



Hot hotel news

AS Accor departs from its Pier One Sydney hotel at midnight



and it becomes Pier One Sydney Harbour, Autograph Collection under the Marriott International banner, former director of sales & marketing David Lowe will morph into Accor NSW Hotels director of communications & public relations.

We couldn't think of a more perfect choice, so be prepared for some fun times ahead!

MEANWHILE, when asked for his ideal day in London, CEO of the quintessential London hotel The Goring (with its own Royal Warrant), Jeremy Goring, offered this sage advice:

"Start with a full English breakfast at The Goring (do not scrimp on the black pudding!), walk it off in our enormous garden, take the dog for a walk in Richmond Park (there are oak trees that Henry VIII rode past while hunting deer and their descendants are still in the park today), take in some galleries - I think The Tate is the best or check out what's happening on the South Bank. "Enjoy a big plate of fish and lobster at Randall & Aubin in Soho and walk to Graphic for cocktails in paint tins (or to the Experimental Cocktail Club)."

Makes you want to hop on a flight immediately!

Jill.

Right man for the job

JOHN O'Sullivan has taken over as managing director for Tourism Australia from Andrew McEvoy.

O'Sullivan comes into the role at a time when the Australian dollar is readjusting to more usual levels, allowing greater opportunity to reinvigorate some of the 'traditional' inbound markets.



Currently chief operating officer at Fox Sports, O'Sullivan brings with him extensive experience in major events, including CEO of Events Queensland and the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic organising committee.

Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA) managing director

AIME for more value

REGISTERING for Asia-Pacific Incentives & Meetings Expo (AIME) before 06 Feb could nab you more value.

Using the code 'VAAP' in the fourth step of the registration process could win you a Visitor All Access Pass for AIME Knowledge, the expo's Education Program, with a line up of world-class speakers, organisers said.

Rodger Powell welcomed the appointment and if new hotels were to be developed, and existing ones upgraded, the decision to invest would be based on demand generators such as major and business events.

"We know that John has a good understanding of, and proactive relationships with, the accommodation sector and that as the tourism industry's second largest revenue, jobs and tax contributor, he will engage at an even greater level.

"We are fortunate that Australia has quality event infrastructure already in place, and this will improve even further when the new Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre is completed."

Gov't MICE funding?

MEETINGS and Events Australia (MEA) with the Australian Events Academy (AEA) are calling for expressions of interest (EOI) from individuals or employers interested in participating in nationally recognised training for the industry.

MEA said the organisations were exploring government funding for such training, with areas of available training including a Diploma of Events.

Training would be delivered in a class, with potential for training at some regional locations to be confirmed.

EOIs close on 17 Feb. To log yours, **CLICK HERE**.

Points for Four Points

THE first internationally branded, new-build property to enter the Brisbane CBD in more than a decade, Four Points by Sheraton marks the brand's fourth property in Australia.

With 246 rooms, the hotel is located in a 32 storey city tower.

It has a special opening offer starting from \$149 per room per night, including in-room Wi-Fi.

Guests will enjoy free Internet access in the lobby and a fully equipped fitness centre.

Fuelled by the success of the brand's "best for business" proposition, it will service conference, meetings and business guests with 312 sqm of dedicated function space.

To book, call 1800 074 545.

MEANWHILE the Four Points by Sheraton has appointed Brad Mercer as general manager.



The hotel will open on 03 Mar.

Mercer comes from managing the Sheraton on the Park in Sydney, as well as exec. assistant manager for The Westin Resort and Spa, Sheraton Fiji Resort and Sheraton Denarau Villas.

Mercer said he was excited to be involved with the launch of the hotel and the brand's debut in Queensland.

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The BCEC fires up



PREPARATIONS are well advanced for the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC) hosting the G20 World Leaders Summit in November.

A busy lead up includes more than 600 events already on the calendar with 120 conferences and the hosting of some 40 site inspections, many from participating countries.

Horticulturists, medical scientists, finance and water experts and environmentalists will be among some 60,000 delegates who will attend.

These conferences will include the 29th International Horticulture Congress 2014 for 2,000 delegates with some 17 additional symposia, XXXII World Congress of Audiology 2014 for 2,000 delegates and the Asian Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver for 1500 delegates.

The Centre reported an impressive first six months of the 2013/14 financial year with 51 new convention wins bringing 41,270 delegates to Brisbane including some of the leading

medical and scientific experts.

