



A Manly tale

AT **BEN**, we get invitations to many functions, famils and events.

Some come by email, some by snail mail and some come in the hands of a courier.



But it's not every day that the invitation, because of its size, is personally delivered by a member of the Manly Accor team.

Such was the case recently when a surfboard emblazoned with MANLY along one side, was actually an invitation to enjoy a weekend in Manly courtesy of the Novotel Manly Pacific, Q Station Manly and Sebel Manly Beach.

It certainly caused quite a stir and enviable looks from staff members.

Was the purpose that I should bring it with me to learn to ride it during my time at Manly beach?

When I picked it up, it was light as a feather - a polystyrene copy of a surfboard.

So we took a photo to show you (seen below) - the shark is just there for effect.

The Accor team told me a friendly, local surfboard maker had created it.

It just goes to show that thinking outside of the box or in this case, the surfboard, can create an indelible impression and its uniqueness makes it fairly unlikely that the receiver will say no to the invite. *Jill*



Ibis ANZAC day deal

IBIS Sydney World Square has an ANZAC Day special on offer.

A stay in a standard room includes complimentary breakfast for two and 50% off one car park rate, valid from 20 Apr to 27 Apr, with room rates from \$119.

To make a booking, call 02 9217 6666 and quote 'ANZAC Offer'.

Gotta Handa to you



HANDA Opera on Sydney Harbour is set to return for another three years.

The event has pumped \$20m into the NSW economy since 2012, attracting more than 11,300 overseas and interstate visitors, with 40,000 this season.

The renewal was announced by NSW Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the Arts George Souris last night after the final curtain call of *Madama Butterfly*, Opera on Sydney Harbour's latest show (**BEN** 21 Mar).

Minister Souris said Opera Australia and Destination NSW expected *Madama Butterfly* alone to drive about \$20m in new

money into the NSW economy throughout its season.

Funding comes from the NSW government and the International Foundation for Arts and Culture, with chairman and founder Dr Haruhisa Handa renewing financial support for the next three years.

Handa said he looked forward to the continued partnership.

"Opera Australia has brought a magical new opera event to Sydney - one that the city should be very proud of."

Opera Australia ceo Craig Hassall said Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour was about making opera accessible and entertaining.

"This winning event formula entices new audiences each year and we hope that even more people will have their first opera experience at Handa over the coming years."

Photo credit: James Morgan.

Noumea-Melb flights

AIRCALIN is offering a launch special fare for its first direct flights from Melbourne to Noumea.

The flights start from 06 Jun and the special starts from \$499 including taxes and fuel levies, available today until 28 Apr and valid for travel between 06 Jun and 16 Sep.

The flights are scheduled for Fridays and Tuesdays, and the airline said the frequency would increase to three services per week from late October.

Aircalin and New Caledonia Tourism have today launched a joint advertising campaign to support the new flights, called 'Have it all'.

Four pages today

BEN has three pages of editorial plus full pages from:

- BridgeClimb Sydney

Port Douglas update

PORT Douglas is open for business.

Tourism Port Douglas and Daintree ceo Doug Ryan said the town was up and running after Cyclone Ita, with most restaurants, cafes and boutiques now open on the main street.

"We are pleased to report that apart from a few fallen trees, which have now been cleaned up, everything is back to normal in Port Douglas."

Most tour operators would be offering tours to the Low Isles and the Outer Great Barrier Reef today, he said.

"Overall we have been very lucky and now that Cyclone Ita has passed everyone is looking forward to getting back to normal and resuming full operations during what is a very busy time of year."

QLD Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services Jack Dempsey said communities in North Queensland impacted by the cyclone would receive emergency assistance to restore essential public assets, help farmers to recover and support some of the worst affected workers.

For more information, you can visit:

www.disasterassist.gov.au

Hot Events Jobs!

► Event & Incentive Executive

Sydney CBD location: International program focus. Salary from \$65K

► Program Coordinator

Sydney City fringe: Registrations, Delegate Management & Event assistance. Salary \$45K + super

► Event Travel Executive

Sydney City fringe: 6 month contract. Groups + extensions. Sabre & Tramada. Salary \$55K + super



Ben Carnegie



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business events news

14th April 2014



Creating Big Experiences

www.sydneyshowground.com.au

Howdy welcome at DFW



A DELEGATION of civic and business leaders from Dallas and Fort Worth (DFW) last week announced new services for Australians that will streamline the customs process.

The delegation was part of a week-long development mission to Australia promoting the Qantas-DFW route.

