



Bula to DMS

WITH the news that specialist inbound travel company Pacific Destinationz Fiji has joined the portfolio of Destination Marketing Services (DMS) comes a special discount offer for group transport arrangements in Fiji.

The offer, for travel until March 2016, means bookings need to be made before 31 Dec.

Pacific Destinationz Fiji md James Sowane said the company knows Fiji like the back of its hand and offered sneak peak incentive ideas, including a visit to an authentic Fijian village to experience the life of a Kaiviti (Fijian), an exhilarating jet boat safari tour, chartering a boat for an exclusive tropical island adventure, snorkelling through the magnificent Great Astrolabe Reef and indulging in a traditional kava drinking ceremony.

"If you dare," he challenged. *Jill*



Restore regional biz ev fund

A REPORT released by Tourism Accommodation Australia has recommended the NSW government restore a regional business events fund, administered by Business Events Regional NSW.

The report, conducted by AECgroup and referencing various research sources including Tourism Research Australia's National and International Visitor Surveys, said in 2012-13, visitor expenditure in regional Australia was 44.8% of Australia, and regional NSW was 49.3% of NSW.

However, visitor nights in regional NSW were down to 45.1% from 48.9% in 2005/06, and were forecast to drop to 40.2% in the period to 2012/13, the report said.

The government's 2020 Tourism Industry Potential aim of overnight visitor expenditure reaching between \$115b and \$140b was at risk, given

expenditure in the year to March had seen an increase in the annual growth rate needed to reach the goal.

The report said the number of business event visitor nights in regional NSW had declined at an average annual rate of 2.5% over the last 10 years.

Increasing business events in regional NSW had the most potential to fill mid-week troughs, and increase the proportion of visitor nights in hotels and spend, it said.

The state government should thus restore the regional fund, administered by a new body funded by government and industry, Business Events Regional NSW, which would focus particularly on regions within two hours of Sydney with infrastructure, the report said.

Its first task would be an infrastructure audit.

CLICK HERE to read more.

Regional nights up

IN RESPONSE to the TAA report, Destination NSW ceo Sandra Chipchase said regional nights in NSW were in fact growing but at a slower rate than total nights in NSW.

Over the last nine years, expenditure from regional NSW had been about 45%, she said.

"There are several factors affecting regional growth - transport access, international competition, the need to refurbish properties.

"The NSW Regional Conferencing Strategy is being developed, but clearly major reforms require funding. The strategy is due for release at the end of this year."

Government funding for NSW regional tourism was at a record high at \$21m over the last three years, and a record number of regional events (51) had been secured with government funding over the last three years, Chipchase said.

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12th November 2014

Hilton Melb to Pullman

HILTON Worldwide has announced it will not renew its management agreement for Hilton on the Park Melbourne on 31 Dec.

Instead, Accor has signed the hotel for its Pullman brand, which will see the hotel become Pullman Melbourne on the Park on 01 Jan 2015.

The 419 room hotel currently has a dedicated conference and events floor with 12 meeting rooms available, with total space of 2,214 sqm and a capacity of up to 1,000 people.

Accor Pacific chief operating officer Simon McGrath said Melbourne was the events capital of Australia as well as being a top choice for meetings and conventions and Accor had been eager to expand the Pullman brand into this market.

Further expansion was in the



works for the brand, Accor said.

An Accor spokesperson confirmed the company planned to refurbish the hotel's lobby, bar and restaurant next year.

A Hilton Worldwide spokesperson said as a matter of corporate policy, the company would not comment on why it had decided not to renew the release.

6 - 9 SEPTEMBER 2015



THERE'S MORE FOR MICE AT LUXPERIENCE 2015

Welcome to the first monthly column from the team at Luxperience. This will be the place for you to discover the latest industry trends, new developments and the exciting range of luxury and experiential travel options that are opening up for the MICE market.

There are some big changes in place for Luxperience, starting with a stylish new look for the brand, a revamped website and a new home for the event 6 - 9 September 2015 at Sydney's Australian Technology Park. In addition to more flexible registration options for MICE buyers Luxperience will offer a greater variety of inspiring suppliers and destinations from all over the world allowing incentive, meeting and event specialists greater creative opportunities

The MICE segment is becoming increasingly sophisticated, with higher expectations yet still seeking increased value. Experiential small ship cruising is one of the most popular emerging options for unique corporate incentives. **Aqua Expeditions** operates the exclusive 20-suite Aqua Mekong vessel between Vietnam and Cambodia, with flexible private charters available throughout the year. As well as standard luxury inclusions, there are a host of onboard extras perfect for MICE groups like free Wi-Fi across the whole ship, an outdoor theatre and an air-conditioned observation deck for presentations.

Luxperience is now accepting registrations from buyers and offering special early bird rates for exhibitors who register before 28 November.

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Brisbane G20 ready



THE first delegates have started to arrive in Brisbane as it gears up for the G20 Summit this Friday.