The Centre's 2014 calendar of events also includes nine new exhibitions across a broad spectrum of interests, including the Australian Woodworking Industry Suppliers Association 2014, Supanova 2014 and ConveneQ – a new business events showcase for Queensland.

Confirmed conferences are set to deliver \$83.3m to Brisbane and 204,798 hotel room nights, the Centre said.

First steps taken

TJAPUKAI'S Creation Theatre Show has started the next stage of its redevelopment project.

The show, that ran for 18 years, using holographic technology blended with choreographed theatre, closed this month.

The script, written in Djabugay language, allowed visitors to experience many facets of the Tjapukai people's culture and way of life.



Through ancient and powerful creation stories, a new product, 'Art of My People' will replace the Creation Theatre until it reopens from mid-2014.

Additionally, Seger Thei-um (Sea Breeze Spirit) showcases a new style of indigenous dancing, with Torres Strait Island performers showcasing the cultural connection between the people, the land, wind and sea.

Getting into the spirit

CELEBRATING the launch of its collection of luxury small group tours to India, APT is offering three special deals.

For example, book the 14 day Spirit of India from Delhi to Kolkata, priced from \$9,695, and companions fly free to India, including air taxes of up to \$780.

The six night land journey from New Delhi includes stays at world-leading hotels.

For more, visit www.aptouring.com.au.

Kennedy for Hilton

THE Hilton Sydney has appointed Brigid Kennedy as their new director of sales.

Kennedy will be responsible for leading the sales team as well as developing and implementing sales strategies across all market segments for the hotel.



Kennedy brings more than 25 years of experience with a hospitality career that began with Hilton Melbourne on the Park.

Most recently she was the executive officer for Ultimate Winery Experiences of Australia.

Diversifying Thailand

DIVERSIFIED Communications has formed a joint venture with Kavin Intertrade Co. Ltd. in Bangkok.

Kavin Intertrade Co. Ltd. is an international exhibition organiser in Thailand; founder Kavin Kittiboonya will continue to lead the business, overseen by Diversified's international director Matthew Pearce.

The division joins others in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, India and the UK.

Kittiboonya said the company was pleased with Diversified's outlook for building existing businesses and establishing new events in Thailand.

Diversified president and ceo Theodore Wirth said the venture provided the company with an opportunity for expansion and a gateway to Southeast Asia.

Have more Hanmer

HERITAGE Hanmer Springs has a deal for conferences held from 01 March to 30 Sep.

The hotel has a monthly competition for organisers to win one night for six in a luxury villa, with a personal chef.

Or as an alternative prize, organisers can choose to upgrade to the next level on the Heritage Hotels conference rewards programme.

For more information visit www.heritagehotels.co.nz.



LEADING global travel site Skyscanner has released its new 'Best time to Book' interactive, infographic tool that finds the top five most popular countries travelled to by Australians, to predict how far in advance to book flights and the approximate savings to be made.

For instance, the best time to book flights to the UK – Australia's number one destination in 2013 - is only one week out from the travel date, which could potentially save travellers up to 11% off the average fare.

For travellers feeling nervous about booking flights three, two or even one week in advance, Skyscanner marketing manager for Australia, Dave Boyte, offers some advice.

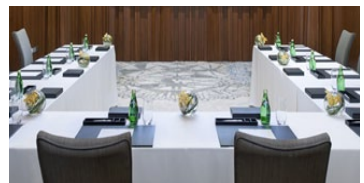
"If you want to take a gamble, you can try your luck and book closer to departure, in the hope that the airline will release cheap fares as a last-ditch effort to fill up a flight.

"What our data suggests though is that finding the best value flight is all about planning ahead and doing your research."

May was the cheapest month to travel, with December the most expensive, and the average best time to book a flight from Australia to get the lowest price was six weeks in advance.

More for meetings

HOLD your conference or event at the Mandarin Oriental, Macau and take advantage of their 'Meetings with More' packages from HK\$1900 per room, per night, with a full-day meeting package supplement for HK\$730.



Available for meetings on or before 31 Dec, the packages offer several value-added privileges; to add some fun to the event, try their team-building activities such as 'Sky Walk at Macau Tower'.

For more information email momac-sales@mohg.com.



Web game changer



SYDNEY Living Museums (SLM) debuted its new website on Wednesday.