In a first for the Australian meetings and incentive market, a separate meeting was held between the trade media and members of the delegation with an interest in the Australian business events market.

Former chief operating officer at Virgin Australia and new DFW International Airport ceo Sean Donohue explained how they had been working to streamline the customs and immigration process for their international customers, focusing on improving the customer experience.

“As you know, this is the first interaction Australians have when they arrive in the US and while our foremost objective is security at DFW, we have a customer orientation, which you don’t always get with customs and immigration personnel.

“Here they know their priorities but they also know how to greet the customers and give them a friendly welcome to the US.”

In October, DFW launched their Automated Passport Control (APC) system for US and Canadian citizens, allowing travellers to interact with one of 30 kiosks for primary immigration screening.

Beginning in May, the service

will be expanded to include Australia and other visa waiver countries, and DFW will also add another 24 kiosks.

“If you are moving groups anywhere in the US, DFW is the best airport in the United States for connecting,” Donohue said.

“There are a lot of similarities between Texas and Australia – people are very friendly, they don’t take things too seriously and like to be outdoors, active; so in terms of meetings, groups and conferences, we see them as really enjoying the Dallas, Fort

Going LEGO

WITH the release of The LEGO Movie in Australia, LEGOLAND Malaysia Resort has launched a schedule of activities for fans.



These include learning activities, such as treasure hunts, singing and dance classes, as well as a fashion show featuring children guests.

Based in the state of Johor in the south of the country, LEGOLAND Malaysia Resort has a LEGO themed water park and hotel on site, with roller-coasters, educational activities and a to-scale Miniland.

Royal Botanic Gardens

THE opening of Christchurch’s Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre was a royal affair, with the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge officially opening the new building.

The royal couple are touring New Zealand on an official visit, with son Prince George in tow.

Built to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the gardens, the NZ\$16.4m Centre contains a function room that can seat up to 120 people and is located next to the Avon river.



The Centre also houses a cafe which seats up to 60.

The cafe and function room would be managed by Vbase, ready for business in May, the Christchurch City Council said.

The Gardens Centre incorporates a working nursery, botanical research herbarium and permanent exhibition, telling the city’s story through plants.

REJUVINATE at Rae’s

RAES on Wategos has a luxury escape package - their inaugural REJUVINATE, a premium package across five days with activities designed by fitness and lifestyle coach and author, Toby Morrison, at its luxury Byron Bay property.

With all inclusive packages starting at \$3,300, they are available for two weeks in June and include four nights’ luxury accommodation, daily group training and exercise activities provided by Morrison and a one hour spa package of choice.

The first week begins 02 Jun, with the second week beginning the following Monday.

For more information, email events@raes.com.au.



IF you are curious to know how humans will travel in 2024, global travel site Skyscanner has conducted in-depth research and a series of interviews with experts in the field including tech companies and travel futurologists.

The site asked questions such as whether holidays would be experienced from the couch, whether robots would make our bookings and whether space would replace London as a favourite destination.

Skyscanner’s answers to these questions and many more comes with the launch of their report on the Future of Travel 2024, which you can access by **CLICKING HERE**.

The future, according to the travel site, will see wearable technology evolve from the recently launched Google Glass to a device so small that it will fit onto a contact lens, providing immediate translations, breaking down language barriers and the need to learn the holiday lingo.

Rather than replacing holidays, the Skyscanner report forecasts that virtual reality will offer holidaymakers the opportunity to ‘try before they buy’, allowing them to see the sights, hear the sounds, and even feel the landscape of a destination.

And the robots? The report says in the 2020s, we’ll have an ‘e-agent’, or artificial intelligence contained in a watch or small piece of jewellery, connected to the web to personalise the travel experience.

Skyscanner’s Dave Boyte said the report was a great sneak peek into the future.

“Skyscanner’s vision of what the symbiotic relationship between technology and travel will look like in the next 10 years.”





business events news

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Darwin Uni's 25th

CHARLES Darwin University celebrated its 25th anniversary dinner on 22 Mar, at the Darwin Convention Centre.

Organised by the AA&P events team, the dinner was attended by 820 guests, up from the original anticipated 300, including the Duke of Edinburgh, who presided over the opening of the original Community College in 1974.

AA&P said a primary focus was to allow time for a number of speakers and presentations and for guests to catch up and talk.

Work included liaising with the venue and managing bookings and payments, AA&P said.

CDU office of media, advancement and community engagement director Robyn McDougall said the evening exceeded all expectations.

