



Much ado

WHO doesn't like a bit of behind-the-hand news?



Something you can leak but the details are still pretty hush hush?

BEN (Breaking Exclusive News) has got wind of some goings-on at the Novotel/Ibis hotels at Sydney Olympic Park.

It appears there is talk of a special offer being made to conference organisers that gives them the chance to win a car, in a 'drive your next conference' competition, starting in June.

Ssssh. Toyota's the word!

Meanwhile, with all the talk of the retirement age rising to 70 by 2035 comes the story from Malaysia's Pangkor Laut Resort that their oldest employee and head chef is celebrating his 80th birthday this year, clocking up 29 years of solid service at the private island resort.

Chef Lim Fang Tat, affectionately known by all as 'Uncle Lim', heads the team at the breezy, al fresco Uncle Lim's Kitchen.

Over the years, guests of the resort have flocked to the restaurant to savour authentic Hock Chew and Nyonya home cooking in a unique dining venue, built on a rocky outcrop overlooking the sea.

To honour their mentor, his heritage and also his loyal fan base, the team has created Uncle Lim's Special Birthday Menu that includes melt in your mouth chunks of stir-fried local lobster with Chinese black bean sauce and Aromatic Steamed Grouper sourced from Pangkor's fisheries.

So you see, there is life after 70 – and a working one at that!

Where will it end? *Jill*

Five pages today

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

- Club Med
- BridgeClimb Sydney

Industry slams CoA report

THE business events industry has slammed the Commission of Audit report recommendations released last week (**BEN** 02 Apr).

The report recommended that Tourism Australia's (TA) funding be halved, saying most of the benefits of tourism accrued to tourism operators.

"There is no clear reason why significant funding should be provided to tourism above other Australian export industries."

Exhibition and Event Association of Australia ceo Joyce DiMascio said the recommendations showed how little the Commission understood the challenges of marketing Australia as a leisure and business events destination when faced with the barriers of distance, time and cost.

"How will a single convention centre or hotel or attraction tackle building business opportunity in international markets if there is no Tourism Australia marketing to create the brand presence and destination visibility?"

She said the proposal to cut funding by 50% was an "absurd" one, hopefully unlikely to be supported by the Government.

Business Events Australia received a very small share of the TA funds, so any reduction of its budget would be highly detrimental to marketing the country as a business events destination, she said.

Business Events Council of Australia chairman Matt Hingerty said the recommendations, including those of reducing Austrade's activities and ceasing funding for Export Market Development Grants, would result in "tragedy" for the Australian economy.

"The impact on the business events sector would reverberate through our whole export economy, as for many of our trading partners their first experience of Australia is via a

business event."

Reviews had recommended TA'S abolition as an independent entity and part or all of its funding throughout its history, he said, usually by people with an imperfect understanding of how marketing in the tourism industry specifically, and the services sector in general, worked.

"Happily, the Abbott Government has stated that this budget will be fundamentally about economic growth, and has identified tourism as one of our future growth pillars.

"To that end we would be surprised if they did not reject these economically destructive recommendations."

Tourism Accommodation Association managing director Rodger Powell said the recommendations were short sighted, since the accommodation sector was driven by marketing, the chief function of TA.

The cuts would "severely impact" business events, he said.

The majority of accommodation businesses were too small to be able to fund significant marketing efforts in international markets on their own, he said.

"It is not simply about advertising, it is about working in our key source markets to ensure that Australia wins its fair share of business, and Tourism Australia has been doing that very effectively in recent years."

Tiger departs Alice

THE news on Friday that Tiger Air has ceased operating between Alice Springs and Sydney, Melbourne and Alice Springs, and between Melbourne and the Sunshine Coast after a short time servicing the destination, has caused disappointment in the Red Centre.

Alice Springs Convention Centre sales & marketing manager Kylie Mansfield said their regret at the decision was tempered by enthusiasm for Qantas' consistency and strong forward bookings.

"While Tiger Air's decision is both disappointing and unexpected, given anecdotal evidence of exceptional load statistics for both the Melbourne and Sydney to Alice Springs routes, we are not anticipating a significant impact on our vigorous conference market which traditionally embraces the full service carrier consistency of Qantas."

