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“ The 2014 Travel Industry Exhibition
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Jayson Westbury / Chief Executive, AFTA

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**EXHIBITIONS
& TRADE FAIRS**



Beware, take care!

WHEREVER you tread.....

No matter how experienced

you are at travelling, beware!

Needing a visa for an upcoming India trip, I applied online.

I put India Online Visa into my search engine and a website, India Visa Services (www.india-visas.com), came up.

I filled in the three page form, paid the requested fee and the following day went to the India Consulate in Pitt Street to present the form and my photo.

Not only was I told I was at the wrong office (the Visa Office is in Kent Street), but that the form was on a bogus site, to which I had paid a visa fee of \$100!

For the unwary, the form and the questions are virtually the same except it requests that you pay the fee online and submit the form to the Visa office.

Please note, the real India Visa site is www.vfs-in-au.net.

But wait, there's more.

At the Visa Office in Kent Street, I told them my story and asked if they had a form I could fill in. No, I was told, it had to be done online and without a laptop or printer it meant coming back another day.

Fortunately I knew of industry colleagues in the same building who graciously gave me the use of a computer and printer.

Form duly completed, I returned to the Visa Office, took a ticket and waited my turn. There were 14 people ahead of me in the queue.

Ten minutes later a large clanging noise was heard – it was the fire alarm and everyone was evacuated from the building. As it was past lunchtime I went to a local café and an hour or so later returned to the now open Visa Office, to be fourth in line.

Finally after four hours of to-ing and fro-ing, I submitted the visa request.

I swear, I thought I was in a Month Python skit.

Jill



Marriott re-imagines



WHEN Marriott Hotels started navel gazing about the future of meetings in its more than 4,000 hotels around the world and more than 160 in the Asia Pacific region, it recognised that what lay ahead was very much in the hands of the upcoming X and Y generations.

Marriott global sales South Asia regional director Avril Northridge (pictured left), speaking at Water at Pier One Sydney last week said the company asked the question, 'Are we keeping up?'

"So in 2012 we went out in North America to conduct research from the point of view of corporate meeting planners, the decision makers, the people who do all the heavy work on a day to day basis and the actual end users."

What Marriott arrived at was a new online platform for event planners, 'Meetings Imagined'.

Marriott Hotels also implemented the "re-imagining" of traditional meeting spaces to service a growing demand for more inspiring and creative work environments, including re-thinking everything from

boardrooms, breakouts and pre-function spaces, taking a holistic approach to meetings and integrating service, mobile technology and contemporary design.

It also introduced the app 'Red Coat Direct' for meeting planners (**BEN** 19 Feb) which is now available for use in Australia at hotels such as Sydney Harbour Marriott Hotel.

ACB targets health

THE Adelaide Convention Bureau (ACB) has said it is upping its push to attract conferences from the health sector to capitalise on the government's investment in health industry events.

ACB ceo Damien Kitto said it was working with the state government's HealthInSA to identify national and international conference opportunities.

Adelaide is set to host 37 events through to 2017.

This was projected to generate about \$97.4m for the state economy, he said.

"A further 15 conferences with a combined 12,000 delegates have already been identified with the bidding processes currently in the pipeline."

Health Industries Minister Jack Snelling said the government was pleased to support the ACB to assist in attracting events to Adelaide.

Three pages today

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

- The Travel Industry Exhibition

Ta ta Taj BLUE

WITH just one Taj Hotel in Australia, the sale of BLUE Sydney has been announced by Samsara Properties Limited, an offshore wholly owned subsidiary of The Indian Hotels Company Limited.

The buyer is the Hong Kong based Hind Hotels & Properties Group, which operates hotels and serviced apartments under the Ovolo brand.

The transaction, valued at \$32m, is subject to conditions and is scheduled to be completed by 31 Oct.

The Taj Group said the sale did not reflect any diminution of the group's interest in the Australian market but had been undertaken as part of its strategy to focus on markets which were core to operations and to create liquidity to fund the company's ongoing expansion in such markets.

Asia Pacific and particularly China have been identified as targets for expansion.

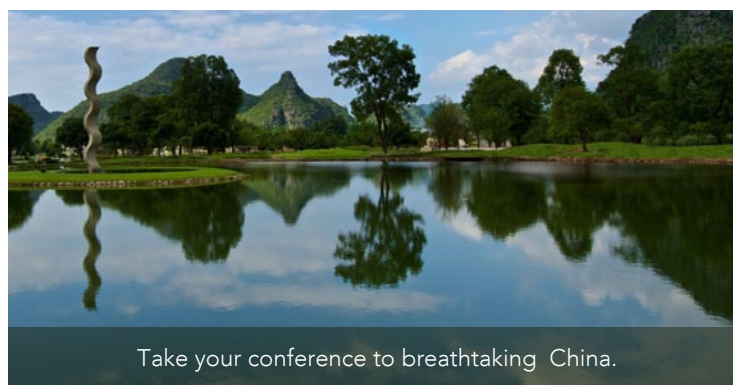
Taj Hotels said it was proud of its record managing BLUE Sydney, which it acquired in 2006 and had operated with "excellent" occupancy rates.

