



Bridging the gap

THOSE who know of or have visited Kancanaburi in Thailand



know it is an area notorious for being the Japanese base camp for Asian forced labourers and Allied POWs, who built the Thai-Burma Railway during WWII.

Immortalised in the film 'The Bridge on the River Kwai' and more recently in 'The Railway Man', today there is a memorial cemetery and two museums to commemorate the hundreds of thousands who died.

Like many stories of redemption, this city and scenic region of paddy fields, sugar cane plantations, local temples and villages has new stories to tell.

There's the hotel that X2 Resorts is building with views along the River Kwai.

The eight luxury "cabins" labeled by the architecture Thai firm Agaligo Studio as 'industrial chic' have exposed steel framing, inside of which are corrugated metal boxes that have been elevated, with wooden decks and glass balustrades.

Another 18 are planned for 2015 that will apparently 'float' on the river. *Jill*

KLCC makes a meal

THE Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre has introduced a range of Asian-influenced mocktails and cocktails for TenOnCall (TOC) clients.

DCP clients can add 'colour' to their conference by choosing a Malay, Chinese, Indian, Muhibbah or Western theme for their half or full-day programme.

Besides the themed menus, packages include creatively tailored décor and appropriately attired staff.

The Centre's TOC 'Sundown Hour Packages' include free-flow beverages for two hours, a basic PA system and sound technician on standby for a minimum of 50 guests and above.

Tassie targets China



TASMANIA is hosting an incentives group from China as Business Events Tasmania sets its sights on the growing market.

A group of nine from China, comprising seven business event organisers and two media representatives, are taking in a private dinner at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Tasmanian produce at Frogmore Creek Winery, a Tasmanian Air Adventures flight to Ralphs Bay and Pennicott Wilderness

Luxperience & NZ

LUXPERIENCE and Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) have announced a destination partnership, with TNZ also joining forces with Air NZ as the major sponsor of the Buyer and Media Lounge at Luxperience 2014.

TNZ will this year increase its exhibitor presence by 70% compared with last year.

A total of 34 travel companies from New Zealand are registered to exhibit at the show, which runs from 31 Aug to 03 Sep.

Up to 300 exhibitors and more than 600 buyers including 350 global travel trade specialists, consumer buyers and international media delegates are expected to attend.

TNZ trade, PR and major events director Justin Watson said in the organisation's third year as a key partner, its presence would be bigger than ever before.

Luxperience 2014 post touring runs from 04 to 07 Sep and includes experiences such as 'Southern Alpine Experience' and 'Volcanoes, Hobbits and Lodges'.

CLICK HERE for details.

Journey's 'seafood seduction' cruise (pictured) on the three day famil, which started yesterday and which Business Events Tasmania says will showcase the state as a high end business events destination for the Chinese market.

It's the latest region to focus on China, with the Sunshine Coast looking to boost its conferencing and incentive business from the country (**BEN 02 May**) and Trade and Investment Minister Andrew Robb kicking off Australia Week in China in April (**BEN 11 Apr**).

China is Australia's fastest growing market in terms of business events spend and Business Events Tasmania ceo Stuart Nettlefold said it was the biggest contributor to international visitor spend for Australia.

"We see real potential for Tasmania, as a particularly attractive business event destination for China and Hong Kong."

The famil was a good introduction to the state as a new business events destination for clients already familiar with Melbourne and Sydney, he said.

"Through our relationship with Business Events Australia, these event organisers have been specifically selected with the knowledge that they have corporate business events that would be well suited to Tasmania as a destination."

Famils, with other strategies, were effective tools for securing business and the organisation hoped to see the benefits soon, he said.

Dallas visits Oceania



DALLAS and its nearby leisure destination Grapevine hosted a dinner in Sydney on Tuesday as part of a New Zealand and Australia sales mission.

Attended by clients and industry partners Qantas and American Airlines, it included some of Sydney's foremost business events companies.

Qantas sales support manager Nathan Smeulders said the partnership between the airlines was a key one and with Dallas as the network feed in the US, it provided Australians with invaluable access.

"I predict that over time Dallas will be the major gateway feed, especially for groups who often like to have two stops on the way through America."

Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau president and ceo Phillip Jones said Dallas was unlike anything else in America.

"Dallas is the fastest growing city in the US and we have just heard that Toyota is moving its headquarters here.

"It's a move that is based on the fact that we have so many non-stop services to the rest of the US."

Joining the Dallas marketing blitz was historic Grapevine, a 10 minute drive from the Dallas International airport.

Offering a true Texan experience, it is home to Marriott's Gaylord Texan Resort & Conference Centre with 400,000 sq ft of flexible meeting space.

Pictured from left are Qantas' Nathan Smeulders, Grapevine's Shana Schlabach and American Airlines' Simon Todd.



ACTE & CAPA buddy up

THE Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) has formed an alliance partnership with CAPA - the Centre for Aviation, which will see the organisations collaborate and support each other's events; the CAPA Corporate Travel summit and the ACTE Corporate Travel Education Conference 'Travelution'.

These will be held on 06 Aug and 04 to 05 Dec in Sydney, respectively, with Flight Centre and Graham Turner confirmed as a speaker for the former.

ACTE regional director Andrew Kelly (**pictured**) said the organisation was committed to advancing its corporate travel and meetings/events community, by investing in professional development, strengthening networks and more.

As a result of the partnership, ACTE would dovetail its annual half day Sydney education forum



into the CAPA Aviation Summit, Kelly said.

ACTE's members and industry partners had endorsed the partnership, he said.

Beyond the conferences, ACTE was looking at strengthening the partnership and was working on some data insight initiatives at a global level, Kelly said.

CAPA executive chairman Peter Harbison said the partnership leveraged complementary strengths in the corporate travel market and aviation.

