



Says who?

THEY said it couldn't happen, wouldn't happen, but it's looking like they may be wrong!



Such is the news last week that Chinese developers Aquis have signed a \$269m takeover bid for the Reef Casino Trust, which owns the Reef Hotel Casino in Cairns.

Aquis have also been given the go-ahead to extend the Reef Casino licence to include their planned \$4.2b mega-resort and casino in far north Queensland.

The Aquis Great Barrier Reef Resort on 340 ha of land at Yorkeys Knob near Cairns has been approved by the Foreign Investment Review Board.

This proposed development includes nine luxury hotels, an 18 hole golf course and a cultural heritage centre.

Cairns Lifestyle say it is being seen by some as a "shining beacon in times of economic uncertainty", although other Cairns residents are concerned about the impact that the resort will have on the economy, environment and lifestyle. *Jill*

Verve expansion

VERVE Creative Events has launched a new division called Zeal Media, which will produce "content-rich high quality technical hybrid video/print publications" based on information delivered at specialist conferences.

The brainchild of Verve md Rob Frank, Zeal's first publication will be titled 'Question?' and will coincide with the INFOCUS conference in Melbourne on 18-19 Aug 2014.

Details of how to subscribe will be released in the lead-up to the event - for more info see vervecreativeevents.com.au.

Today's BEN issue

BEN has three pages of editorial plus a full page from:

- Club Med
[CLICK HERE](#)

The EE-AA of women



"THE power of Exhibition is what we do," said Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA) ceo Joyce DiMascio at the EEAA inaugural International Women's Day Breakfast.

"But the power of women is something else again."

A veritable powerhouse of successful women were within the walls of Doltone House Hyde Park where the event was held, with its five metre high ceilings and striking décor.

They were invited to celebrate the contribution made to the industry and the community.

The line-up of inspirational speakers included Reed Exhibitions South East Asia/Australia president Debbie Evans, Jo-Anne Kelleway, ceo of Info Salons Australia and Anna Cesarano, ceo of Doltone House.

Each woman encouraged the audience to challenge themselves, to be comfortable in their own skin and not to lose perspective.

Hosting the event was writer and marketing guru Jane Caro (pictured above right with Fitted for Work board member Louise Di Francesco).

Caro caused much laughter when she said the acronym EEAA reminded her of bra sizes.

"From EE-AA - women at both ends of the spectrum!"

The UN theme for International Women's Day was 'Inspiring Change' and in concert with this, the EEAA put their support behind the not-for-profit organisation, Fitted for Work.

This free service enables disadvantaged women to get

work and keep it, and provides free interview clothing and coaching.

The common denominator apparent at the close of the event was that these high achievers all had fathers or men who mentored them.

For instance, Evans said her uncle's advice to her as she attempted to forge ahead had been "Life begins when you get to the end of your comfort zone."



Pictured above from left is AMAA chief executive officer Paul Dovas, SEC@GI general manager Malu Barrios and Reed Travel Exhibitions director for AIME and CIBTM Jacqui Timmins.

SmartGate Singapore

SINGAPOREAN visitors to Australia will become the first in Asia to be granted access to SmartGate arrangements at airports.

Minister for Trade and Investment Andrew Robb said Australia was looking to make it easier for Singaporean business people to engage with the country and improve its attractiveness to investors.

"It helps make us more competitive against other jurisdictions."

Four Seasons tech

FOUR Seasons Hotel Sydney has teamed up with AVPartners to install the newest audiovisual technology in its studio spaces, which retracts into the ceiling.

AVPartners said the quick drop in and out setup meant the hotel could have faster turnarounds and so, the rooms could be rented more often.

Each room has its own screen, projector and speakers, and the Residential Suite has a drop down screen, projector, speakers and flat-panel television which rises out of the credenza.

Four Seasons Hotel Sydney sales manager Simon Barnett said quality AV equipment was a crucial element of making sure meetings and events at the hotel were consistently innovative and professional.

Love is in the details.



Russell

engineers and executes cutting edge audio visual to meet and exceed our client's needs. Its more than just light and sound, with meticulous planning and detail our Audio Visual department can orchestrate seamless events large or small to some of the most technically complex in Australia.

