



New beginnings

THERE'S more to the site's fame than its fatal attraction to Michael



Hutchence and now, in line with the opening of the InterContinental Sydney Double Bay in December (formerly the site of the Ritz Carlton), top Japanese restaurant Sake has been confirmed to open a 130 seat ground floor restaurant at the hotel's base.

The InterContinental is currently undergoing a \$20m revamp and Sake's foray is considered well timed, with the suburb in the midst of a revival after a few years in the social pages wilderness.

"It is only going to get better for Double Bay, with plans for a rooftop cinema at the council car park," says Sake owner John Szangolies.

Sake Double Bay will also offer takeaways, an initiative recently launched at The Rocks to service neighbouring upmarket hotels.

MEANWHILE Joyce Weir, who departed her post with Qantas last week "after 20 great years", says she isn't going far but will be capitalising on her experience to develop and build her own business, doing contract and project work in the airline, business events, cruise and tourism area at JWC – Joyce Weir Consulting.

Talking to **BEN**, Joyce said she had few irons in the fire and will start her new business immediately.

"Qantas has been very good to me and I have loved the past 10 years in groups and Fly Cruise, developing these markets.

"I have had opportunities to see the most amazing destinations, work with great colleagues, had the most wonderful clients and made life-long friends."

You can contact Joyce by email at joyce.weir@icloud.com or you can call her mobile on 0419294 781.

Jill

Mantra's biz ev engine



AFTER two years in the making, the Mantra Group is to roll out what it says is the world's first real-time booking engine for the business events industry.

Officially launched at the HotelsWorld conference in Sydney last week in partnership with events software company iVvy, it will be rolled out this month across 94 Peppers and Mantra conferencing properties in Australia and New Zealand.

It will initially provide online Request For Proposal capabilities, allowing conference organisers to book space online, and then move to live real-time bookings, with Mantra hoping to implement this by October.

This would streamline the process, removing double handling and improving speed and efficiency for hotels, a Mantra spokesperson said.

The platform would have the ability to manage every aspect of conferencing requirements in real time including accommodation block bookings, submission of banqueting event orders, making menu choices, managing function diaries and registrations, marketing support and supplier procurement, Mantra said.

Describing the partnership as a game changer for the business events industry, Mantra Group executive director of sales, marketing and distribution Kent Davidson (**pictured** with iVvy ceo Lauren Hall) said the conference market required a more dynamic solution to the planning and booking of both large and small scale conferences and events

and iVvy provided a "seamless automated solution", saving time and money.

"It also provides us with a multi-faceted distribution strategy driving inbound business at the lowest cost of channel."

iVvy ceo Lauren Hall said one of the biggest problems faced by hotels was a lack of real-time access to conferencing and meeting space tools that allowed for faster decision making and increased efficiencies.

Gillian Taylor 4 OCEC



GILLIAN Taylor has been appointed the director of business development at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC).

Taylor (**pictured** second from right) joins the Centre after having worked for the Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau and Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority for the past eight years.

Previously, she served as a board member of the Society of International Travel Executives and Australia's Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau (now Business Events Sydney).

Also joining the OCEC is John Burke as director of operations and technical assets manager.

He was most recently at the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha and prior to that, spent more than 15 years with the NEC Group in the United Kingdom.

Other appointments include Salim Al Flaiti as director of human resources, Ahmed Al Habsi as director of finance & administration and Akram Al Maawali as protocol and liaison manager.

Three pages today

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

- Tangalooma Island Resort

CWT Meetings leader

CARLSON Wagonlit Travel (CWT) Meetings and Events Australia and New Zealand has a new director in Wayne Castle.

Castle would report to CWT Meetings and Events Asia Pacific senior director Steven Smith, CWT said.

With more than 25 years' experience managing and directing events with companies such as Total Concept Exhibition and Events and Haymarket IPMG Pty Ltd, Castle was most recently national commercial manager with the Australian Water Association.

He said these were interesting times for the meetings and events industry, which was currently very buoyant.

NZ to host Ministers

NEW Zealand will host a meeting of Australian Tourism Ministers in early 2015 to explore how the countries can drive productivity in the tourism sector.

NZ Associate Minister of Tourism Todd McClay said while the details and agenda were still to be determined, tourism was a major contributor to the economies of both countries, which shared many visitors due to their location.

"The international business events sector offers considerable opportunity to increase the value of visitors to both Australia and New Zealand, by attracting high value delegates, and encouraging those delegates to stay longer or return for a holiday.

"As part of Budget 2013 the New Zealand Government committed an additional \$34 million to significantly expand Tourism New Zealand's focus on international business events."



business events news

23rd July 2014



crumbs!

OH my gosh, oh my gosh, oh my gosh.

If you're looking for a conference venue with a difference, look no further; the first space hotel is reportedly set to open in 2020.

The BBC gives a run down of what delegates would expect, including a 300km journey and a hotel moving at 27,500 km^{h-1}, circling the planet every 90 minutes, meaning attendees of the Spaceship Ventilation Caretakers Convention would see 16 sunrises and sunsets.

However, the idea has been around for a while, with Russian company Orbital Technologies floating (oh ho) the idea of a commercial space station back in 2010, with support from the Russian Federal Space Agency and an opening date of 2015/16.

