



Fired up

LUXURY train, The Eastern & Orient Express, caught fire on Sunday shortly after leaving Kanchanaburi in western Thailand, a region famous for its World War II era bridge and for inspiring the 1957 film *The Bridge on the River*.



The locomotive plies a scenic route between Bangkok, Malaysia and Singapore and delivers an aspirational touring option for incentive groups.

It's a journey I undertook a few years ago, on which the service and attention to detail were second to none.

It took firefighters 30 minutes to extinguish the blaze before the train resumed its journey.

None of the 160 passengers were injured.

MEANWHILE I was given the rounds of the table by Gary Bender of World Corporate Travel at the launch event of the Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley Conference and Events Centre on Friday, he of 'Bender's Bash' repute.

"You wrote about the 'Bash' (*BEN* 19 Dec 14) and posted photos on your *BEN* page but there were none of me!" he pouted.

Shamefaced, I admitted my oversight.

I now rectify this grievous faux pas.

Mea culpa!
 Jill



Generating change in Marysville

THE Botanic Gardens Sydney Restaurant was chosen to celebrate the opening of the \$28m Vibe Hotel and Conference Centre Marysville last night, as a location that reflects the beauty of Victoria's Marysville region.

The new 101-room hotel features a conference centre and exhibition spaces for 480 people.

It was the beginning of TFE Hotels' journey to refresh and relaunch its iconic Vibe Hotels brand, the company said.

The new hotel played a "significant role" in regenerating the town of Marysville, providing new employment opportunities and stimulating tourism growth, post the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, TFE Hotels said.

Minister for Tourism and Major Events John Eren said its opening was a "major step" towards Marysville regaining its position as one of the state's most popular regional tourism destinations.

The Victorian government committed \$19m to the project as one of eight identified to assist Marysville's economic recovery.

The Marysville and Triangle Economic Recovery Strategy said it was "critical" to rebuild at least one conference centre in Marysville, with the conference market playing an important role in the region's economy.

TFE hotels said it was working in



partnership with Tourism Victoria and local businesses to further promote tourism to the region.

Pictured above from left is the team from TFE Hotels; Paula McDonnell, David Green, Katie Finlay and Emma Fraser.

Mantra City Central opens



MANTRA City Central in Melbourne has opened after a \$1.3m refurbishment.

Previously the BreakFree Heritage, the 60-room apartment hotel is located on Little Bourke Street, in close proximity to several retail developments, the Mantra Group said.

MGallery events spaces in Brisbane



ACCOR has officially welcomed The New Inchcolm Hotel and Suites as an MGallery, the first for Brisbane.

While the 50-room hotel opened late last year, with some rooms having soft openings for the G20, an Accor spokesperson said it had officially launched the property as MGallery in the new year.

After an \$8m refurbishment, the five star hotel has new conference and event spaces, including the Charleston Room (**pictured**), with capacity for up to 100 people, and the Foxtrot Room with capacity for 12.

Brisbane Airport Master plan approval

BRISBANE Airport's Master Plan has been approved by Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss.

The airport is set to see a new conference centre for up to 600 people as part of two Accor hotels, with construction due to start this month (*BEN* 01 Aug 14).



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crumbs!



IF YOU'RE conferencing in the USA in the next six weeks, don't. Punxsutawney Phil has seen his own shadow on Groundhog Day (02 Feb), which means the country is due for another six weeks of blizzards.

The groundhogs have obviously decided to bite back against the tradition, with Phil's gloomy prediction, and one belligerent rodent taking a chunk out of a Wisconsin mayor's ear instead of supposedly whispering the weather forecast.

CLICK HERE to view.



MEL's Indonesian incentive



Credit: Fed Square Pty Ltd

MORE than 4,000 members of the Tupperware Indonesia Manager Incentive Trip will arrive in Melbourne over the next eight weeks, with the first group of eight arriving on 08 Feb.

The Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) said it would be the single largest Indonesian incentive group ever hosted in Australia, estimated to deliver \$19m to the economy.

The four day program would feature a tailored itinerary, including visiting Queen Victoria Market, Ballarat Wildlife Park, Sovereign Hill and Philip Island, the MCB said.

The group would stay across 14

hotels in Melbourne city, it said.

