



Fawltly service

Alex Polizzi is well known in the UK as Channel Five's Hotel Inspector and with Lord Forte for a grandfather, she knows a thing or two about it.



One thing she says she can't abide is the inexplicable disconnection between how some hotels perceive themselves and how the ordinary customer sees them.

Read this and tell me if you weren't nodding your head at this list of hotel faux pas'.

First, there's the waitperson that interrupts the flow of conversation (a pet hate of mine.)

Polizzi says her training at the Mandarin Oriental drummed it in that wait staff should do their utmost to ensure service did nothing to interrupt the flow of conversation at a table.

"Not only should plates be put down and removed with the minimum disruption, but also glasses filled without the customer ever having to engage with the waiter."

Towel art is another of Polizzi's bugbears, particularly the way some hotels display towels on the bed, rather than hanging them in the bathroom.

"Even worse than simply folded towels are those that I come across that have been tortured into amusing shapes – fans, swans, isosceles triangles.

"Who thought of it first?"

Then there are the bath butlers. "There is something ridiculous about the idea of a 'bath butler'.

"I cannot think of anything less conducive to relaxation than, while you wait in a towelling robe, having a stranger hanging about and asking what temperature you like the water."

Jill

Five pages today

BEN has three pages of editorial plus full pages from:

- BridgeClimb Sydney
- Mantra Lorne

China's Australia Week



AUSTRALIA Week kicked off this week in China, taking aim at the Chinese business events market.

Trade and Investment Minister Andrew Robb launched the event, which finishes today in Shanghai and includes a series of events promoting trade, investment and tourism in various cities.

Business events were "very much" a part of the week's growth opportunity, according to Business Events Australia gm Penny Lion.

China was Australia's fastest growing market in terms of business events spend, growing by almost 30% (\$284m) from 2012 to 2013, Lion said.

In expenditure terms, China was the third largest business events market for Australia, likely to overtake the USA in the next couple of years to become the most valuable business events market, she said.

The Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) said Australia Week would help drive growth and highlight the country's \$24b business events sector.

This follows Tourism Australia's findings that incentive bookings from China continue to grow.

The latest Tourism 2020 progress report showed that Australia had 893,000 international business event delegates for the year to Sep, with a total expenditure of \$14b, Tourism Australia said.

Nine per cent of delegates were from China and had 11% of total expenditure.

The business events sector in

the country had the potential to be worth \$16b by 2020, Lion said.

Tourism Australia managing director John O'Sullivan said hosting the North Asia Showcase, held as part of the Australia Week program, sought to highlight the country's corporate meeting and incentive offering by targeting decision makers.

TTF ceo Ken Morrison said China was important to the future of the country's business events sector, given that Australia received 14,690 convention or conference visitors from China in the year to February, which was up 32% from 2009.

Qantas code share

NEW Qantas code share services with China Southern have been launched.

Qantas customers can now book to four destinations, with codeshare on direct services from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth to Guangzhou available for travel from 01 May.

China Southern customers can, in return, book travel on nine Australian domestic routes, as well as on services between Sydney and Auckland.

Qantas also announced direct services from Perth to Auckland, operating from 05 Dec through to 26 Apr 2015.

This followed on from the success of the twice weekly service introduced last summer, for which Qantas international ceo Simon Hickey said customer demand had exceeded expectations.

Sydney wins ICCA

THE International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA) has accepted a joint bid by Australia and New Zealand for its 2018 conference to be held in Sydney, with an add-on event in Queenstown.

The world's biggest arbitration event, the bid was won against Hong Kong, Moscow and Kuala Lumpur and was cast with the support of the NSW Government and local supporting organisations including Business Events Sydney (BESydney).

BESydney chief executive officer Lyn Lewis-Smith said the city's selection further demonstrated global confidence in the city's new convention and exhibition facilities.

ICC Sydney will be open in 2016.



business events news

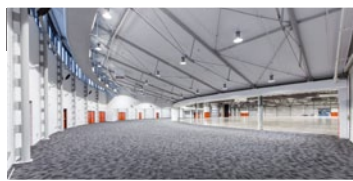
11th April 2014

10,000 sqm of grunt



THERE'S no doubting that the closure of the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre and the opening of the temporary Sydney Exhibition Centre at Glebe Island caused a number of the Sydney's conference and exhibition facilities to take a look at their operation.

