



Feeling the fear



Was it me or was it that I was sitting next to a man in a row of women at the Todd Sampson AIME Knowledge education lecture, Creativity vs Fear, that the audience was predominantly of the female persuasion?

Supremely relaxed and wholly inspirational, what many may not know of this man famous as the ABC TV panellist on the Gruen Transfer and Gruen Planet, is that among the many achievements and challenges he puts himself through, he is the creator of EarthHour, an event that famously started as a lights-off event in Sydney and since grown to engage more than 7000 cities and towns worldwide.

And if you think that influencing a worldwide audience is a pretty mouth dropping achievement, he also climbed Mt Everest alone and unguided.

Meeting his hero, Sir Edmund Hillary, prior to the climb, by looking up his phone number in the Auckland telephone directory and being invited to tea, is just one of his remarkable stories.

You may have seen him more recently on 'Redesign my brain' a three-part documentary series on the revolutionary new science of brain plasticity.

This 'non swimmer' faced his greatest fear by being chained, handcuffed and blindfolded underwater, with only his radically improved brain to help him escape.

That he did, was evidenced by his being alive to tell his story at AIME.

Next, on 'Redesign my brain' is a tightrope walk!

I know there are other visionaries like Todd, who step up to the mark to lead by example and to ever so patiently nudge us along, to feel the fear and do it anyway.

I couldn't recommend him more highly as an event speaker.

Jill

Geelong to host VTC



THE inaugural Victorian Tourism Conference will be held in Geelong at the Pier.

Two hundred tourism and event operators from throughout Victoria are expected to attend the event, held from 14 to 15 Jul.

The industry led conference, which explores future trends, the latest research, consumer insights, and examples of leading operators, is aimed at strengthening and showcasing the industry.

It was expected to contribute more than \$134,000 to the Geelong region, based on Tourism Australia's figure of \$336 per delegate per day, Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) said.

Ceo Dianne Smith said the conference was a great opportunity for people throughout the industry to share ideas, experiences and learn best-practice strategies to grow their businesses.

"It also provides an opportunity

for the Geelong region to showcase its amazing tourism assets, as tourism is an increasingly important economic driver for the region."

Tourism Victoria ceo Leigh Harry said the organisation was delighted to be the Principal Partner of the conference.

"This conference supports Tourism Victoria in conjunction with the industry, in the delivery of Victoria's Regional Tourism Strategy 2013-16, by recognising and addressing the challenges facing the industry over the next few years.

"It creates a platform for tourism excellence, which will assist our industry to be sustainable and competitive into the future."

For more information, email conference@vtic.com.au.

Sebel to Rydges

THE Sebel Surry Hills, which has been managed by Accor for the past two years, is to be re-branded from 08 Apr as Rydges Sydney Central by the Schwartz Family Group.

Director Dr Jerry Schwartz said the change was due to Sebel becoming an apartment-style brand, and it would be 'hubbed' with the other Rydges-managed hotel at World Square, benefitting both hotels, which had major conferencing facilities.

The hotel has 271 rooms, and nine meeting rooms, catering for up to 220 delegates and is also Australia's first hotel to feature an in-ground glass aquarium.

Marriott in Shanghai

MARRIOTT International has opened the 317 room Shanghai Marriott Hotel Parkview, in the Zhabei District and next to the Daning Lingshi Park.

This brings Marriott's properties in China under the Marriott Hotel brand to 15.

The hotel was the only one in the city with two full sized pillarless ballrooms, covering 1400 sqm, Marriott said.

The hotel also has 2800 sqm of meeting space, the group said.

Open invitation

HOW'S this for a new approach to staying connected with the Sydney business events community?

The Northern Territory Convention Bureau's Sydney business development executive Claudia Renner will be hosting a monthly 'time out' yoga session as an opportunity to get Sydney's business events professionals together, change the pace and have fun working on downward dogs and other animals.

The first session is on 10 Mar, from 5.30 to 6.30pm at the Bangarra Dance Theatre, 5 Hickson Rd, Walsh Bay.

BYO towel but mats and water bottles provided and some street parking is available.

RSVP by 07 Mar to claudia.renner@ntconventions.com.au.

Love is in the details.



Adam

loves being a chef. From sourcing the freshest and highest quality local ingredients to creating a world class dining experience for our guests, no detail is unchecked to ensure the perfect food is created and plated every time. From intricate degustation menus to creating the ultimate macaroon, the award winning team at the GCCEC delivers the ultimate culinary experience.

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business events news

26th February 2014

Congratulations to
Erin Gissane of CCM Travel
The winner of our AIME 2014
Trip for 2 to Mauritius!



