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Violet didn't Crumble

IT'S one thing to board the new Violet McKenzie catamaran, go for a spin on the calm waters of Sydney Harbour and marvel at the ship's Incat Crowther design and the technology that went into its Richardson Devine Marine construction, but who really gives much attention as to where it was built and how it got to Sydney?



Cornering Anthony Haworth, gm of Captain Cook Cruises (pictured with Tourism and Transport Forum ceo Margy Osmond), and learning that Richardson Devine Marine is actually in Tasmania, **BEN** was told that Haworth and three others rode the vessel from Hobart to Sydney, with Haworth exclaiming triumphantly, "We beat *Wild Oats*' Sydney to Hobart record by two hours!"

Remarkable, since the two level catamaran with seating in the main passenger cabin for 116 passengers and an open upper deck is not your ordinary sea going vessel and isn't equipped with anywhere to sleep, cook or shower, let alone have sails!

Haworth, no stranger to sailing, said it was fine, with mattresses across the seats to sleep and a bite to eat at Cape Barron Island with some of the locals.

When pressed, he did admit that the seas did toss *Violet* around a bit and there were moments of queasiness but, "All in all it was a bit of an adventure," he grinned.

By the way, as guests left the vessel, they were given a Violet Crumble bar.

Clever, huh?
 Jill

Int'l biz events visitors up

THE latest International Visitors Survey figures show international business events visitors increased in the year to September by 22,000 people.

The year saw 842,000 visitors compared with 820,000 in the year to September 2013, the Tourism Research Australia data showed.

Overall spend was up 3.5% to \$2.46m for the year, but this was down on the \$2.54m posted in 2012, which saw 866,000 international business events visitors.

The total number of visitors included 341,000 people visiting Australia for conferences or conventions compared with 323,000 year on year, 72,000 visitors for trade fairs or exhibitions, down on 2013's 82,000, and 37,000 for incentives, down from 40,000 the previous year.

International business events visitor trip nights were down for the year from 17.5m to 16.9m, the research showed.

Overall international visitor

numbers were up 8% to 6.3m, while trip spend was up 9% to a record \$30.7b, Tourism Australia said.

Md John O'Sullivan said the figures were among the best annual international visitor figures the organisation had seen in some time.

He said there were positive signs of return to growth in business-related travel.

NSW saw the most international visitors, up 7% year on year to 3.16m, followed by QLD up 4% to 2.12m, with the Sunshine Coast posting 9.4% growth to 245,000.

Business Events Sydney ceo Lyn Lewis-Smith said 2014 had been a "phenomenal" year for the city and the events pipeline for coming years was strong.

The organisation had secured 84 events and delivered 76 (**BEN** 05 Nov), she said.

Lewis-Smith said ABS statistics for convention arrivals from July to September showed 68,500 convention arrivals, up 11% for the quarter compared with the previous year.

Five pages today

BEN has three pages of news plus full pages from (**click**):

- Innovative Hiring
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Event for ICC Sydney

THE International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney) has landed another event, making 19 in total when it opens in 2017.

The latest is the International Chamber of Commerce World Chambers Federation World Chambers Congress, set to be held in 2017 and worth \$3.3m to the NSW economy, Business Events Sydney said.

The event was expected to see 1,000 delegates attend and was the first time it would be hosted by an Australian city, it said.

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EEAA, Austrade practical focus

THE Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA), and Austrade have undertaken a number of practical activities in the organisations' work together.

Speaking at EEAA's conference, Austrade ceo Bruce Gosper

said a number of activities had kicked off since April, including introducing EEAA representatives to Austrade overseas posts to discuss cooperation and joint promotion of international exhibition.

Austrade had also put together a 'how to' guide for EEAA members with key points on how to work with the organisation, Gosper said.

EEAA ceo Joyce DiMascio said the organisations had also committed to two roundtable



meetings each year.

The conference itself included four international sessions that identified practical opportunities for working more effectively overseas, EEAA said.

