



## News bites

WITH the travel and hospitality industry in a constant state of flux, news of a recent



product launch, a hotel closure and ideas to give an event that special 'wow' factor are just a sample of all that is new.

Starting in Hawaii, the 'So Much More Hawaii' guide has been launched, filled with an endless variety of special events and off-the-beaten path attractions.

Here, some of the best-kept secrets are revealed as well as a multitude of historic and cultural festivals, craft fairs, athletic events, farmers' markets and more.

In Thailand, the Amari Koh Samui closed its doors in April but only for 12 months, promising a new resort will emerge after the completion of a head to toe refurbishment.

A new private tour has been introduced by Destination Asia Cambodia to one of the few remaining, fully integrated silk producers in the world – the Golden Silk Pheach Preservation Center in Siem Reap.

Close to the Angkor Wat temples, the tour allows visitors to witness the production of unique silk products that are woven and dyed by hand and ecologically produced from the yellow silkworm.

A cocktail reception or three-course lunch can also be organised at the facility.

And the Fairmont Resort Blue Mountains has launched a new MGallery Memorable Moment package for travellers, which also makes an ideal team building activity for conferencing groups.

Jill

## Disability conf attendee grant

THE Federal government has provided \$250,000 to increase participation of people with disabilities at related conferences.

Assistant Minister for Social Services Mitch Fifield said 25 organisations were receiving support to increase participation of people with disability at conferences this year.

Funding could be used to cover conference fees, accommodation and travel for people with disability and the provision of Auslan interpreters, he said.

"This funding has been provided to support conference organisers to increase participation of people with disability at disability-related conferences.

"It's important that people with disability and disability support organisations have the opportunity to come together to learn, to impart knowledge and skills, and to chart the way forward for their organisations."

PCO Association international treasurer Peter Sugg said the organisation welcomed the initiative to help people with disabilities attend conferences.

## Vale Ashley Spencer

FORMER Hilton Australasia operations vice president Ashley Spencer has died.

A long time Tourism Accommodation Australia board member, acting ceo Carol Giuseppi said Spencer had made a significant contribution to Hilton's success and growth.

"He was a true gentleman, always prepared to contribute to the wider industry and advocate on its behalf."

The funding would be delivered under the Department of Social Services New Way of Working for Grants, the Assistant Minister said.

The Minister's office did not reply at time of publication as to which groups would receive the funding and how they could access this.

**CLICK HERE** to read more information.

## Multiple entry tourist visas for China



MINISTER for Trade and Investment Andrew Robb has confirmed the online visa pilot for Chinese travellers (**BEN 19 Dec 14**) will be extended to offer three year, multiple entry visas.

Repeat visitors were an "increasingly" important market, Robb said, staying for longer periods with high yields on spend.

Tourism and Transport Forum ceo Margy Osmond said visa reform was needed to compete with other destinations, such as the United States.

"Australia must continue to eliminate barriers to visitation from our key markets so we can capture the enormous growth potential of the visitor economy."

## Today's issue of BEN

**Business Events News** today has two pages of news plus a full page from (**click**)

- AA Appointments

## ben Events Calendar

**BEN's** calendar details events at various venues across Australia.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email [info@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:info@businesseventsnews.com.au).

### 24-26 MAY

MEA Conference 2015; Hamilton Island; for more visit [www.meetingsevents.com.au](http://www.meetingsevents.com.au)

### 9-11 JUN

ibtm america; Chicago, USA; visit: [www.ibtmamerica.com](http://www.ibtmamerica.com)

### 10-11 JUN

CINZ MEETINGS 2015; Auckland, New Zealand; click here to register as a hosted buyer: [www.meetings.co.nz/Buyers](http://www.meetings.co.nz/Buyers)

### 18-20 JUN

This Is Gold Coast Business Exchange 2015; for details: [www.visitgoldcoast.com](http://www.visitgoldcoast.com)

### 16-17 JUL

Travel Industry Expo; Luna Park, Sydney; more info at: [www.travelindustryexpo.com.au](http://www.travelindustryexpo.com.au)

### 6-9 SEP

Luxperience; Australian Technology Park, Sydney; see: [www.luxperience.com.au](http://www.luxperience.com.au)

### 10-11 SEP

MICE Asia Pacific Exhibition 2015; Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre, Singapore; more info at: [www.miceasiaexhibition.com](http://www.miceasiaexhibition.com)

### 17-19 NOV

ibtm world; Barcelona, Spain; see: [www.ibtmworld.com](http://www.ibtmworld.com)

## Russell

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# business events news

13th April 2015



**FOLLOWING** Jill's Column about the prevalence of selfies and IHG's offer of selfie sticks for guests (**BEN** 11 Feb), comes the news that it's not just the tourism industry getting in on the photo fun - even NASA has contributed, attaching two GoPro cameras to astronauts Terry Virts and Bary Wilmore.