A thread on [Reddit](#), however, may dampen your PCO interest, pointing out that through the years, various dates have been announced for a space hotel, each of which have since passed us by, sadly bereft of an interstellar Holiday Inn.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read the article.

Peppers Canberra

PEPPERS Gallery Hotel Canberra has opened, the hotel group's first CBD-based hotel.

Formerly the Diamant Hotel, the 80 room building had a range of unique venue options on offer, including the Smith Murdoch room, with boardroom capacity of 14 people, Mantra said.

Take a hike!



THE Mossman Gorge Indigenous half-day tour is one that **BEN** experienced recently and heartily endorses.

Starting at the new Indigenous eco tourism development, the Mossman Gorge Centre (take time to check out the Indigenous Art Gallery), the tour includes a host of activities such as the Dreamtime Gorge Walk, an experienced indigenous guide and stories of the Kuku Yalanji culture and traditions.

For more information, call 07 4099 7000.

Full steam ahead

AFTER a two-year construction period and \$1.2b, the new light rail system between the Gold Coast University Hospital station in Southport and Broadbeach South station has opened.

Queensland Transport and Main Roads Minister Scott Emerson said with the G20 and 2018 Commonwealth Games just around the corner, the Gold Coast was now in a good position to show off one of Queensland's best holiday destinations.

The light rail service provides a quick and easy transport solution for conference delegates and event attendees accommodated along the rail link and the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre.



Face to Face with...

Andrew Hiebl

Executive Director

Association Australian Convention Bureaux



Business Events News recently caught up with Andrew Hiebl, Executive Director of AACB, which brings together city and regional bureaux dedicated to marketing their region as premier business events destinations. Its main focus is to raise the industry profile, influence decision makers and provide educational and professional development opportunities to member staff.

What does your role entail?

It involves advocating on behalf of the business events industry – a sector that delivers economic prosperity for Australia. I also manage the association which comprises 15 convention bureau members, ensure that legal and governance requirements are adhered to and deliver our annual conference for bureau staff across the country.

What's the first thing you do when you get in the office?

While I don't consider myself to be addicted to coffee, I do enjoy grabbing a cappuccino at the start of each day from the Melbourne Exhibition Centre café below my office.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

As an association, we would have similar challenges to most others. While our membership is very small, it is extremely broad, from larger capital city bureaux with teams of 40 or more to smaller regional tourism organisations that may only consist of one business events specialist.

What is the future of the Australian business events/convention industry looking like?

I am confident that face-to-face meetings will still play a central role, especially with the increasing ease of global travel. However, technology will enable a wider distribution of content across the globe, allowing for more flexible participation. That is, technology should be embraced as a value add and not seen as a threat.

What's the most important thing when it comes to securing a business event?

Honesty. Securing a business event can take years, during which time a sense of trust must be established, often resulting in long term professional friendships.

Dealing with new technology - bonus or headache?

I love new technology – when it

works. We have just upgraded to a new connect and play system so we can work in a more mobile environment and access information through the cloud while on the go. However, teething problems still exist as our multiple mobile technologies attempt seamless compatibility.

What would you be doing if you weren't executive director of the AACB?

I have always worked in tourism and hospitality since childhood with parents that were glassblowers from Austria, so it is hard to think of options outside this industry. I am passionate about regional tourism and business events, so perhaps an economic development role in regional Australia. Otherwise working in a bar on the beach or in the snow sounds nice too.

Who has inspired you?

I am lucky so say that everyone that I have worked for along my career path in tourism has inspired me. Currently, the bureau ceos that sit on the AACB Board all offer a sense of inspiration through their broad range of professional experiences, unique perspectives and advice.

How do you relax?

(What is that?) In all honesty, I love getting away from it all and spending time with my wife and two young kids, either at home or travelling abroad. The key is being able to switch off from work. Although I haven't mastered that 100% just yet.

What makes a great business event?

Establishing a connection with the host destination. Destination selection is becoming more strategic as the benefits of business events are being more closely linked to economic development opportunities. Regardless of the event type such as incentive, convention or exhibition, playing to a destination's comparative advantage is key as well as delivering benefits to the local community.

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Enviably Conferences On Moreton Bay's Doorstep



One firey new restaurant plus two refreshing renovations equals three enviable eats. The last 6 months has seen Tangalooma reinvigorate it's culinary offerings from the humble fish and chips to Asian-infused a-la-carte dining. Guests can now enjoy their delicious food in awe of the breathtaking Moreton Bay vistas, with all outlets optimising their location and seating layouts to offer absolute beachfront dining.

The edible enhancements extend further than family feasts and romantic

reservations, with the introduction of the Waterfront Pavilion. Situated right on the beach, this private slice of absolute ocean frontage caters specifically to conferences, events and wedding receptions.

Sporting fans and movie buffs alike will appreciate the overhaul of the Sportsmans Bar and Club Lounge, soon boating premium comfort in an energising atmosphere to watch the latest national and international sporting events.

Tangalooma's had more than a face lift, it's revitalised it's food, dining and entertainment experiences to truly cater to all taste buds and budgets all while optimising on those spectacular, and unique, East Coast sunsets.

Booked your 2014 Staff Christmas Party yet? Dates and great rates still available in November. To find out more, contact corporate@tangalooma.com