Lessons from the sessions included the importance of timing for events to make sure they did not conflict with major shows in other parts of Asia, and ensuring that hosted buyer programs delivered a "full suite" of language services, hospitality, introductions and value-adds such as site visits, it said.

DiMascio said there was "enormous potential" to grow the international footprint of existing annual events, and the conference had focused on high level, strategic links with government policy as well as practical ways the EEAA could work with Austrade and other agencies such as the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC).

The announcement of a business events framework last week (**BEN 28 Nov**) was another such step in the right direction for business events, she said.

Pictured from left is Gosper; DiMascio; Bonnie Shek, HKTDC; and Domenic Genua, EEAA president.

Congress doubles expectations

THE International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Parks Congress, held at Sydney Olympic Park last month, saw 2,600 more delegates attend than the last Congress in 2003.

A total of 6,136 delegates, including 3,559 international delegates, attended the event, which Congress ambassador Peter Cochrane said was double the number of attendees originally targeted for the event.

Reasons for the increased numbers included the attractiveness of Sydney, Australia's geographic location and the environmental challenges faced by the country and Asia Pacific neighbours, director Trevo Sanwith said, while Cochrane said a broader event program and a wider range of invited sectors could also have helped.

It had also featured more comprehensive and constructive engagement with business than the previous event, he said.

BCD Travel expands

BCD Travel has partnered with corporate travel and inbound tours specialist Tonle Travel in Cambodia, the 18th country in which BCD Travel has a presence.

Cambodia was a key emerging market, BCD Travel said.



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Mantra to manage Bell City development

MANTRA Group has said it will manage the 844-room Bell City mixed use development in Melbourne's Preston precinct.

The tower hotels would be rebranded from Rydges Hotel management to Mantra and BreakFree later this month.

The development was bought by Elanor Investors Group, Mantra said.

The 383-room tower, set to carry the Mantra brand, featured 15 conference rooms including a 500 person capacity ballroom, Mantra said.

The 461-room tower would carry the BreakFree brand, the company said.

For more information, **CLICK HERE**.

DMS Workshops

THE 2015 DMS Workshops, to coincide with AIME 2015, will kick off in Sydney at Doltone House Hyde Park on 20 Feb and at Crown Towers in Melbourne on 23 Feb.

The workshops allowed for industry partners to get acquainted with more than 20 DMCS, DMS said.

Based on industry feedback, pre-scheduled appointment sessions are now in place.

CLICK HERE for more.

Whitsundays to host Corroboree Greater

THE Whitsundays will host the Corroboree Greater China 2015 event.

CLICK HERE for more.

Thanks for the goodness

MARRIOTT International hosted its annual Thanksgiving client dinner on Thursday at Sydney's Swine & Co, a bar and restaurant that pays homage to the suckling pig as well such things as king salmon, organic spatchcock, and on this occasion, turkey.

Marriott International global sales South Asia regional director, Avril Northridge (**pictured** below right with Gill Watkins, DuPont) gave thanks to guests for their support throughout the year, revealing that even with 700,000 hotel rooms around the world, the company was still planning many more.



"You may be surprised to know that Marriott International has 19 brands including Ritz Carlton, Bvlgari, Autograph Collection, Edition and Renaissance.

"Ahead, we have plans for a Ritz Carlton in Auckland, while we have a Marriott in Fiji that will open at Momi Bay in 2016."

The event, which began with drinks in the lively bar, was followed by dinner in the

downstairs dining room of this former Bank of New South Wales art deco gem.

CLICK HERE for more photos of the night.

Pictured above from left is Hardy Killiman and Theo Ocks, Marriott; Brett Dudley, e-cruising.travel; and Peter McKeon, Delta Airlines.





business events news

3rd December 2014

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crumbs!

PHILATELIST has to be the best name for a hobby ever, and stamp-lovers in Asia Pacific, rejoice, because the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre has landed the world's largest philatelic event.