"We have received wonderful feedback from guests."

Putting in the boot

RETREAT Port Stephens is holding a boot camp weekend from 27 to 29 Jun.

The weekend involves training with a qualified personal trainer, relaxation, stretching sessions, healthy meals and two nights' accommodation.

The package is available from \$600 per person including meals and training sessions, with other bootcamp weekends to follow later in the year.

Visit the organisation's website for more at

www.theretreatportstephens.com.au.

Intercontinental BDE

INTERCONTINENTAL Fiji Golf Resort and Spa has appointed Javed Shameem as business development executive, based at sister property, the Holiday Inn Suva.

Shameem comes from Sofitel Fiji Resort & Spa where he had almost three years' experience as a business development executive.

Shameem would drive the resort's performance in the meetings, incentives, conferences and events markets, MICE director David Pearson said.

Shameem said IHG's 'Room to Grow' philosophy mirrored his own career approach.

Two Hiltons offers

HILTON Hotels & Resorts are offering a range of day delegate packages when booking a meeting or event at Hilton on the Park Melbourne or Hilton Cairns.

Book for 250 or more delegates with Hilton on the Park Melbourne by 31 May for meetings from 01 Jun to 31 Aug and you can get a day delegate rate from \$70.

Day delegate rates for an event at the Hilton Cairns start from \$62 or you can upgrade to a deluxe package starting from \$67 which includes complimentary canapé service.

For more information about Hilton on the Park Melbourne, email Kate.Abbott@hilton.com and for more information on the Hilton Cairns packages, email sales.cairns@hilton.com.

Heritage centenary

TO celebrate the Heritage Auckland's Hobson Street building turning 100 years old this month, the hotel is offering a conference special of NZ\$159 per night for a superior room including 500MB daily in-room WiFi.

Marking the centenary on 14 Apr, the conference special kicks off a series of special events for consumers and the corporate market.

This includes the recreation of a high tea on Mother's Day, 11 May, in the roof-top Grand Tearoom, installed in 1930.



The room would be presented as it was in its heyday (pictured above), and guests could attend in a hat befitting the occasion to win a prize, Heritage said.

The tea is NZ\$75 per person and NZ\$45 for children under 14 years old.

The Hobson Street building was originally commissioned as a catalogue sales warehouse for a company called Laidlaw Leeds.

When the business owner, Robert Laidlaw, was called up to WWI he sold the company to the Farmers Union Trading Company, but was asked back as general manager of what was to become 'Farmers,' one of the largest stores in New Zealand.

The store closed in late 1992 followed by its transformation into the Heritage Auckland Hotel, which opened in July 1998.

V/Line's free WiFi

THE announcement by the Victorian State Government that mobile blackspots and free Wi-Fi on V/Line trains travelling between Melbourne and Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Seymour and Traralgon, has been welcomed by the Victorian Industry Council (VTIC).

Chief executive Dianne Smith said the organisation had "consistently" called for this service, so it was pleasing that there had now been a commitment by the state government to deliver this to support regional tourism operators and related businesses.

A little night music

A PARTNERSHIP between the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (SSO) and the InterContinental Sydney, Live at the Cortile with the SSO, provides a delightful excuse to wile away the early evening with a client or guest.

Designed to captivate ears, eyes and palates, at each concert the InterContinental's chefs work with the players from the SSO in these 'Menu to Match the Music' events.



On Thursday, the second in a series of three events was held.

The theme, Argentinian Tango, saw a perfectly-crafted menu of provoleta with ciabatta bread, milanesa, salsa blanca, Patagonian Toothfish, roasted red capsicum and churros con chocolate, nicely paired with a flute of 2004 Moët and an Alfred Martini, named after the creator of the liqueur brand, Alfred Cointreau.

The next concerts are being held in June and August.

Premium seats plus cocktail and canapés are \$100 per couple or \$50 per person.

Premium seats plus cocktail only are \$50 per couple or \$25 per person.

To book or for more information, email

restaurant.reservations@interconsydney.com.

Rainforest conference

O'REILLY'S Rainforest Retreat in the Gold Coast Hinterland has an unmissable conference day delegate offer that focuses on successful team outcomes.

The offer includes rainforest retreat accommodation and a full buffet breakfast in the historic dining room.

Subject to conditions, it is available until 30 Apr and is valid for stays until 30 Aug.

Conference venue hire is not included in the rate and a booking of a minimum of 10 room nights is required to redeem offer.

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