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business events news

7th March 2014

First for South Coast



AS the Mantra Group expands its regional network, a new management agreement will see the Best Western Wollongong rebranded to Mantra Wollongong in mid-March after acquisition by new owners Moss Capital.

Mantra Group ceo Bob East said, "Mantra Wollongong will provide both an excellent base for leisure travellers given its proximity to beaches and restaurants, and also to guests travelling on business or for conferences in the Illawarra."

The property, which opened in 2008, offers fully self-contained one and two bedroom apartments, a rooftop deck and conference and meeting rooms for up to 80 people.

ACTE in Hong Kong

THE ACTE 13th annual Asia Corporate Travel Conference will be held in Hong Kong for the first time, from 06 to 07 Aug, hosted by the Crowne Plaza Hong Kong Kowloon East.

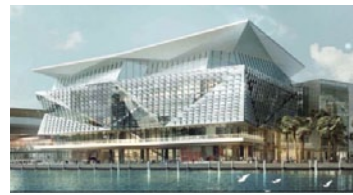
SICEEP changes

APPROVED modifications to the development of the Sydney International Convention, Exhibition and Entertainment Precinct (SICEEP) will see internal and external alterations including change to the facade treatment and architectural design.

Released towards the end of last month, the approval of the modifications will see changes to the convention, exhibition and entertainment centres, including redesign of the rear extension of the Convention Centre, alteration of the raised loading dock screen to the western elevation of the Exhibition Centre and revision of the north and east elevations of the Entertainment Centre.



The modified Convention Centre theatre building (pictured above) will undergo redesign.



The Convention Centre modifications (pictured above) include a different location for the photovoltaic panels on its roof as well as minor reductions in its height.



The changes to the Exhibition Centre (pictured above) will have the Quarry Street bridge and the pedestrian bridge connecting it and the Entertainment Centres realigned, as well as alterations made to its terrace design and platforms.



The modified Entertainment Centre (pictured above) would see minor reductions in height and more photovoltaic panels.



A SERVICE has been launched that allows travellers who like to get their thrills between the sheets to get them beneath the waves at the same time.

At least that's British travel company Oliver's Travels' are selling their Mile Low Club.

For the (we're assuming not niche) market of people who like to get intimate underwater, the service offers a night in a private submarine, nicknamed Lovers Deep, CNN reported.

The submarine, launched to mark the company's 10th anniversary on Valentine's Day, is moored in the Caribbean, and has had five real inquiries, and goodness knows how many joke ones, the publication reported.

You get to choose how to deck out the submarine, which is currently hired by a variety of different businesses for quirky brand launches, exactly as you like for your night of passion, from bedroom to bathroom.

If you find yourself hooked, you'll need to be netting some substantial cash or landing some big clients because the Sub of Love costs £175,000 a night or about AUD\$324,400.

Diversified buys Total

DIVERSIFIED Communications, one of Australia's largest exhibition companies, has announced its acquisition of Total Facilities Expo.

Established by National Media, Total Facilities Expo is Australia's largest dedicated industry gathering of facility planners, specifiers, designers and managers.

Diversified managing director Matt Pearce said it was estimated that the facility management industry employed over 200,000 workers and contributed over \$20m to the Australian economy, making it a very valuable opportunity and addition to the company's trade and professional offering.

Diversified Communications will open the 2015 Total Facilities Expo at the Sydney Exhibition Centre at Glebe Island from 25 to 26 Mar next year.

Total Facilities Expo will sit within Diversified's existing trade portfolio.

Client Relationship Manager/ Team Leader

Travel Daily is Australia's leading travel trade publisher, with a portfolio of publications also including **Business Events News**, **Cruise Weekly**, **TD Cruise Update** and **Pharmacy Daily**.

A unique opportunity has arisen for a Client Relationship Manager/ Team Leader to join our fun friendly team based in Epping, NSW. This is a diverse role with hands-on responsibilities as well as client interaction and staff management .

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Gold Coast thrills PCOs



THERE was plenty of action last weekend when InterContinental Sanctuary Cove Resort invited a group of event planners from Melbourne and Sydney for a 'real' taste of the resort.

The resort also introduced them to the 'Insiders Collection,' an idea that allows delegates to experience a side of a destination that visitors rarely see.