Indigenous Champs

TOURISM Australia (TA) has acknowledged the Indigenous Champions in its joint initiative with Indigenous Business Australia that looked to build the reputation of Indigenous tourism operators internationally through the 'Champion product'.

About 14% of international visitors took part in an Aboriginal cultural experience to , worth \$6.5b annually, Tourism Australia said.

The number of Champions had more than doubled at 51 this year, md John O'Sullivan said.



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business events news

14th July 2014



.....and you thought the flat bed, sleep seat wasn't as comfortable as it's cracked up to be, especially as you sleep with your seatbelt done up.

Think again - it's pure luxury in comparison to the idea of a vertical passenger seat.

With flight ticket costs getting beyond the pale, Fairuz Romli, an aerospace engineering professor at the University of Putra Malaysia, came up with the idea of the vertical seat.

In a report published in the *IACSIT International Journal of Engineering and Technology*, Romli said the vertical passenger seat, or 'standing cabin', may be the next big cost-cutting move in aviation and could be here within five years.

He says his motivation is to lower the cost of air travel to a level competitive with buses and trains.

"I stumbled across the idea when I was looking into ways to reduce the flight ticket price," he told *CNN*.

A frequent flyer, Romli used the popular Boeing 737-300 as an example and his study calculates that a standing cabin would lead to a 21% increase in passenger capacity while dropping ticket prices by as much as 44%.

Still, it's nothing new.

The idea has already been researched most notably by Airbus, Spring Airlines and Ryanair, while a perching saddle developed by Aviointeriors S.p.A., was unveiled in 2010.

Las Vegas targets biz ev



THE Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority has set its eyes on the meetings and events market, unveiling two advertising campaigns aimed at showing Las Vegas' stuff as a premier venue for hosting "memorable and cost effective" business events.

One campaign focuses on the business to business market of meetings and events professionals, called 'Neon Signs'.

The campaign aims to show these professionals that Las Vegas can add sparkle and life to events and meetings, with a two-fold approach.

The first part of the campaign uses the tagline "Las Vegas Makes Every Meeting Exciting" and features digital and print ads with boring sounding meetings jazzed up, Las Vegas style.

The second part of the campaign, launching in 2015, uses the tagline "Las Vegas Makes Events More Eventful" and again uses digital and print ads featuring common meeting items that have been Las Vegas-fied.



A Blu in China

AN AGREEMENT has been announced between Carlson Rezidor and resort developer CUTC Chongqing Easpring Hot Spring Development for the development of Radisson Blu Resort Chongqing BeiBei in Chongqing, China, Carlson Rezidor's fourth hotel in the Southwestern metropolis of Chongqing.

The 280 room new build hotel is scheduled for completion in 2015.

Part of a 222,000 sqm mixed development called Yishang Mountain Hot Spring Town, it includes a hot spring and spa, high-end residences, commercial space and leisure facilities.

Radisson Blu Resort Chongqing BeiBei will have three restaurants and a variety of meeting spaces.

Thai visitor #s up

DESPITE the recent politically-activated unrest affecting Thailand and in particular Bangkok, the Tourism Authority of Thailand reports that visitor arrival statistics for the period January to May show there has been little impact on Australian visitor numbers.

Visitor arrivals from January to May are reported to have increased 0.29% year on year to 353,044 for the period.

Tourism Authority of Thailand director Australia Numphon Boonyawat said the situation had now calmed across the country.

The other campaign targets high level executives who make the final decision on corporate meeting venue selection and is called 'Entertain You'.

The print and digital ads emphasise return on investment.

The Centre said the meetings and convention industry was "critical" to Las Vegas' economy and a key growth market, with more than 22,000 meetings, events, conventions and trade shows a year.

USA in Aus events

DESTINATION marketing organisations NYC & Company, New York State, Destination DC and VISIT FLORIDA have kicked off the East Coast USA Mission, a series of events including b2b meetings and agent expos designed to better package and showcase the East Coast USA destinations to the Australasian market.

The mission starts in Sydney today, hits Melbourne on 16 Jul and finishes in Auckland on 17 Jul.

Ngamoowalem EOIs

REGISTRATIONS of interest are open for tourism operators to develop new visitor experiences on Aboriginal land in Ngamoowalem Conservation Park, as part of the Naturebank program.

Tourism WA said many different ventures could be developed - **CLICK HERE** for more.

A virtual BridgeClimb

IF YOU have been considering a BridgeClimb as part of a conference activity but have people with issues about heights, there's a solution at hand.

BridgeClimb has launched a responsive version of bridgeclimb.com, taking users on a voyage from the desk to the top of the Sydney Harbour Bridge through a series of images, inspiring video content and social interactions.

CLICK HERE for more.

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