Generational change

GLOBAL managing director of Pacific World Herve Joseph-Antoine was in Sydney last week.

Pacific World is a leading destination management company in Asia and throughout the world.

Speaking with **BEN**, he said how impressed he was with the industry here.

"I see a very dynamic industry here and Destination Marketing Services (DSM), with whom we work are real experts and very proactive, especially in terms of working with and understanding clients."

Here to promote Asia Pacific World, Joseph-Antoine, based in Singapore, said the mainly Asian company worked with many global companies and organisations.

He predicted that Korea was the next big MICE destination.

"We opened an office in Seoul at the beginning of 2013 and have found it to be much more popular than we expected.

"Korea is a new, modern country in terms of hotels and infrastructure, very strong in congresses and associations, yet an up and coming one for conferences, meetings and incentives.

"I think the interest there is a fascination for the very innovative spirit of the Korean companies, both in automotive or IT industries."

Concert package

SPECIAL VIP packages for the mighty Hunters & Collectors has been announced as part of Rochford Wine in the Yarra Valley - A Day On The Green concert.

The group are returning to their home state in their first tour since 1998 on 22 Mar.

The Rochford Wines Concert & Dining Packages include a rock star experience with dinner, drinks and premium seating.

Concert & dining packages are \$375.00; see www.rochfordwines.com.au for more.



With China a given growth market, he said the company was getting more and more enquiries about India and Myanmar.

"It's not massive as a business destination yet, but what is also strong is Vietnam.

"In just in a few generations it's amazing how things have changed."

IT&CM China surges

INCENTIVE Travel & Conventions, Meetings (IT&CM) China has had a surge in support from official agencies including Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority and Singapore Tourism Board.

This was enabling more suppliers in private sectors to gain inroads into China, IT&CM said.

Over 50 co-exhibiting companies are expected to be featured under the new destinations.

A recent forecast has predicted 98m border crossings from mainland China in the second half of 2013 to the first half of 2014, with outbound travellers spending a total of about \$143b.

These projections have caught the attention of destinations globally, with anticipation that the MICE industry would experience parallel benefits, IT&CM China said.

First-time exhibitor Sri Lanka Convention Bureau's general manager Vipula Wanigasekera said China was a primary market for Sri Lanka's MICE tourism.

"We expect to receive at least 100,000 Chinese outbound travellers this year, a 50% increase from 2013, based on the present enthusiasm that the market has for our destination."

Bowling them over

THE positive reaction of the Indian delegation to the Adelaide Oval during Dreamtime last year is being used as a marketing tool to target the Indian corporate and incentive travel market by the Adelaide Convention Bureau.

The visitors were able to witness a test cricket match between Australia and England, as well as having the chance to see inside the historic scoreboard, the last of its kind, tour the grounds, visit the Bradman museum and lunch in a private suite during the cricket.



Adelaide Convention Bureau ceo Damien Kitto said this part of the famil was a highlight.

"In 2015 the ICC Cricket World Cup comes to Australia with one of the great rivalries, India v Pakistan, playing in Adelaide March 4.

"This is a perfect opportunity for the Indian Corporate and Incentive market to include a world class cricket experience as part of an incentive trip to Adelaide and is what we are focussing on with our drive into this market."

Leong joins flagship

WITH a wealth of knowledge and many years' experience working at senior management level in the hospitality industry, Harry Leong has been appointed as the general manager of Metro Hotel Sydney Central, Metro's flagship property.

He has worked with international hotel chains throughout Asia Pacific, including Hyatt, Shangri-La, Sheraton, Ramada, Vista International Hotels, Berjaya Hotels and Resorts and Pan Pacific Hotels Group.



TIME to step out of the ordinary.

There are hotels around the world that differ from the usual cookie-cutter room.

You can choose to stay in a bubble in a French forest or ride an elephant onto your private island in Sri Lanka - these are just some of the hotels on offer at GAYOT.com's Top 10 Extreme Hotels Worldwide.

For instance, there's Le Grotte Della Civita in Matera, Italy, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that has been inhabited since the Bronze Age.

Then there's Attrap'Rêves in Allauch, France

Here campy meets camping in six bubble accommodations, with themes ranging from 1001 Nights to Zen. The bubbles are made from recycled materials and are deflated at the end of the season, for minimal impact on the surrounding pine forest.

Or take the previously mentioned Taprobane Island in Weligama Bay, Sri Lanka.

Just one sumptuous, five bedroom villa, it was built in the 1920s by a self-appointed count.

