



Six of the best

PROVING that innovation knows no boundaries, global alliance BestCities, whose certification program ensures a consistent level of convention bureau service excellence from its partner cities, has had six of them feature on *Business Insider's* 2014 list of the '18 Most Innovative Cities in the World.'



Karen Bolinger, BestCities board chair and ceo of Melbourne Convention Bureau said, "Innovation can be defined as 'finding a better way of doing something', which BestCities Global Alliance has been doing for more than a decade, delivering the best professional practices and service to the meetings industry."

The publication said the reason the six BestCities partners were featured was because:

"Singapore has the best infrastructure in the world, including an airport complete with a butterfly garden, rooftop pool, movie theatres, hotels, spas, showers, and even a four-story slide.

"Copenhagen boasts some of the most efficient nationalised healthcare on Earth, with both maternity and paternity leave.

Cape Town makes it easy to get off fossil fuels, by making solar water heaters available to citizens.

"Vancouver has set a mission to become the greenest city in the world by 2020, which has already led to a 20% decrease in water consumption. Plus, 41% of people walk or bike to get around.

"Dubai features strikingly innovative architecture, like the 160-story-tall Burj Khalifa, the tallest building on earth."

Regional Affiliate Member Tokyo also made it onto the list for launching the world's first cap and trade system in 2010, which now has 1,100 participating facilities.

Jill

Helipad for ICC Sofitel

THE International Convention Centre Hotel (ICC Hotel) in Sydney could have a helipad atop its 35 storeys, and external lighting.

Announced at Darling Harbour (**BEN** breaking news yesterday) by NSW Deputy Premier Andrew Stoner, the Schwartz Family Company signed an agreement with developer Lend Lease to purchase the hotel for an undisclosed amount.

Accor has been appointed to manage the hotel under its Sofitel brand, making it, succinctly, the second Sofitel for Sydney (seriously).

The Company said it would be the largest and most significant new hotel to be built in the city for more than 20 years.

Stoner said it would provide convenient and contemporary accommodation for delegates to the ICC, increasing Sydney's appeal for major international events.

Construction of the hotel is set to start this year and be completed by the second half of 2017, in time for major events, with about 600 rooms, including meeting rooms and a ballroom.

The ICC is set to open in late 2016.

Schwartz Family Company principal Dr Jerry Schwartz said the company would be seeking the rights for a helipad on top of the hotel to allow more direct access to the precinct.

"We will also be in dialogue with the authorities to introduce external lighting of the building, so that it will enhance Darling Harbour at night and put it on par with other major harbour cities, such as Hong Kong."

No appointments had been made and no formal discussions had taken place regarding



Accor working with the ICC in partnership to attract conference business to the hotel, an Accor spokesperson said.

Biz Ev Tas expands

BUSINESS Events Tasmania (BET) has added a business development manager based in Launceston in a move it says will boost conference activity for the north and north west.

An announcement would be made soon but the manager had been appointed and would start in mid September, BET said.

The new position tied in with the BET board's broader strategy of expanding representation into key industry sectors as well as the conference and tourism sectors, BET chairman Malcolm Wells said.

The new position was funded by state government and local councils, with BET seeking additional funding specifically for the position.

The organisation said it was sure the position would boost enthusiasm within the sector and ensure both Launceston and northern Tasmania remained an attractive business events destination.

BET ceo Stuart Nettlefold said the new position would work with business and Universities to up the organisation's ambassador program, as well as working to find new products, such as Boag's new visitor centre and conference facility, which would increase the region's appeal.

Four pages today

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

- Accor Conferences

Moet love for BEN



THE winner of the **BEN** draw at Inspire EX, Lauren Harkness of LH event management, picked up her prize yesterday, a bottle of Moet, just in time for her mum's sixtieth birthday this weekend - congratulations Lauren, and happy birthday, Lauren's mum!

Lauren is **pictured** left with **BEN** deputy editor Alex Walls.