Fiji Airways takes two

SEPARATING the sales and marketing functions, Fiji Airways has made two key senior appointments.



Otto Gergye takes on the newly created position of executive general manager sales and marketing.

An experienced airline and travel industry executive, Gergye will be responsible for the global sales force and regional sales offices, as well as all sales channels and marketing oversight.

Reporting to Gergye in the role of general manager marketing is Franc Zvonar who brings marketing experience and knowledge to the role, having worked in both Australia and the UK, and previously with Virgin Australia, where he oversaw the introduction of their frequent flyer programme.

Former chief commercial officer Aubrey Swift is now the airline's chief strategy officer, responsible for revenue management and network and fleet planning.



DRONE cameras mounted on mini helicopters caused a buzz at the World Association of Newspapers conference in Hong Kong recently.

The drones, belonging to sponsor tech firm CCI, were a welcome diversion to talk of chronic circulation problems and revenue decline for the region's newspapers.

MEANWHILE drones delighted construction workers in Singapore as Coca-Cola used them to deliver cans of the drink from the sky to more than 2,500 guest workers, *Mumbrella Asia* reported.

Part of the soft drink company's Open Happiness campaign, they teamed up with non-profit organisation the Singapore Kindness Movement, whose associate general secretary Michelle Tay said it supported kindness initiatives that looked to do good in local communities.

"With businesses like Coca-Cola coming forward to become champions of kindness, we move steadily towards our vision of becoming a kinder, more gracious and ultimately happier society."

The company is using the hashtag #CokeDrones to promote its campaign, developed by Ogilvy.

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ATM visitor record



THE Arabian Travel Market has topped its record for visitor numbers, up 10% over last year to a whopping 23,000 visitors.

Organiser Reed Travel Exhibitions said this year saw 2,100 more visitors than last year over the four days of the show, held in Dubai from 05 to 08 May.

The show had already reported an 8% increase in exhibitors over 2013 and main stand holder numbers were also up 10% to 420 this year, including new destinations such as Slovenia.

ATM hosted more than 2,700 exhibitors, 68 national pavilions and 40 seminar and tech theatre sessions, and re-bookings for next year's show were "extremely encouraging", Reed Travel Exhibitions portfolio director Mark Walsh said.

"The preliminary figures for this year's show underscore Arabian Travel Market's relevance to the regional travel and tourism sector and reflect the healthy performance and confidence of the industry and its vital role as a major economic driver for the region."

More than 24,500 sqm of floor space was reserved for the show.

A 50th birthday aloha



HAWAI'I Tourism Oceania held a table-top meet and lunch with 30 visiting industry partners, on the Aloha Down Under 2014 - Behind the Scenes Tour at Dedes on the Wharf, Walsh Bay.

Bringing with them a tropical vibe in the shape of two Hawaiian dancers, Hawai'i Tourism Oceania country manager Ashlee Galea spoke about the recent launch of a free event information app which lets users search for events by island, location and type.

Hawaiian Airlines used the occasion to celebrate 50 years of flying to Australia with a livery-inspired birthday cake and the airline's NSW/ACT business development manager Hugh Twomey announcing the introduction of the Extra Comfort Class seating on their A330 aircraft for an additional \$100.

The 40 Extra Comfort seats with a 36" pitch include priority boarding at the departure gate and a personal power outlet.

Pictured from left is Hawai'i Tourism's Jana Birse, Oahu Visitors Bureau's Kainoa Daines, Galea, and Hawaiian Airlines' Heather Jeffrey and Hugh Twomey.

GENerating Change

Director of Conference Focus, Max Turpin is sharing his insights on a range of topics with a regular column in **BEN**.

Topics will include new generation events and making events effective and valuable.



Event Design – It's About How They Work!

IF you work in the meetings and events industry, you have to admit it's a weird and wonderful one! Indeed, I can't think of another industry like it. Take these examples...

Firstly, take a look at your business card. What's your title? Event Manager? Event Planner? Event Producer? Project Manager? Event Specialist? I can think of more than 10 different titles and names which we go by and call ourselves. But aren't we all essentially doing the same thing? Planning, coordinating and managing events?

Then there's the acronym for the industry in which we work – MICE. I don't know who first used and coined this but I know it's disliked by many. Indeed, in many countries, this acronym is not used. Instead, Meetings & Events or Business Events is used. And so there is no global agreement even on the name of the industry in which we work.

Recently, in a global LinkedIn group for event planners, someone asked the question, "How important is the design of your event?" This generated more than 300 comments.

What I found most interesting was the amount of comments relating to aesthetics and how events look – ie. colours, décor, flowers, theming and lighting. However, in my world, meeting and event design has nothing to do with how an event looks, but how it works. To me, event design relates to objective-based design to optimise value and ROI. But if I called myself an 'Event Designer',

many might confuse me with an Event Stylist...yet another name for what some of us do!

In an attempt to differentiate, the term and title of "Meeting Architect" is taking hold in Europe. This relates to the careful design of the structure and format of events to enhance their effectiveness. Will this new title take hold, I wonder?

For those that understand the importance of developing the right event program and format to optimise the effectiveness and value of events, I'd like to suggest another new title: Event Engineer.

The definition of Engineer relates to design and building, and to "skilfully arrange for something to occur." I like that. And so I'm no longer an Event Manager, Planner, Producer, Designer or Architect, but an Event Engineer!

Coming back to the word 'design', I'll leave you with this quote from the great Steve Jobs:

"Design is not just what it looks like and what it feels like. Design is how it works." Steve was a very clever guy!

If you'd like to learn more about how to make your events fresh, innovative and effective, please contact Max



Turpin at Conference Focus on 02 9700 7740 or visit the website at conferencefocus.com.au.

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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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