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NEWS FLASH

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18 & 19 August 2014

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Above & beyond

FOLLOWING on

from Monday's edition (**BEN** 04 Aug), the invitation to the Lama's birthday blessing, attended by hundreds of local people in magnificent traditional costume, will be a standout for me for years to come.

It's not every famail that allows the participants the luxury of staying in one place for five days to really get to know the hotel and the surrounding area.

This Cox & Kings famail at Chamba Camp Thiksey has been exceptional.

Not just for the fact that when I wake up in the morning in my canopied bed, the magnificence of the Thiksey Monastery is directly in my line of vision.

For some clarity, the province of Ladakh is only slightly smaller than Scotland and its character and people more Tibetan than Indian.

The camp is beyond expectation and is perfect for a small group incentive or corporate think tank or to just go for a special experience.

In the meantime, I've been escorted to Stok Palace, a medieval fortress, dined under the stars, dabbled in archery and picnicked on the banks of the Zaskar River.

As one recent guest recorded, "It has surpassed our greatest expectation – the luxury, the attention to detail and the warmth and efficiency of the staff."

This says it all. *Jill*



Accor's new ibis

ACCOR will announce Australasia's largest ibis next week, but for now, the company is keeping mum, only saying it will be "in the Pacific" at a briefing held for the World of Accor showcase yesterday.

Accor Pacific chief operating officer Simon McGrath (pictured right with Australia marketing and communications director Bridie Commerford) said the conference market had had a "softer" last 12 months, after the election and the Budget, but was starting to respond in the last two months.

In Accor's forecasts and results in this time, some occupancy rates in conferencing had been around 85% of space where this would not have been the case 12 months ago, he said.

The business events outlook was very strong, despite a softer year last year, he said.

"We're seeing in all our hotels, and we have a very clear focus and a very targeted strategy,



it's core business to us, and the insight we're getting is that in all states, in all regions, business on the books is stronger this time than it would have been same time last year."

After the briefing, media headed down to the World of Accor expo, held in the Sofitel Sydney Wentworth, with more than 800 delegates representing almost 3,600 hotels and resorts worldwide.

Prizes were presented by Melissa Doyle of *Seven Afternoon News* and Larry Emdur of *The Morning Show*.

CLICK HERE for photos of the event.

Four pages today

BEN has three pages of editorial plus a full page from (**click**):

- Inspire Ex

First event for Hunter

CROWNE Plaza Hunter Valley has landed its first booking, the Rotary District 9685's 'Light up Rotary' conference in March next year.

The conference and events facility is due to open late this year with capacity for 1,000 people.

The Rotary conference would see between 550 and 800 delegates attend and in their downtime experience a range of activities at the hotel and in the Hunter region, including wine tasting and golf, Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley said.

The facility also hosted a lunch to discuss opportunities for regional tourism, with Minister for the Hunter and Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian.

WA hosts ecotourism conference

WESTERN Australia will host the 2015 Global Eco Asia-Pacific Tourism Conference at Rottnest Island with an estimated net benefit of \$3.6m for the state.

The conference would be held in October or November next year and was expected to see between 200 and 250 participants from Australia and overseas, the WA government said.

Tourism Minister Liza Harvey and Environment Minister Albert Jacob said in a joint statement that the win was a "great coup" for the state to host the conference on the island, which would be a perfect location for it.

Jacob said the opportunities for sustainable nature-based tourism arising from the creation of marine parks created by the government, including three future parks, would be examined by delegates.

Vellington's in business

WELLINGTON is taking aim at business events with a range of new developments, including a purpose-built convention centre and a new Events and Partnership team.

The new team was created to help Wellington leverage the "significant capital investment" made by hotels in the capital city, including refurbishments and a new 130 room Sofitel hotel, with marketing support, Positively Wellington Tourism ceo David Perks said.

The four person team, including two business development managers, would work to secure business events for the city, he said.

The team is **pictured** right getting into the spirit of Wellington's sign change to 'Vellington' in honour of the New Zealand vampire comedy 'What



We Do in the Shadows', currently taking the world by storm.

Wellington City Council also had a proposal for a public-private partnership to build a 165 room Hilton alongside a conference facility of about 2,500 sqm of space, hosting up to 2,500 guests theatre style, located opposite Te Papa Museum, Positively Wellington Tourism said.

The proposal was out for public consultation and had the facility opening in 2017, forecast to attract NZ\$35m in new spend to the city annually, it said.

Peppers conf deals

PEPPERS Parehua Martinborough is offering a special deal for conferences.

Book for August or September for six or more delegates with the residential conference package and you'll get a free skeet shooting team building experience.

The package costs from \$289.



business events news

8th August 2014



NOW here's a snappy idea - Instagram is kind of a big deal (and possibly smells of rich mahogany) for events these days and Australian company KeepSnaps has decided to bring the photo booth into 2014 with the KeepSnaps printer.

Basically, guests take photos at your event using your designated hashtag and upload them to Instagram or Twitter.

