



Excitement bot, activate!

I'VE often been told (by Jill) that I'm a nerd, a personality trait I embrace fully, so you'll understand my excitement when I learned that Contiki will host a pop up Robot Restaurant in Sydney to celebrate the launch in March of its Japan Unrivalled 13 day tour of, you guessed it, Japan.



I've been fascinated (read: slightly obsessed) with the Robot Restaurant ever since the Japan National Tourism Organization told me about it last year (**BEN** 31 Mar 14).

The pop up in Sydney is set to involve robot battles (of course!), J-Pop music and "as many lasers as can possibly fit", Contiki have said, with the real Robot Restaurant on the Japan Unrivalled itinerary.

The pop up in Sydney is for two nights only, from 23 to 24 Feb and registrations for tickets are open if you would like to witness the overthrow of mankind - **CLICK HERE**.

I asked Contiki whether there was an audition process to be a robot but sadly, I was told they are "fully choreographed and professionals".

Still, I for one welcome our new robot overlords.

Alex on behalf of Jill who is away

Should venues vet events?

IN THE wake of venues being called on to cancel events held by controversial figures, **BEN** asked industry leaders whether venues should 'vet' events prior to booking them.

The Como Melbourne Hotel cancelled an event due to be held by pick up artist Julien Blanc, following an online petition signed by more than 10,000 people (**BEN** 05 Nov); Blanc's visa was then cancelled.

Last week, five venues, including the Amora Hotel Riverwalk Melbourne, cancelled events at which US anti-vaccination campaigner Sherri Tenpenny was set to present, following an online petition signed by more than 7,000 people (**BEN** 09 Jan).

Amora gm Tim Bilston said cancelling had been the "best business decision" for the hotel.

Australian Hotel Association ceo Stephen Ferguson said venues that cancelled bookings were often not originally aware of the full details of the booking.

"They could be informed that there will be a 'lecture' without any reference to the speaker or issue to be discussed, and as long as the venue has space, they will most likely book it in."

He said hotel venues needed to place the safety of their guests and staff as their first priority, and might also take into account liquor licensing laws and their own house policies.

"Ultimately the decision to take or refuse a booking is up to the judgement of the licensee taking into account the circumstances of the venue and conduct in question."

If accepting a booking might

attract reactions that could lead to serious confrontation, it was appropriate for a venue to review the booking and make a decision based on the risks associated with hosting it, Ferguson said.

"Importantly, there is no right or wrong in making such decisions – it is up to the judgement of the licensee involved taking into account local circumstances."

Venue Management Association board member Dean Hassall said many venues in Australia did vet events, particularly venues owned or managed by government.

Venues looked at bookings in a competitive environment so often decisions could be made on a commercial basis, he said.

Safety of the client and stakeholders was the number one concern for venues.

Whether to book an event should be based on a decision from the venue and stakeholders around issues such as the implications for participants and whether hosting it would have a negative effect on the community or venue, he said.

Today's issue of **BEN**

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

• Tangalooma Island Resort

ibtm africa hosted buyer apps open

HOSTED buyer applications are now being accepted for ibtm africa 2015.

The event is set to be held in the Cape Town Convention Centre from 13 to 15 Apr.

Buyers would have a diary of up to 36 pre-scheduled appointments with MICE exhibitors, organisers said.

CLICK HERE to register.

Conference Shop famil program

THE Conference Shop has said it will be hosting several famil in regional NSW and ACT this year to give conference and corporate event organisers a feel for the destinations featured, including the Blue Mountains, Hunter Valley and Canberra.

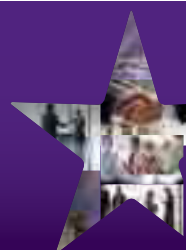
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business events news

14th January 2015



crumbs!

FOR an incentive with a difference in Vanuatu, have you considered toasting marshmallows inside Marcum Crater?

We ask, because Air Taxi Vanuatu owner Simon Turner was filmed by his friend toasting marshmallows over a lava lake in the Crater, believed to be at more than 1,000 degrees Celsius, *stuff.co.nz* reported.

Apparently, Turner hoped that people viewing the video would see the volcano was accessible, the publication reported.

“People can come over here and do it and it’s an incredible experience.”