The Convention Centre's strong forward bookings and the mid year completion of the \$35m Lasseters Hotel redevelopment were not necessarily tied directly to Tigerair, Mansfield said.

The news was announced via a tweet from @TigerairAU, which said Alice Springs and Sunshine Coast flights were cancelled "post 22/07" due to network cancellations.

Passengers would be contacted in the next two weeks, the tweet read.



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business events news

5th May 2014

Inspire EX update

NEWS is that Yvonne Adele, known as Ms Megabyte, will be presenting at Inspire EX, held from 18 to 19 Aug.

Adele, who created the 'Ms Megabyte' brand/persona in the mid 90s, has a mission to make technology accessible to the non-geek and will demonstrate how to build an army of advocates as you plan your event.

A social media commentator and speaker, with clients that include NAB and Microsoft, she will MC all Inspire sessions.

Inspire EX will also have a new feature called 'The Concierge - How can we help you?'

This dedicated service allows visitors to source details about new suppliers and venues and gain inspiration for their own events.

Speaking @ IMEX

AN extensive final professional education programme for the 2014 IMEX Messe Frankfurt exhibition for incentive travel, meetings and events has been announced.

SOME 150 free educational sessions of appeal to industry buyers and suppliers will be delivered across eight industry-specific topics, including business skills.

Sessions will be led by industry experts and speakers, including Debra Zabloudil of The Learning Studio who will share her leadership skills in a talk titled 'Everything I Need to Know About Leadership I Learned From Rock 'n' Roll', as well as Maritz Travel's offering, 'Avoiding the Me Too and Getting to the A-Ha's of Social Media'.

12 good people and true



TWELVE Club Melbourne Ambassadors were presented with awards last week for events which are expected to generate \$55m in economic impact for the state of Victoria.

The ambassadors secured 15 international conferences in 2013 for Melbourne and the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC).

The Honourable Louise Asher, Victorian Minister for Tourism and Major Events presented the awards and announced Club Melbourne's first special contribution award recipient, Professor Philip Batterham, for his outstanding role in mentoring the student organisers of WorldMun 2013.

"Club Melbourne has become

a very influential voice for Melbourne internationally with its Ambassadors using their contacts and industry knowledge to bring world class business events to Victoria," she said.

MCEC ceo Peter King acknowledged the significant milestone achieved by the program in February, officially leading 81 international conferences and contributing more than \$500m in economic impact to the state of Victoria since its inception.

"We are incredibly proud to have this unique group of Melburnians who work alongside our team and partners to lead and help deliver some of the largest and most prestigious conferences in the world."

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Famil reveals secrets



THE Hawkesbury, which has been described as one of New South Wales' best kept secrets, has revealed its surprises to a group of PCOs (pictured).

Conducted by Riverside Oaks Golf Resort and Tourism Portfolio, the famil started with a visit to Tobruk Sheep Station, a rural working farm, with animals, rustic buildings, a blacksmith's shop and a Drover's Camp.

Returning to Riverside Oaks, currently in the final stages of an expansion program that has seen the addition of 36 new first-class rooms (including six luxury suites) and the first nine holes of a new Bob Harrison-designed golf course, East Coast Experiences took the group for a light-hearted 'Segway Olympics' featuring

obstacle courses, baton relays and time trails.

Some of the group spent the afternoon on Riverside Oak's championship golf courses, while others enjoyed Laser Clay Shooting and cruised the Hawkesbury River.

The day ended with dinner at the resort's recently opened fine dining restaurant, Bungool, which accommodates 60 diners in a restored 1880s stone cottage.

WIN A STAY AT THE HOLIDAY INN



This week **BEN** is offering one lucky reader the chance to win 1 Night's Accommodation in a Superior Room including breakfast for 2 at the Holiday Inn Darling Harbour, courtesy of Holiday Inn Darling Harbour and JC Travel Professionals.

The prize includes:
- 1 Night's accommodation for 2 in a Superior room
- Full buffet breakfast for 2 at Shipley's Restaurant

For your chance to win, email your answer to the question below by Fri 9th May to:
comp@businesseventsnews.com.au.

To win tell us in 25 words or less why you deserve this package prize?