Although guests can wade to their two and a half acre private island from Sri Lanka's shore, it's more fun to ride in on an elephant. The villa was designed to avoid closed spaces, which means that there are views of the sea from almost every point in the house.

Burden for CHC

VBASE, the venue manager of Christchurch's premier convention, entertainment and sporting venues, has appointed Darren Burden as general manager after several years in Dunedin, where he played a pivotal role in the development of the multi-million-dollar Forsyth Barr Stadium.

He also headed up the Carisbrook Stadium Trust, which led the drive to get the stadium built, and was operations director for Dunedin Venues.



Best of the best



A BESTCITIES breakfast was held during AIME at which Karen Bolinger, ceo of the Melbourne Convention Bureau and chairwoman of the BestCities alliance, talked about the organisation and its membership. Founding father of BestCities, Gaining Edge's Gary Grimmer, (pictured **far right**), started the alliance with four bureaux, "Who got together in a pub – where all the best ideas are fermented," said Bolinger (pictured **third from left**).

Starting with Melbourne, Copenhagen, Edinburgh and Vancouver, Bolinger said the alliance was the first of its kind. "With 10 partners, we have the right partners and the right profile and are moving it forward. "In the last few years we have had Houston and Chicago join and then Berlin 18 months ago. Bolinger said a large part of what BestCities did was a quality management program to ensure it serviced all of its clients to a certain quality and standard. "An audit is done both internally and external. "This provides a stock

standard level of service to all our participants any of our association clients that want to utilise a city's bureau. "We are on the cusp of a level of expansion with the two key areas missing at the moment - South American and a little bit more in North Asia. "We are hoping in the next couple of months or so to introduce a North Asia partner. "Watch this space for South America."

Grab a deal

HOLD a meeting with the Spencer at Byron at Takapuna Beach Auckland in March or April and for \$79 per person you'll receive a full day delegate's package and complimentary screen and projector. Hold your group dinner during the same period for \$79 per person and receive complimentary room hire, which also gives a designer plated dinner (min 20 guests - one entree, main and dessert) or a buffet with carvery (min 30 guests) plus many extras; email meetings@spencerbyron.co.nz.

Mantra gives advice

WHEN Australian Red Cross was in the early stages of building the Pat Gosper Wellbeing Centre in Cairns, they approached the Mantra Group to provide advice and industry expertise on accommodation operations. Last week the Centre opened, a home away from home for people from rural and remote areas who need medical treatment in Cairns, which Mantra said would fill a real gap.

"It's been great to be able to provide support to Red Cross in other ways, in addition to the fundraising our hotels across the country do each year," said Chris Northam, general manager of Peppers Beach Club & Spa "Offering our expertise in a particular area has been a rewarding experience."

Giving its all

OTAHUNA Lodge, nestled in the Port Hills of New Zealand's Canterbury region, has launched a 'Lord of the Manor' package that allows small groups to book exclusive use of the entire property.

The offer means 10 guests can have full run of the Victorian mansion, its grounds and facilities for NZ\$5,995 per night.

Bookings are available throughout the autumn and winter months and stays include a nightly five course degustation dinner matched with New Zealand wines, plus breakfast.

Depending on the occasion, the Lodge can be exclusively reserved for a single night, a weekend or even a longer sojourn.

Find out more on www.otahuna.co.nz.

Grays' Say

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



MY AIME IS GETTING BETTER

I HAVE written many column centimetres over the past few years berating AIME and its organisers, but I am very pleased to report that this year, in my opinion anyway, AIME has at last lifted its act. The design and layout of the exhibition was much improved, I would say most attractive. For me, the stand that was 'best in show' was Melbourne and Victoria which really pulled out all the stops.

Whilst I would still argue for the educational seminars to be held each day prior to the trade show opening, the AIME Knowledge programme was well run and contained a comprehensive list of subject matter. The Incentive Association - bringing incentives back to AIME for the first time in many years - was happy with the attendance at its one seminar although a far cry from the audiences it achieved when hosted buyers and exhibitors were able to attend.

Many exhibitors I spoke to were still of the opinion that AIME was an expensive show in comparison to others around the region and each year judgements have to be made whether the

business obtained was worth the expense. There were a few notable exhibitors missing this year and several others that had down-sized their presence. The question must be asked whether the combination of ownership by MCB and management by Reed is costing too much. Rumours about how much MCB took out of the show last year and I will not repeat them here, but just as other shows have flourished because of such cost impositions I would hate Melbourne to lose this iconic event.

AIME week - and in spite of the show only lasting two days many overseas and interstate visitors are in Melbourne for the whole week - is something that is welcomed by many and provides a useful business opportunity.

Well done AIME. Let's hope for something even better next year.

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