The website, launched by director Mark Goggin (above right with web designer Tim Girling-Butcher) at a private room in the Hyde Park Barracks Museum, has been developed to provide intuitive engagement with the 12 museums, previously unpublished histories and with their venues.

The website was not just a skin-deep exercise, but part of the museum's digital reach to engage new audiences, Goggin said.

It provided a unique platform that enabled deeper collection exploration for researchers and for the public, he said.

"The time of people perceiving museums as static hoarders of

knowledge and collections is gone.

"The growing expectation today is that museums will be places of connection and experience rather than a gathering place for facts and artefacts from the past.

"For our \$8 million business events and functions sector, the website answers all their questions and makes available inspiring photo galleries and information to help with every aspect of planning an event, so they can see exactly how it will work."

Rodgers for Demeure

LIZ Rodgers has been appointed as The Royal Demeure Hotel Group's Australia and New Zealand rep.

The group of historic and prestigious luxury boutique properties are found in Italy's most beautiful cities, including Rome, with the Hotel D'Inghilterra and the Residenza di Ripetta, in Florence, where there is the Hotel Helvetia & Bristol, in Siena, which has the Grand Hotel Continental and in Vicenza with the Hotel Villa Michelangelo.

Drop by & win

THE Sunshine Coast is inviting AIME visitors to their stand, No. 2222, to experience their 'naturally refreshing' destination.

To inspire visitors, they are offering an opportunity to win an escape to the Noosa International Food & Wine Festival.

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Fukuoka ranks 2nd

FUKUOKA City has ranked second in Japan with a total of 252 meetings, for the fourth year in a row.

The ranking comes from recently released 2012 statistics from the Japan National Tourist Organisation.

The number of participants from international conventions held in the city increased by 80,000 from the previous year, to a total of 171,049.

Earlier this year, the city participated in its first MICE international trade show, IMEX in Frankfurt.

Home to some 50 universities and colleges, Fukuoka has boosted its appeal as an international MICE city, successfully hosting large scale conventions and events such as 'SIU 2012 – the congress of Societe Internationale d'Ulorogie' with 3200 delegates.



Shinji Nakagawa, executive director of Fukuoka CVB said the city aimed to reinforce its competitiveness in the international conventions market through "consolidated efforts in our service delivery and MICE products as well as in meetings infrastructure."

Now is the time

VISITOR registrations are open for the Travel Industry Exhibition.

The expo allows travel professionals to network and learn about all the latest technologies for destinations, hotels, tours and packages.

Being held at Sydney's Royal Hall of Industries from 18 to 19 Jul, Jayson Westbury, Australian Federation of Travel Agents' ceo, strongly encouraged those working in the travel industry to attend, as it would highlight the latest news and developments.

"The Travel Industry Exhibition is a fantastic initiative."

Register here to attend www.infosalons.com.au/TRAVEL14S/index.php.

Ben on BEN



Each month Business Manager for inPlace Recruitment, Ben Carnegie, writes his observations from the recruiter's perspective to help job hunters find the perfect job.

Ben has over 15 years working in 5 star hotels and the MICE industry and has worked on some of Australia's biggest events.

WE'VE just finished our quarterly mini conference and I'm now feeling even more positive



about the commitments I've made and the year ahead. As a job seeker or employer have you reviewed your approach to recruitment for 2014?

Having some set goals to reach really helps with motivation and a sense of achievement. As a job seeker, will you commit to 'X' number of applications per day or week? Will you attend a networking event once a month? As an employer, will you promote your business and the reasons why candidates would want to work with you?

Whatever goals you choose to set for yourself, don't just write it down and stick it in a drawer to gather dust. Print them out in bright colours and stick them on the wall. Tell someone to make yourself accountable too. A plan will assist you to find your perfect job or star employee!

March into this deal

DELEGATES can enjoy conferencing in Heritage Queenstown's Icon Conference Centre, with stunning views over Lake Wakatipu and the Remarkables, when a conference is booked in March.

Accommodation rates in their newly refurbished rooms start from NZ\$179, including breakfast and free in-room Wi-Fi.

Additionally, summer offers a huge range of team building activities in Queenstown including wine tours and mountain biking.

Then there's always the adrenaline filled activities the Adventure Capital is famous for.

Contact Sarah Blithe at sarahb@heritagehotels.co.nz