These events prompted them to work to establish themselves



during the building of the new International Convention Centre to secure a sizeable slice of the future event pie.

The launch of the Sydney Showground's new events precinct on Tuesday evening with its new Exhibition Halls 5 and 6 marks a new beginning for the Showground.

It's been wrought by much navel gazing and research that has seen a complete rebranding and a revitalisation of their facilities.

Less than two years ago the Showground's new building and its rebranding wasn't even on the drawing board, admitted Sydney Showground general manager Peter Thorpe (**pictured** above right with Sydney Showground business development executive Lauren Milledge and ecomlocations location manager Luke Torrevillas).

"Here we are today in a brand new building and about to unveil a brand new campaign and we are not done yet.

"We are still talking about building on beyond this building and taking over the building next to that and the one next door to that."

What is big is the 10,000 sqm expanse of Hall 5 and Hall 6 (**inset**) which are operational for the first time since it was completed in early March.

The Showground has also relaunched its website; to visit it, **CLICK HERE**.



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MCEC goes paperless

THE Future of Work conference was the first official paperless event held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC).



The event was run by the University of Melbourne's Centre for Workplace Leadership who encouraged delegates to bring their own electronic devices to use, with MCEC providing a special unrestricted and dedicated WiFi service, and beanbags.

Delegates were provided with information on workplace innovation and changes taking place in workplaces.

Centre for Workplace Leadership marketing and communications officer Susannah Woodward said the feedback had been overwhelmingly positive.

"Many of the attendees leaving the conference inspired to reinvigorate their interest in leadership and start to make changes to the way they work."

The paperless aspect had been a "hit" and the Twitter hashtag #2014FOW was trending on the first day, Woodward said.

Centre for Workplace Leadership researcher professor David Shallcross presented a conference session on the latest technology including 3D printing and virtual environments.

Another keynote speaker included former Apple chief evangelist, columnist and co-founder of venture capital firm Garage Technology Guy Kawasaki, who Woodward said was "fantastic - he loved the beanbags and wished he'd studied at the University of Melbourne."

His insights looking backwards helped attendees see how to move forward at work, Woodward said.



crumbs!

FIRST it was bungy jumping and skydiving to add an adrenalin-packed punch to a trip.

Now it's swimming with the dolphins or sharks, wilderness hikes and authentic indigenous village visits.

However, if you've ever wondered what it would be like to illegally cross the border from Mexico to the US, then there's a trip for that too!

Two hours from Mexico City in the small town of El Alberto's Parque EcoAlberto, the 'caminata nocturna' - or night time hike - gives participants a Mexican border-hopping experience, complete with chasing border patrol officers and fellow refugees to help you find your way.

While it sounds a lot like a team building exercise with all the running away from fake cops, there's also a serious message.

"Being an immigrant isn't a source of pride," said one guide.

"The idea here is to raise people's consciousness about what immigrants go through."

Margaret River debut

ARAVINA Estate has debuted a corporate meeting venue at the northern end of West Australia's Margaret River wine region, available from 01 Mar.

The new 242 sqm function space has all the contemporary requirements including hearing-impaired induction loop, microphones, air conditioning, WiFi and sound system.

The 200 seat centre's floor-to-ceiling glass concertina doors open to bush and lake views, landscaped gardens and a 141 sqm wrap-around verandah.

The use of a purpose-built Recharge Retreat is available when hiring the events room and is complete with full bathroom facilities including couches.

The kitchen is led by Tony Howell, the West Australian ambassador for the Restaurant Australia campaign.



business events news

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helloworld soccer to 'em



HAWAIIAN Airlines' and helloworld's corporate soccer team, the Lunchtime Legends, has won North Sydney's indoor soccer tournament.

Sponsored by Hawaiian Airlines, the team plays in their lunch breaks and all are staff members from helloworld.

They've carried off the gold trophy in triumph to their North Sydney head office, where it will remain to inspire awe in visitors until someone takes up the Legends' challenge to more

Sydney travel industry companies to join the competition.

Tournaments are held four times a year with the seasons.

