover Moore said supporting Sydney's emerging food truck culture was part of the city's plan to create a safer and more diverse late-night economy.

"The Sydney Food Trucks program is a great example of how innovative ideas can create a brand new industry and transform the experience of dining after dark.

"Over the two-year trial period, the trucks have been embraced by locals and visitors alike, and we've been swamped with enquiries from potential operators keen to set up their own food truck business."



The Sydney Food Trucks trial emerged from the City's OPEN Sydney consultation program in 2011, when Sydneysiders said they wanted more accessible, affordable and diverse late-night eating options.

Nine trucks now in operation offer everything from yum cha to gourmet vegetarian burgers, and serve an average of 1,700 customers each every month.

Demand has grown so high that a 'Food Trucks United' festival in Belmore Park near Central Station is to be held on the first Friday night of every month.



A double for DoubleTree



HILTON Worldwide has signed an agreement with SKS Group to manage two hotels in Perth and Fremantle, in a deal that has a combined development value of more than \$160m.

To be branded DoubleTree by Hilton, they will join Hilton Worldwide's existing portfolio of 20 hotels in Australasia.

The 241 room DoubleTree by Hilton Perth Waterfront will be located at Riverside Drive, adjoining Barrack Square and fronting the Swan River.

It will offer panoramic views of the Swan River and include a business centre and event spaces, with construction expected to start in the middle of this year, for an anticipated opening date in 2016.

DoubleTree by Hilton Fremantle to be located at Point Street overlooking Princess May Park, will feature 150 rooms, a business centre and event spaces.

Construction is expected to start this year, with an opening date in 2017.

DoubleTree by Hilton global head John Greenleaf said continued growth around the world added locations for guests

to experience the brand's culture.

"We remain dedicated to tailoring our service offerings and product to the needs of business and leisure travellers who seek an upscale, full-service hotel experience in the market."

Fiji seeks agency

TOURISM Fiji is seeking expressions of interest from internationally experienced market research agencies to conduct research into the target audience for holiday visitors.

The research will be focused on the key source markets, including Australia, New Zealand, the United States and China.

Tourism Fiji director of global marketing Ken Freer said Fiji was a small player in a huge global travel environment.

"It is essential that we have the market intelligence at hand that allows us to best focus our activities, to ensure our budgets are allocated as effectively as possible."

Interested agencies have until 11 Apr to register their interest.

To do so, contact: tvalentine@tourismfiji.com.fj.

The hill of space

AN increase in capacity for the 2014 Formula One Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix at the Yas Marina Circuit, has seen an extension made to the popular Hill grassed area introduced last year.

This means it can now accommodate 3,000 more fans - and with the Paddock Club boosted by 1,500 extra guests, the event will now host 60,000.

The previous record last year was 55,000.

Tickets are on sale online at www.yasmarinacircuit.com.

Biting the SEC@GI

A CLEAN bill of health was drilled down at the new Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island (SEC@GI) when it hosted close to 8,000 medical industry professionals at the ADX14 Sydney dental exhibition series.

Convened by The Australian Dental Industry Association (ADIA), the event was held from 21 to 23 Mar.



Attendees came from across Australia and internationally, including 190 exhibitors across 450 exhibition booths.

In a first for the SEC@GI, three purpose-built theatrettes housed a series of professional skills programs.

ADIA ceo Troy Williams said the success of the event, which was the nation's largest healthcare exhibition with a reputation as a "premium business promotion event" was largely due to the location and quality of the venue and the quality of assistance received from the SEC@GI team.

"The decision to hold an event such as ADX14 Sydney at SEC@GI was a considered one, based upon the expertise of the venue manager, AEG Ogden and the attributes of the venue itself."

SEC@GI general manager Malu Barrios said the scale of the exhibition and the outcome that had been achieved was a testament to the location and operations of the new venue.

Tigerair tanks up

FOLLOWING on from the report (**BEN** 26 Mar) that the Whitsundays' Convention Bureau has recorded \$5m worth of "significant" growth in business events opportunities, comes the news that Tigerair has launched new direct Sydney-Whitsundays coast services.

The three weekly return services commenced yesterday and will run every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

The new route is expected to deliver over 55,000 visitor seats through the Whitsundays' doorstep annually or more than 1,000 additional visitor seats weekly through Whitsunday Coast Airport.

In addition, new daily Tigerair return services will commence on 15 Apr from Brisbane to Cairns/ Cairns to Brisbane, representing more than a 30% growth of Tigerair's services to far north Queensland.

Also commencing on 15 Apr are daily return services from Brisbane to Darwin/Darwin to Brisbane.

Daly @ Inspire EX

INTERNATIONALLY renowned event producer John Daly is to headline Inspire EX's seminar program in August at the Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island.

Daly designed and produced Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes' 'Welcome to the USA' party they threw for David and Victoria Beckham and has worked with other celebrities including Barack Obama, Oprah Winfrey, Frank Sinatra and even the Pope.

Commonly referred to as the 'Guru of Special Events Design' with a successful business built over 45 years, Daly will give the keynote presentation on 18 Aug where he will draw invaluable insights from his portfolio of events to share his beliefs on the value of a well-designed and crafted face-to-face experience for companies and people.

Of the Tom Cruise/Katie Holmes' event, Daly said what solidified its success was when Stevie Wonder decided to jump up on the DJ table and belt out a tune.

"To keep him steady, I was up there holding onto his belt loops ensuring he didn't fall."

You can register for tickets via the Inspire Ex website at: www.inspireex.com.au.

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Enviably Conferences On Moreton Bay's Doorstep



Introducing Tangalooma's newest beachfront venue, the Waterfront Pavilion.

Enviably situated on the pristine shoreline overlooking Moreton Bay, this private slice of absolute ocean frontage caters specifically to conferences, events and wedding receptions. The elegant white marquee-style structure boasts

4 meter ceilings, PA system and stage and dance floor additions are optional.

At 30m in length by 15m wide, the air-conditioned Pavilion comfortably seats up to 250 guests indoors. Or step outside into the private garden gazebo, the perfect sanctuary to entertain up to 100 guests with cocktails and canapes.

Extend your stay overnight for only **\$99*** per room for all bookings made until 30 June 2014.

To find out more, contact **corporate@tangalooma.com**

*based on single share. Only valid for conferenced and events. Surcharges apply to school holidays and public holidays. No daily maid service included.

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