For more photos, check out our Facebook page by **CLICKING HERE** and check out LH Event management by **CLICKING HERE**.



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ATE exhibition tender



TOURISM Australia (TA) has released a tender for the provision of exhibition management services for its travel trade show, the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) 2016-18.

This would cover three years of the event in three states: ATE 2016 in Queensland, ATE 2017 in NSW and ATE 2018 in South Australia, the tender said.

TA said the successful tenderer would need to have at least five years' experience in the exhibition and events industry in Australia as well as previous experience delivering events of a similar nature and size as ATE.

The tenderer would need to be "suitably accredited" and manage venue negotiations as well as coordinate the trade show floor build, liaise with the organisation regarding standard booth design.

TA did not immediately reply to queries about budget and a previous tender for management of ATE 2015-17.

The tender closes on 23 Sep. **CLICK HERE** to access the tender.

Credit: Tourism Australia/ Tourism and Events Queensland.

Mauritius famil



AIR Mauritius and the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) recently sponsored five agents on a week long famil to Mauritius to promote the nation as a major destination for the MICE market.

MTPA Australian representative Peter Power said it offered clients something different, with the agents taking part in activities such as walking with lions, voted by the group as the favourite activity, sailing and rum tasting.

Mauritius had a range of properties suitable to the MICE market, was close to Australia and had diverse activities available for delegates.

Pictured from left are Anne of Gray Impact Events, Peter Bender of Flight Biz, Melanie Wynne of Phil Hoffman Travel, Anna Fraunfelter of BI Worldwide, Daniela Chiodo of CI Events, a Solis Representative, and Peter Power.

Novotel Cairns dsm

NOVOTEL Cairns Oasis Resort has appointed a new director of sales and marketing, Shirley Dodt.

Dodt had worked in the tourism and hospitality industry for more than 25 years and was most recently account director at Sheraton Mirage Port Douglas Resort.

Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort gm Peter Richardson said with Dodt's experience and knowledge of North Queensland, he was confident she would help the resort achieve new success.

AACB conference

THE 25th Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) annual staff conference has opened today at Daydream Island Resort and Spa.

The conference would involve professional development and sharing of knowledge between staff, AACB said.

The conference brought competitors together in a friendly environment from 15 city and regional member bureaux, executive director Andrew Hiebl said.

Sizing up Fiji



AS FIJI'S tourism and business events product enters a new era of maturity after major expansion and refurbishment programs, Tourism Fiji's Sydney MICE Roadshow presented a different style of updating clients on Monday evening at The Menzies, by holding eight minute presentations to diners.

Tourism Fiji regional director Carlah Walton spoke of the maturity of Fiji's business events market as one that offers everything from big events to a new convention centre, right through to executive retreats and small exclusive resorts.

"We have a really well developed infrastructure including substantial transport companies with brand new coaches, an international airline through Fiji Airways and an extensive domestic network through Fiji Link."

There was much laughter when Walton said the Denarau Island Convention Centre (DICC) was

known affectionately as The Dick. "As you know size matters in Fiji!"

Walton talked of Fiji's food and beverage challenges, saying while there had been issues in past years, food and beverage in Fiji had come full circle.

She said Fiji was on the cusp of a F&B revolution.

Highlighting Fiji's social justice programs, Walton said they were integrated into conference and incentive programs.

"Fiji is not just about laying on a beach and drinking a cocktail, in this day and age we find people want to feel like they are contributing and we have a lot of programs which can aid in this.

"They can really make the difference between a good conference and a great conference."

Pictured from left Matt Symonds and Luisa Finiasi from Tourism Fiji Sydney line up with the Fiji operators at the MICE Roadshow in Sydney.



business events news

27th August 2014



crumbs!

IF YOU'RE keen to give your delegates a preview before they attend an event in Victoria, then good news - Street View Trekker is on its way for the state, the product of a Tourism Victoria and Google Street View partnership.

The tool would allow people all over the world to take virtual tours of Victoria's tourist attractions while sitting at home, the state government said.