Team member Steven Zahra said some of the members were new to the game and some were rusty but that the team soon got over this; training tips included to turn up and go hard.

For those keen to put on their war boots, the indoor soccer competition takes place every Tuesday from 12 to 2pm at the North Sydney Indoor Sports Centre.

In response to a suggestion from **BEN**, the team has said there is a possibility of war paint should other corporate teams rise to the challenge...

Pictured from left, back row, are Andrej Dopud, James Chaiwon, Nick Grunseit, Guy Mcfarlane; front row, Ante Kolak, Steven Zahra, Wayne Adams, Anthony Ippolito; not present was Marcelo Meruvia.

Crystalbrook incentives

ANOTHER luxury experience, Crystalbrook Lodge in Queensland's northern outback has joined Luxury Lodges of Australia (LLOA).

Each LLOA operator is committed to creating an upscale but intimate experience for sophisticated incentives.

The addition of Crystallbrook offers visitors the chance to take part in helicopter rides, wildlife tours and horseriding tours.

STAR-ing 20% off

THE Star is extending a corporate offer until 30 Apr to parties dining at the restaurants Balla and BLACK by eZard (open for dinner Tuesday to Thursday) and Sokyo (Monday to Thursday).

The offer allows corporate diners 20% off food upon presentation of their corporate card or staff ID to any of the three restaurants at the hotel.

This offer only applies to parties of up to eight people.

To book a table call 1800 700 700 and quote CORPORATE20.

For larger bookings or corporate events, email Noeline.ahlam@echoent.com.au.

Dining out for a duck

AS an added incentive for Australian business event decision-makers to sign up for MEETINGS' hosted buyer programme, Conventions and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) has persuaded Cloudy Bay Wines to provide 10 double invitations for their famous Cloudy Bay Pinot and Duck Trail, a food and wine match at top restaurants.

Anyone who registers before 18 Apr will be eligible to win a double invitation to one of these nights, held in July.

MEETINGS is being held at the Auckland ASB Showgrounds 18 to 19 Jun.



CONFESSIONS OF A COMPULSIVE CONFERENCE-GOER

Andrew Klein, director of SPIKE Presentations, presents his front line observations on conferences in a regular feature in **BEN**.

Top 5 Things To Do During a Boring Conference Presentation

What goes on at the conference stays at the conference, okay? So let's just keep this to ourselves. But I confess that recently I was MC'ing a conference and sitting in a large plenary room, mid-session, during a let's just say "less than exciting" presentation. Wanting to utilise my time productively, I came up with a list of things to do during a boring conference session to stay awake.

By the way, if any of my clients are reading this article, it wasn't during one of your conferences, I promise. It was your competitor's conference. Okay, so here goes...

5. Pretend to be taking notes on your iPad but actually check your emails. Admit it, you've all done it. Some of you are doing it right now, reading this very article on your phone or iPad, mid-presentation, while the speaker at the lectern drones on and shows slide after slide of dull bullet points. You could drift off to sleep but instead you're making use of the 45 minute session by checking your emails. At least you're being productive. And by the way, the guy sitting next to you is doing the same.

4. Presenter Lookalikes Game. Stare at the presenter for a minute. Take a good long look. Ask yourself: Which famous person does he or she look like? Middle aged, grey haired, suave type in a suit. George Clooney, perhaps? Small, thin, balding, wealthy industrialist. Mr Burns from the Simpsons? The woman from Law and Order? Karl Stefanovic? Go on, try it. It's fun.



3. Pocket Program Origami. Reach into your lanyard. Remove the tiny pocket program. It's too small to read anyway. Start folding. A plane. A swan. A Lady Gaga costume? At least you're being creative.

2. Doodle. Technology has virtually rendered the ancient art of conference

doodling obsolete. Why doodle when you can tweet or check

Facebook? Because at least others in the conference room will think you are diligently taking notes. But actually you are doing that psychedelic maze-like geometric doodle pattern that you used to do during Year 11 Chemistry.

1. Evaluate. Fill out the conference evaluation form and suggest they get more interesting speakers for the 2015 Conference.

For more information about Andrew and what he can do for you at your next conference email andrew@lunch.com.au or visit his website at www.andrewklein.com.au.



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