The two day Summit is expected to draw 4,000 delegates and up to 3,000 media and will be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Tourism Australia md John O'Sullivan said the country's hosting of the event was a good opportunity to show off Australia's prowess when it came to delivering business events.

Brisbane had created a total city experience, he said, showcasing the food, facilities and culture on offer.

The Centre said its AV team had been working full time for six months on the event, and 700 staff were getting set for the Summit, expected to generate \$100m for the city long term.

Ramada Shoal deals

RAMADA Resort Shoal Bay has a discounted summer conference package available, with savings of up to \$85 per delegates.

The all inclusive deal is for at least 25 people booked before 31 Dec and held before 31 Mar next year.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more.



MOVEMBER will see multitudes of males growing mo's to raise funds for the Movember Foundation's programs and to encourage community awareness and support around men's health.

Amadeus IT Pacific men are putting out the challenge to the travel industry to raise funds for the cause. The person who raises the most money will win a **Shaving Brush Travel Kit**.

It's not to late to join - **register at au.movember.com** (add your company name after your name and choose to join the **Amadeus IT Pacific team**).

Email your before and after pics and progress updates to mocomp@traveldaily.com.au and we will showcase them on Facebook and in **BEN**.

Get involved as an Amadeus Mo Bro! Click **HERE** to learn more about the program.

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12th November 2014



THE Restaurant Australia campaign is really cooking with gas now (sorry), with the news that the guests attending the finale gala dinner in Tasmania include not only Matt Moran but also Heston Blumenthal.

The English chef, who is set to launch his Fat Duck restaurant at the Crown Melbourne next year, is famous for creating weird and wonderful dishes through a scientific approach to cuisine, including cooking with liquid nitrogen, which, if you've seen The Terminator, you don't really want to get wrong.



"This never happens at Coffee Club."

Blumenthal won't be cooking on Friday at the MONA where the dinner is being held but he will be featuring in a documentary Tourism Australia is filming, featuring some of the chefs involved in the campaign.

We imagine it will feature a number of food puns, with Tourism Australia md John O'Sullivan kicking things off by saying Blumenthal's attendance was "icing on the cake" of the dinner's guest list.

For those wanting to refresh their memory of the famous face, play the 'Moby, Michael Stipe, Bruce Willis or Heston Blumenthal' game by **CLICKING HERE**.

Business Events News is Australia's newest online publication dedicated to the vibrant meetings, incentives, conferences and events sector.

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A right royal appointment

PIER One Sydney Harbour has appointed Canadian born and highly acclaimed international executive chef Chris Irving.

With credentials of having cooked for Her Majesty The Queen as well as being chef-consultant to the Spanish Royal Family, he was also the private chef to David and Victoria Beckham in their residences across the UK and USA.

Irving, who is already in Sydney sourcing sustainable Australian paddock-to-plate produce, also spent four years with the Gordon Ramsay Group, where he was responsible for the menu creation, set up and execution for various outfits include the UK's Savoy Grill, Claridges, Maze and Bread Street Kitchen.

With the recent opening of Pier One's new lobby and bar, the trading date of Irving's new Gantry Restaurant and Bar is expected to be mid December.

Auckland event fund

ANY major events planners seeking sponsorship for events to be held in Auckland from 01 Jul 2015 to 30 Jun 2016 can now apply for sponsorship from Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development's fund.

The funding is estimated to be about NZ\$900,000 and planners can apply until 12 Dec.

Successful events are expected to be announced in April 2015.

CLICK HERE for more.

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Sitting Pretty

THAI Airways Royal Silk

Welcome to Sitting Pretty, our review of experiences up the front of the plane.

BEN recently flew Royal Silk Business Class with THAI Airways in its 747-400 from Sydney to Bangkok. THAI flies this route 10 times a week and from Melbourne there are 12 weekly flights. From these cities, Business Class passengers have the use of the Air NZ lounge.

MICE Business

With an undertaking for Bangkok to become the meetings hub of Asia, the airline, with the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, and the Thailand Incentive and Convention Association, has given a commitment to lend its support to business event planners and organisers globally.

The Seat

Seated in 11A in a 2-2-2 configuration, there's something about climbing into your own little eyrie above the other passengers that makes you want to hi-five your decision to ask to be seated in 'the bubble', especially as all the window seats have a very useful luggage bin beside them. All the comfy, roomy seats have 115V power outlets while the on-demand entertainment system, with a choice of 100 movies – although little in recent releases – includes noise cancelling headsets and touch-screen and handset controls.

The Service

The service was efficient but unremarkable and there was a distinct absence of those winning Thai smiles.

Saluting the occasion with Palmer & Co Brut Reserve Champagne, I followed this with a French Chateau Bertinerie 2010 to quaff with the rather tasteless lobster entrée. Rather than being offered a choice from the trolley, my main, the Red Curry, came in a foil container, looking like it had come off an economy class tray. True to the style of Business Class, everything else was served from the trolley. An apple tart and custard dessert was handed to me without anyone asking if I wanted it or not. Perhaps it's time for the food service crew to have a training update.