Tourism and Major Events Minister Louise Asher said testing was underway in Melbourne and the technology would be used to get 360 degree panoramas of the state's most visited attractions, including Federation Square, the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the Yarra Valley.

Street View Trekker involved a backpack with a camera system of 15 lenses on top automatically gathering images as it was worn by an operator while they walked down pedestrian trails, the government said.

These were then stitched together to make a 360 degree view, it said.

The initiative followed the 'Play Melbourne' campaign where tourists were equipped with wearable cameras and microphones and directed by prospective visitors via a website to explore the city, the Minister said.

Other Street View Trekking experiences include Angkor Wat, the Taj Mahal, Venice and polar bear capital, Churchill.

The Ghan with opals



A NEW four day service on The Ghan that adds the opal mining town of Manguri (Coober Pedy) is being pitched to the incentive market.

Passengers will fly into Darwin to join the train, from where it travels to Katherine, Alice Springs and Coober Pedy.

Great Southern Rail business development manager Damien Wolff said the Ghan was a high incentive product with the private Chairman's Carriage available for hire or a full train charter for 350.

"Rarely do travellers get to see Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs and Coober Pedy in one journey and for the incentive market this timetable makes good sense.

"Literally, you get to see the outback in one great experience."

While in Alice Springs, passengers enjoy a full day's touring or they can upgrade to do a scenic flight to Uluru and Kata Juta.

Coober Pedy, with its opal mining credentials, is something of a bucket list wish for many Australians and train enthusiasts and it is here that they can experience dugout style living in the underground rooms at the Desert Cave Hotel.

The Ghan's peak season services depart Saturdays May to Aug.



Sitting Pretty

China Southern Airlines Business Class

Welcome to Sitting Pretty, our regular review of experiences up the front of the plane.

China Southern Airlines is a rising star amongst business and leisure travellers, one of a number of airlines based in China making a place for itself on the world stage. BEN travelled on one of its nine new 787 Dreamliners from London to Guangzhou.

THE SEAT

Greeted by friendly smiles from the crew, **BEN** took a seat in 3K by the lovely large windows that feature in the 787 Dreamliner. The unique dimming system on the windows meant that **BEN** got a fantastic look at London at night, a view which just got better as other passengers reclined to sleep later on in the flight.

The seats on the Dreamliner are the same width as in China Southern's other planes, reclining 180 degrees to provide a luxurious bed for overnight flights. In a 2-2-2 layout there is plenty of room, although if you are in a window seat you do have to clamber over the person seated next to you to get out if they are sleeping.

There is a generous amount of storage in front of the seat, very handy for shoes when you tuck in for bed, as well as above in overhead compartments. The new Dreamliners have been designed so that there is no overhead luggage storage above the centre aisle seats and it is amazing how much of a difference it makes. There seemed to be an incredible amount of space, definitively removing any sense of feeling cramped.

ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

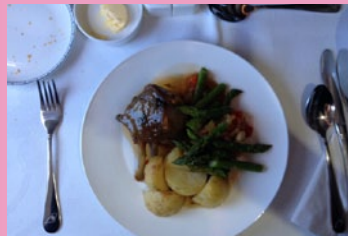
Passengers are able to watch movies immediately after they are seated, not having to wait until in the air, although **BEN** opted to use the lighting options above and next to the seat to do some light reading. Business class passengers have large individual screens and are able to choose from a wide variety of Western and foreign films, including a good mix of new releases and old favourites. There are also a number of TV shows, CDs and even e-books available.

Additionally, the seat is equipped with conveniently located USB and power ports for charging devices and there's even an option to stream music or videos from your personal device on to the screen.

SERVICE

BEN's flight departed at night, so dinner was served, with a delicious mix of classic Western food such as grilled rack of lamb, as well as traditional Chinese dishes.

China Southern also times the flight from London to connect neatly with their ongoing flight to Sydney, on which **BEN** travelled, meaning thankfully little time was spent in transit. It made for an extremely pleasant journey with almost no jet lag at all.



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