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Jumeirah's grand tour



"EIGHT events, three cities, five days and all without a personal hairdresser," chirped Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts Australia representative Teree George, comparing last week's second annual Jumeirah sales mission to Kate and Wills' recent royal tour.



It was a mission that targeted key MICE and retail partners and one that started in Perth, continued on to Melbourne and ended up in Sydney where **BEN** caught up with the team from six Jumeirah properties at a PCO breakfast, held in fitting style at Café Sydney and perched above a sparkling harbour panorama.

George said Jumeirah's first sales mission last year had resulted in a number of

outstanding events being held in Jumeirah properties, predominantly in Rome, Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

"The growth from the Australian corporate market has been extraordinary," she said.

Pictured above from left are Jumeirah Zabeel Saray's Sabrina Ding, Jumeirah Group regional director of sales and marketing Teree George, CiEvents' Caroline Gair, The Events Authority's Shelly Page and BCD M&I's Danny Schroder.

Pictured left are Emirates corporate sales NSW Kate Hunter and the 'one and only' Joyce Weir of Qantas.

Fuller joins AACB

MICHAEL Fuller has taken on the newly created strategic communications manager role at the Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB).

Fuller has experience in marketing, communications and advocacy in the US, Europe and Australia.

Outrigger drops \$100m

A \$100M investment to revitalise the oceanfront Outrigger Reef on the Beach in Waikiki has been announced by the Outrigger Enterprises Group. Making way for the renovation and opening up the ocean vistas, an existing five storey structure located on the beach will be razed and replaced with 34,000 sq ft of open recreation space, inclusive of swimming pools, landscaped lounging areas and open-air dining facilities.

A new tower, set back from the shoreline, will add more than 200 full-service hotel rooms to the property.

The revitalisation is the capstone to the Outrigger-led transformation of Waikiki Beach Walk, stretching from Kalakaua Avenue to the sands of Waikiki Beach.

Outrigger will also add 15,000 sq ft of new meeting facilities to serve the currently underserved small to mid-size meetings market in Waikiki with construction slated to begin in 2017 and finish in 2019.

Shangri-La Yangon

FOLLOWING an extensive two and a half year, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts has rebranded Traders Hotel, Yangon in Myanmar to Sule Shangri-La, Yangon.

The 484 room hotel is named after its nearby landmark, the 2000 year old Sule pagoda and located in this British Empire key port that still boasts vestiges of its colonial past after nearly a half-century of isolation.

The hotel is a showcase for local artists and craftsmen and their works are creative depictions of Burmese stories, while memorabilia and photographs from the early 1800s fill the walls

The hotel's meeting spaces – regular hosts of delegations and dignitaries – span three levels and have been refurbished in a modern palette with gold accents.



FOR the Star Wars lovers out there, yesterday may have been close to a holy day for you, given it was the 04 May, or 'May the Fourth be With You' and there was no shortage of events.

Events around Sydney included the movie marathons of all the prequels (best not mentioned) screening on Saturday, and the soothing effects of the original trilogy screening on Sunday.

The West Sacramento Civic Centre in California saw a

May the Fourth Be With You convention which sought to raise money for the Make a Wish Foundation as well as the local parks and recreation department's children's programs, while Doncaster

in the UK saw the Geeks Unleashed convention celebrate the big day, with hundreds of fans expected.

One church in Vancouver swapped the hymns for the Imperial March, with some of the congregation dressing in character as Jedi and Sith.

The weekend also saw the celebration of Cinco de Mayo, with events including the fourth annual Chihuahua races in Denver, which incidentally cost US\$500 to enter, as well as a parade in San Francisco and an event at the Maude Cobb Convention and Activity Centre in East Texas.

MEETINGS record

NEW Zealand business event trade show MEETINGS has seen a record number of exhibitors register, at more than 180 from around the country.

There are more than 30 first time exhibitors making their debut at the ASB Showgrounds in Auckland, with the event held from 18 to 19 Jun.

Conventions and Incentives New Zealand organises the event, and registrations are open for day buyers - **CLICK HERE** for more.

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Business Events News is part of the Travel Daily group of publications which also include: Travel Daily, Cruise Weekly & Pharmacy Daily.

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