The footage from early this year includes selfies in space and the rotation of the Earth, shot from the International Space Station, *Mashable* reports - **CLICK HERE** to view.

For those pondering the possibilities of conferences in the stratosphere (**BEN** 23 Jul 14), be forewarned that delegates may face all kinds of unforeseen problems - like the inability to have a bit of a cry at that particularly moving key note speech.

NASA posted a video of Commander Chris Hadfield demonstrating the effects of microgravity on tears, which you can view **HERE**, in response to the Twitter hashtag #astronautproblems, the *Telegraph* reported.

## Nature Coast invite

**AN INVITATION** is extended to the travel industry to discover new accommodation, attractions and touring options when Australia's Nature Coast, a joint venture between Queensland's Sunshine Coast Destination Ltd and Fraser Coast Opportunities, holds trade expos in Melbourne on 13 Apr, in Sydney on 15 Apr and in Brisbane on 16 Apr.

**CLICK HERE** to enquire.

## Auckland hotel occupancy up



**AUCKLAND** hotel occupancy rates were up 77,000 rooms to 83% in the year to February, helped by a "golden summer" of events, Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) has said.

Annual domestic guest nights for the year to February were up 7% on the year prior, and international nights were up 0.9%, it said.

Average daily room rates also increased for the year to February to \$150.53, up from \$142.35 for the prior year.

The increased rooms and hotel room rates saw about NZ\$27.9m more spent on Auckland hotel rooms compared with the prior year, ATEED ceo Brett O'Riley said.

## LA wins STEMfest

**THE** right to host the Fourth International Festival of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEMfest) in 2017 has been secured by the Los Angeles Convention Board.

The festival, with up to 13 conferences and 15 community events, will see delegations from about 55 countries participate.

Global STEM States executive director David Goncalves said the festival brought the varying STEM groups from within a city together, to allow them to focus on one project, and also to talk with the international community to establish global partnerships.



# Face to Face

## Peter Thorpe General manager Sydney Showground



*Business Events News* recently caught up with Peter Thorpe, Sydney Showground gm, who started with the RAS Showground in Paddington in 1979. Thorpe previously ran operations, customer service and catering at Sydney Turf Club before returning to the RAS as gm in 2010.

What analogy best describes being gm of Sydney Showground and why?

Dad! We have lots of young, willing, vibrant staff all wanting to improve and impress our clients; some even have personal problems. I like to think that they can come to me with anything, that nothing is too big to handle. *Sydney Showground* recently expanded and launched a new brand - why all the change?

Time for a refresh - it coincided with our new venue's opening and it linked in with our updated signage, refurbishment of catering outlets and modern new colour scheme. We are a world class venue and we need to keep up with trends, ensuring our clients receive the best.

The IUCN World Parks Congress saw 6,000 attendees - how did you cope? What did you do to keep with the 'parks' theme?

It was an amazing event. We coped very well because we have an amazing team. There were a number of dignitaries from all over the world in attendance, each with their own set of protocols and needs. Staff were very aware of these needs and the relevant security requirements involved, everything went off without a hitch. Other concerns included being as green as possible and our suppliers were also very cognisant of this.

Have the animals ever escaped at the Royal Easter Show? What is

your top insider tip for the show? Yep. With up to 4,000 animals at any one time, we've had a few escapes but some of us are handy with a lasso.

The best one I could give would be pace yourself - 14 days, 14 nights, 900,000 people coming through, it's a bloody big event.

The Royal Agricultural Society of NSW operates the Showground - what are some of the more out-there aspects of mixing business events with agriculture?

There are some anomalies in terms of which buildings you can use or not use for other business events depending on what type of animals have been housed in them; obviously not our primary venues such as the Dome and Halls but definitely at the other end of the site! I'll leave this up to the readers' imagination.

What one tip would you give to events organisers for venues?

Be truthful, don't exaggerate your expected attendance. It can actually have a costly flow on effect which eventually hits everyone's bottom line.

What's one historical event you wish you could have attended - and what advice would you have given the organisers?