Tupperware Indonesia sales support manager Agus Mustapa said the Bureau had taken the time to understand what the company as looking for, and had the infrastructure necessary for large groups.

The MCB worked with the City of Melbourne and Tourism Australia who helped negotiate a customised visa application process between the travel agent and the Australian embassy.

MCB ceo Karen Bolinger said Melbourne was increasingly an attractive option for the Asian incentive market, with growth seen from Indonesia in particular.

Wyndham buys Dolce to expand meetings

WYNDHAM Hotel Group has bought Dolce Hotels and Resorts, giving it a "significantly larger" presence in the group and meetings segment.

The acquisition, to the tune of \$57m, would expand Wyndham's managed portfolio by 40%, and Dolce's brand recognition with meeting planners would enhance this, with "significant" group cross-selling opportunities across its existing operations, Wyndham said.

Ceo Geoff Ballotti said Dolce was a respected leader in the group space and had a long history of innovation in conference planning, attributes which Wyndham looked forward to leveraging globally.

Dolce chairman Philip Maritz said Wyndham had agreed to grow Dolce while preserving the brand and continuing the company's focus on meetings.

CLICK HERE to read more.

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4th February 2015

Warning, warning!

TODAY is the last chance to submit your application for the 2014/2015 MEA Industry Awards, an opportunity to excel in the achievement of business and personal goals, MEA said.

Winners would have the privilege of enjoying a considerable profile within the meetings industry and with the general buying public.

CLICK HERE to apply.

OCEC team additions



THE Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) has added several new members to its team, as the Centre gears up to open its doors early next year.

The appointments include head of event operations Troy Reynolds (**pictured** front left), international business development manager Sheikha Al Mugheiry (**pictured** front right), with six years of local five star hospitality industry experience, and business development manager for exhibitions Thomas Joseph (**pictured** back second from right).

QLD mission to NZ



A TRADE mission to New Zealand involving 44 Queensland tourism businesses was held yesterday in Auckland.

Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) said the 2015 Queensland on Tour mission saw the businesses meet more than 100 New Zealand travel trade partners to promote Queensland's products.

New Zealand was the state's largest international visitor market, with 405,000 New Zealanders visiting Queensland in the year to September, spending nearly \$520m during this period, up 6% year on year, Tourism Australia Research found.

Held at the Pullman Hotel in Auckland, Queensland on Tour formed part of a series of initiatives to attract more visitors to the state, TEQ ceo Leanne Coddington said, with participation in famils extended.

Participating businesses included Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Tangalooma Island Resort and Sunshine Coast Destination Limited.



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Presentation tips 101

The nature of the world we live in today means that whilst the basics are still fundamentally important, when giving a presentation, it's all about what will take it to the next level to leave your audiences truly inspired.

1. Delivery

We have various technology-based solutions readily available to us to help engage audiences in a relevant way and encourage interaction. It is, however, also very easy to congest content with excessive information and various technologies.

Superfluous wording in PowerPoint slides, too many videos and even too many combined technologies, can lead to loss of audience attention and failure in delivering the content effectively.

Simplicity is always best, so being concise and maintaining fluidity is essential for a productive and impactful presentation:

- Use bullet points to minimise wording
- Reduce transitional and animation effects
- Spread video content throughout your presentation, rather than just in one section.

2. Creating conversation

It sounds like an oxymoron to create conversation when presenting involves delivering a one-way piece of communication. However, a great presentation engages the

audience and naturally encourages conversation.

Thanks to social media, you can in fact facilitate conversation at the same time as delivering a message. Providing access to excellent content, not only in your presentation, but also online, enables audiences (both physically present and virtually) to share relevant points and materials.

A qualified AV technician can help guide you on what technology you should consider integrating into your presentation. They can even make helpful adjustments to ensure your presentation is concise and technically sound.

A well prepared presentation that incorporates effective uses of technology can lift your presentation to leave a longer-lasting and more impactful impression.

Marcos Morales is the designated partner at Swisshotel Sydney with AVPartners, which creates integrated

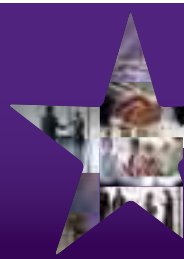


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