For two fun packed days the group was encouraged to make use of the hotel's facilities, which was heeded with enthusiastic swims in the resort's one-acre beach lagoon pool, lunch in the lush resort garden and in their fine dining restaurant, The Fireplace.

The group also enjoyed drinks in the Veranda Bar and dinner in the glamorous Manor Suite.

There was a helicopter lift from the resort's helipad to McLaren's Landing on South Stradbroke Island for breakfast and some sporty activities.

Following this, the group had an extreme boat ride back to the hotel, fairway driving tuition at

the Sanctuary Cove Golf Club, drinks and canapés by the pool serenaded by 'Mr Cool,' singer Rhydian Lewis, before setting off for a private night at Dreamworld for dinner.

The evening included a thrilling encounter with a white tiger, a walk-through of the new Dreamworld Corroboree, furious laser combat at Zombie Evulution and a white-knuckle ride on the Tower of Terror II.

More thrills were in store the following morning, when the attendees were strapped into V8 racecars and roared around the challenging race circuit at the Performance Driving Centre in an exhilarating driving experience.



Melbourne offer

THE Sheraton Melbourne Hotel has a special offer for stays between 01 Apr and 30 Sep to celebrate its opening on 31 Mar.

Guests will have overnight accommodation, double Starpoints, daily buffet breakfast for two and complimentary in-room WiFi from \$260 per night.

Sanderson's Dockside

DOCKSIDE Group has appointed Chris Sanderson as venues operations manager.

Sanderson would be responsible for the Darling Harbour venues, including Star Room, and would oversee the catering operations of the Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island and the Dockside Pavilion Darling Harbour when it was developed, Dockside said.

Sanderson has more than 35 years of event experience, including hospitality and operations.

Shake up MEA & win

YOUNG MEA meetings professionals with ideas on how to shake up the industry can score a fully-paid trip to the MEA National Conference in Kuala Lumpur.

Announced by Australia's number two AV company, Scene Change, there are four FlyMEA scholarships, one from each state Scene Change operates in: NSW, Victoria, Adelaide and Tasmania. Worth \$2000 each, the scholarship covers flights, accommodation, registration and transfers to the conference that runs from 14 to 17 May.

"Scene Change wants to encourage new voices, strong opinions and youthful energy in the meetings industry," said Scene Change co-founder Ian Whitworth.

"We get annoyed by lazy Gen-Y stereotyping, so we've designed the FlyMEA Scholarship to counter that."

Applicants have to write 100 words or less on the subject 'If I Ruled The Meetings Industry', and post it on the Scene Change Facebook page.

It's not a writing contest, so don't worry if you are not a natural writer.

Entries close 18 Apr and winners will be announced on 22 Apr.

For more, visit www.scenechange.com.au/flymea.

Shoal Bay to Wyndham

SHOAL Bay Resort & Spa has joined the Wyndham Hotel Group to its portfolio of South Pacific properties.

The recently refurbished property would be re-branded as the Ramada Resort Shoal Bay, managed through the hotel group's South Pacific operations, based in the Gold Coast, the company said.

Wyndham Hotel Group South Pacific managing director Barry Robinson said the opening of the Ramada was a "significant" milestone in the company's expansion across the South Pacific.

The hotel was the second joint venture between the group and owner Jay McPhee, the hotel group said.

The resort has a convention centre and \$5.5m day spa.

HNL reduces services

INSUFFICIENT demand from Taipei to sustain a profitable route for Hawaiian Air has been cited by the Hawaiian Tourism Authority (HTA) for the reduction in services to the destination.

The HTA said they will continue to work with their marketing partners to stimulate and cultivate travel demand from this market.

The launch of Hawaiian's new Beijing route in April they say will provide additional direct service from China to the Hawaiian Islands.

Best practice award

INCON, a partnership of the world's leading conference organisers and event management companies, has launched a "Digital Infrastructure Award" that recognises global venues who demonstrate best practice.

The Award will be judged by technology experts Bob Hiele, founder of ZigBee Alliance and chair of IEEE Wireless Interim Meetings, Rick Alfvén, vice president of Network Services at Verilan Inc., and Daniel Branik, executive manager of Technology for one of Australia's largest PCOs, Arinex Pty Limited.

The first winner(s) will be announced at IMEX Frankfurt in May 2014.

For more information, visit www.incon-pco.com/award.

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