The opening of the Harbour Bridge in March 1932. Advice: get a new security firm, the current one isn't doing its job (in reference to Captain Francis De Groot riding in on his horse and unofficially cutting the ribbon with his sword).

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

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### JOIN THIS FORWARD THINKING PCO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER NORTH SYDNEY LOCATION – OTE \$120K

This well-known PCO is looking for an experienced BDM. The role is focused on lead generation and pure business development components. This is your chance to showcase your strong presentation, negotiation and selling skills working for an industry leader. Monday – Friday role with some travel and client entertaining after hours requirements. You will have industry sales experience, preferable from events in hotels or production. Apply today or call the Executive team for a confidential discussion.

### FUN IN NUMBERS

#### CRUISE GROUPS SPECIALIST SYDNEY CBD – SALARY PACKAGE UP TO \$60K

This pioneering family owned Cruise Company is looking for a talented Groups Consultant. Book all the world's best cruise lines from OE2 to deluxe River Cruising arranging all-inclusive bespoke experiences including chartering an aircraft, land logistics & arranging once in a lifetime land experiences. You need groups travel exp, cruise knowledge preferable, strong GDS skills & organisational skills. In return enjoy onboard inspections/famils & the opportunity to travel on the packages you create. Cruise into your new role today!

### YOUR NEXT BIG EVENT IS HERE TRAVEL MANAGER – 3 MONTH CONTRACT MELBOURNE – GREAT HOURLY RATE

Our client, is a well know Events Management Company who requires a superstar travel manager for a 3 month contract starting soon. Work on one of the biggest events to come to Melbourne! You will be responsible for assisting to book domestic and international group flights as well as assisting with allocation of group seats, managing extension request and other delegated flight related management leading up to the event. These fantastic assignment is due to start soon, so send in your application today!

### ARE YOU READY FOR MORE?

#### GROUPS TRAVEL CONSULTANT SOUTH EAST MELB - SALARY PACKAGE UP TO \$58K (DOE)

This independent travel company provides a product like no other and is seeking a groups guru to join their growing team! Servicing varied clientele, you will promote & sell an array of special interest group touring products to some of the most exciting destinations across the world. Whether it be a culinary tour throughout Europe or rail tour through China no two days will be the same. With a fantastic set salary and supportive team environment you would be crazy to miss this opportunity! Don't delay and contact us today.

### \*HOT\* GLITZ AND GLAMOUR GROUPS AND EVENTS CONSULTANT SYDNEY - SALARY PACKAGE \$70K OTE

Fancy booking Kylie or Will. I. Am. for your client's next function? Do you want to make the move to the North Shore? Be a part of a global brand that has an outstanding reputation as an industry leader. Work in great modern, bright offices with a friendly passionate team. Assisting prestigious clients with their event and group booking needs from Sydney to Macau and everywhere in-between. If you want to go the extra mile and have fun along the way then this is the role for you. Don't wait, apply today!

### ARE YOU A GROUPIE?

#### GROUPS TRAVEL CONSULTANT SYDNEY - SALARY PACKAGE \$60K OTE

This award winning company is looking for a talented group's consultant to join their friendly team. Work for a company that prides itself on staff training and development. You will be responsible for servicing both passengers and agents with all their group travel needs, preparing quotes and FIT arrangements in conjunction with the group bookings. You will enjoy an attractive salary package, with fantastic bonus opportunities and great educationals. Work in great office located on the Lower North Shore.

### \*HOT OFF THE PRESS\* FUN IN NUMBERS GROUPS TRAVEL CONSULTANT SYDNEY - SALARY PACKAGE \$55K

This global company is looking for some talented, motivated and driven consultants to join their fast growing groups team. This company offers superior on the job training and excellent career progression. No two days will be the same in this role. Book a sporting group to watch the Ashes, to a romantic wedding on a beautiful beach in Tahiti, to a corporate conference at a 5 star location; what a huge variety. You will be working in a close knit team, who are extremely successful within the brand.

### WANT TO GET YOUR WEEKENDS BACK?

#### LEISURE GROUPS TRAVEL CONSULTANT BRISBANE CBD – GREAT SALARY PKG UP TO \$55K OTE

Do you enjoy working in a team and booking group travel? This globally recognised travel company is on the lookout for a Groups Travel Consultant to join their successful leisure department. Your role will involve booking group travel for all sorts of events including weddings, sporting groups, school groups and more. For this fun and challenging role previous exp is required. You will enjoy a strong salary pkg, Mon-Fri hours and a supportive team and team leader. This role is interviewing now so get in quick and don't miss out!