The 29th Asian International Stamp Exhibition and the World Youth Stamp Exhibition is currently being hosted until 06 Dec in Malaysia, with 20,000 attendees targeted, the Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) said.

Estimated to boost the economy by about A\$5.7m, the event will see more than two million stamps and stamp-related items on sale and on show, the MyCEB said.

The stories of stamps with errors being more valuable due to their scarcity appear to be true, such as the Treskilling Yellow stamp, the only example in existence which was printed in yellow by accident.



Discovered by Georg Wilhelm Baeckman in 1886 while going through his grandparents' attic, it is the only known example and sold in 1996 for about A\$3.5m, a world record, according to China.org.cn.

Maybe it's time to hunt through some old letters and jump on a plane to KL?

Violet joins the fleet



MONDAY saw the launch of the fourth SeaLink/Captain Cook Cruises vessel on Sydney Harbour this year, the *Violet McKenzie*.

SeaLink chairman Giuliano Ursini (**pictured**) said while the company did not necessarily embrace the concept of 'build it and they will come', it was to some extent preemptive.

"We are careful, but we believe that we drive the market and help to build the communities that we serve and that is what this is all about."

Providing Hop On Hop Off and Whale Watching cruises as well as host charter events, the \$2.6m Rocket catamaran joins her sister vessels *Elizabeth Cook*, *Mary Reibey* and *Annabelle Rankin* and a fleet that includes the company's flagship vessel *Sydney 2000*, as well as a range of public cruises and private charters for two to 2,000 guests.

The vessel was officially launched by Tourism and Transport Forum ceo Margy Osmond by breaking the traditional champagne bottle across the bow and was named after Violet McKenzie (1890 – 1982) who was Australia's first female electrical engineer.

Ursini said the launch demonstrated SeaLink's confidence in the Sydney market, the Sydney people and the NSW economy, "to be able to invest this kind of money and in the one calendar year."

Gray's Say

Peter Gray, an independent Motivation Consultant, presents a regular *Business Events News* feature on current issues in the Conference and Incentive industries.



PROFESSIONALISM HAS BECOME A DIRTY WORD

MY LAST bemoaned the apparent lack of experience and - yes - professionalism being exhibited by some correspondents to LinkedIn. It was therefore gratifying to realise, from the large number of emails and telephone calls I received, that I wasn't alone in my supposition.

But taking the topic one step further, do the meetings and incentives industries actually encourage anyone who wants to hang up his or her shingle to claim to be a professional whether or not they have any more experience than having attended a conference or been a participant in an incentive program?

Are those of us in the C&I industries truly exhibiting the high standards of professionalism our clients have a right to deserve?

MEA and the PCO Association encourage those who join their ranks to become accredited; the Incentive Association has the same aim, though has not yet set this in train. However, cloud-based software companies would have us believe that by simply using their software the average man or woman in the street becomes a professional which, to some, entails sending RFPs to more and more suppliers, hotels in particular.

From what I hear from hoteliers these days, the lack of professionalism amongst PCOs and Incentive Practitioners is

showing more now than ever.

Hang professional relationships...it's a dog eat dog world out there!

But do we deserve to be treated as professionals when most of us will provide a fully costed and detailed proposal - not a simple quote - to clients at no cost? And then, as happens frequently, the so-called potential client decides they could organise their next conference or incentive program themselves or pass your ideas, for which you haven't charged, onto someone else. If you want a solicitor's advice there will be a charge; doctors, architects, accountants and many more make you pay for their services, even the initial consultation. An initial briefing meetings should always be free, but once a potential client asks you to do more work on their project, a verbal contract exists. It is therefore only fair that having asked for ideas, suggestions and costings, there should be a charge to cover your time if nothing else.

Will it happen? Maybe, but then there's always someone that will 'break ranks' and offer this as a free service believing that to do so will win them the business. Think again!

Peter Gray can be contacted at peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net.



Business Events News is Australia's newest online publication dedicated to the vibrant meetings, incentives, conferences and events sector.

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