The KeepSnaps printer then searches the networks for the hashtag and prints tagged photos within 15 seconds, the company said, with companies able to brand the photos with logos, the event or colour scheme.

Sounds like a neat idea for a conference or convention, although whether it will follow the Instagram tradition of adorable animal photos is another story; we'd certainly like to see an event populated with photos of kittens with moustaches (a la [@hamilton_the_hipster_cat](#)) and adorable Shiba-inus eating watermelon (a la [@marutaro](#)).

Here's **BEN's** offering, with thanks to [@katy_f19](#).



KL wins Worldchefs



KUALA Lumpur has won the bid to host the 2018 Worldchefs Congress, which is estimated to see about 1,000 delegates attend.

The Congress will be held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre from 09 to 13 Jul 2018.

The economic impact was estimated to be about AUD\$3.69m, the Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) said.

Familiarisations or tours around the Congress were still in planning stages, MyCEB said.

The congress would see a gathering of those in the culinary business and was organised by the World Association of Chefs' Societies (Worldchefs), it said.

Worldchefs Asia continental director Rick Stephen said the presentation and culinary diversity available in Malaysia impressed the organisation and delegates at this year's Congress were left wanting more.

Business tourism had a huge potential for growth in Malaysia and was expected to bring a greater flow of high yield business visitors to the country from 5% to 8% of total tourist arrivals by 2020, or an increase to 2.9m business visitors, MyCEB said.



All go for CCC



ACCOR New Zealand has been selected as the preferred operator for the master planning and development stage of the Christchurch Convention Centre, and the consortium Plenary Conventions New Zealand, comprised of the Plenary Group, Ngai Tahu Property and the Carter Group, has been selected as the preferred developer.

Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee said the Crown, which had committed NZ\$284m to the project, would now work with the consortium and Accor in the master planning and development phases on the detail of the precinct.

The project remained on track for construction to begin next year and the Centre to be opened in 2017, Brownlee said.

The Convention Centre Precinct will have initial capacity for up to 1,500 people, expanding to 2,000 in the future.

Accor NZ, Pacific Islands and Japan senior vp Garth Simmons said Accor looked forward to working to develop facilities that would put Christchurch on the map as a national and international destination for conferences and events.

Accor was a global hospitality company and had experience operating convention centres across the world.

It could therefore bring its global expertise to New Zealand, as it remained committed to the re-build of Christchurch, he said.

Christchurch and Canterbury Convention Bureau manager

Caroline Blanchfield said now the Bureau could actively pursue large international conferences for the region.

"We already have significant interest in events wanting to book at least three years out.

"Now we have the certainty to go out and sell Christchurch on this scale."

Tourism New Zealand Business Events manager Bjoern Spreitzer said the Centre would attract more high value visitors to the South Island in the off-peak season.

Christchurch & Canterbury Tourism ceo Tim Hunter said the Centre would bring back one of the most successful parts of Christchurch's tourism sector, with the region cornering 25% of New Zealand's conference market prior to the earthquake, now sitting at about 9%.

The Christchurch industry had been waiting for the announcement for more than three years and was very happy with the news, he said.

Put on a Playhouse

ETERNITY Playhouse in Darlinghurst is now available for hire as an events venue.

The 127 year old building has been renovated and restored and features a 200 seat theatre.

The lobby could be used for pre and post event networking for up to 250, and corporate 'theatre and dinner' style packages were available, the Darlinghurst Theatre Company said.

To book, **CLICK HERE**.

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Hard a Port

WHEN Port Douglas Incentives invited a group of conference and event organisers to see what Port Douglas/Daintree and the surrounding region has to offer event planners beyond its dazzling blue skies, white sandy beaches and its lush World Heritage reef and rainforests, they packed in some extraordinary experiences.

Where else can your meet 'n' eat include crocs, and big ones

at that, a helicopter flight over the Great Barrier Reef, dinner under a starry night, diving and snorkelling with Quicksilver cruises, breakfast on Thala Beach, lunch in a rainforest at Silky Oaks or cocktails on the deck of an old sugar wharf.

CLICK HERE for more photos or check out our Facebook page www.facebook.com/BusEvNews.



LEFT: Mossman Gorge guide Cameron demonstrates colours of traditional body painting.



LEFT: 'Happy campers' the family group enjoy an Indigenous walk in Mossman Gorge.

RIGHT: Chow down on a Whitchetty Grub!



ABOVE: Grand arrival at Thala Beach Resort with Grubs Personal Trike Tours.

ABOVE LEFT: Mossman Gorge, a scenic section of Daintree National Park where crystal-clear water cascades over large granite boulders in the Mossman River.



ABOVE: The Wildlife Habitat Port Douglas where visitors have the chance to observe up close a huge range of flora and fauna.

CENTRE: At the centre of the Pullman Port Douglas Sea Temple Resort & Spa is a stunning 3000m2 lagoon style pool.