The video on YouTube has clocked more than 171,500 views and can be accessed by **CLICKING HERE**.



An ex-pat Kiwi, Turner joins the ranks of possibly insane New Zealanders which include James Grant, who was bitten by a shark while speargfishing near Colac Bay.

Grant stitched up his leg, and then went to the local pub before heading to hospital, the *Guardian* reported.

AVPartners Hamilton Island ops manager

AVPARTNERS has appointed Nathan Hinschen as operations manager for Hamilton Island.

With three and a half years’ industry experience, Hinschen had worked as an audiovisual technician at Hamilton Island on a number of major events including the Australian Ballet at Qualia, AVPartners said.

Online Indian business travel visa

MINISTER for Trade and Investment Andrew Robb has launched a pilot allowing Indian business and tourism visitors to apply for a subclass 600 visa online.

The move follows a pilot of online visas for Chinese visitors launched last year (**BEN** 19 Dec 14).

Robb said India was one of the fastest growing outbound travel markets and the pilot would make it easier for Indian visitors to apply for visas for travel to Australia.

Leading the Australia Business Week in India trade mission, which is currently underway (**BEN** 12 Jan), Robb said the mission and the pilot were “putting runs on the board” under a Memorandum of Understanding on tourism signed in November between the two countries.

“Under the Australian Government’s national tourism strategy, Tourism 2020, India has the potential to contribute between \$1.9 and \$2.3 billion annually to our tourism industry by 2020.

“That’s why in the first half of 2015, the Australian Government is rolling out a trial of online visa applications to capitalise on this rapidly growing visitor market and create jobs.”

CLICK HERE to read more.

ICC Sydney on track

THE International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney) is one third of the way along towards opening, AEG Ogden has said.

The venue is set to open in December 2016.

Business Events Sydney ceo Lyn Lewis-Smith said 19 business events had been secured for the Centre with an estimated economic impact to NSW of \$150m.

Many of the events would not have come to Sydney without the new facilities, she said, including Sibos 2018 (**BEN** 16 Jul 14).

Cape York rebrand



RESORT Bamaga in Cape York Peninsula is set to be rebranded to Cape York Peninsula Lodge, with a new management contract in place as of 01 Jan.

The Bamaga Enterprises board appointed an independent company to manage the property, with the new contract including a refurbishment and upgrade of existing facilities, Bamaga Enterprises said.

Clive Pollack, appointed director of Cape York Peninsula Lodge Pty Ltd, said refurbishment would begin later this month and would include all rooms as well as a new touring schedule incorporating cultural components.

Indian fami in NSW

NSW Premier Mike Baird has said the state is set to host a group of travel retailers and wholesalers from India on a familiarisation tour called ‘Focus on India’.

Held from 08 to 13 Feb, the delegation would be shown key areas featured in the ‘Jhappi Time’ campaign commercials, such as the Blue Mountains and Port Stephens, Baird said.

The online campaign, created by Destination NSW, would be expanded to play on TV screens across India, with Singapore Airlines secured as the campaign’s airline partner.

This would see more people asking travel agents for details about regional NSW, he said.

The delegation would also take in a World Cup match at the Sydney Cricket Ground to showcase the city as Australia’s home of major events, the Premier said.

CLICK HERE to read more.

WIN WITH CROWNE PLAZA HUNTER VALLEY



To celebrate the opening of Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley later this month, **BEN**, Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley and the Altogether Perfect campaign are offering you the chance to win one night’s accommodation in a Deluxe Room with breakfast for 2 at Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley.

Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley Conference and Events Centre will provide the largest and most comprehensive conference and exhibition facility in the Hunter Valley. Nestled amongst the Semillon vineyards and majestic Brokenback ranges, Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley gives you easy access to 150 world-class wineries, indulgent restaurants, boutique breweries and a remarkable blend of experiences brought to life by the friendly local communities in the region. Experience Australia’s only full scale, gourmet food and wine event experience within a setting of contemporary design, state of the art technology and adaptable spaces that can be perfectly tailored for your next event at Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley.

To enter, send your answer to the following question to **comp@businesseventsnews.com.au**.

2. What is the name of the spa sanctuary at Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley?

Hint: www.crowneplazahuntervalley.com.au

For more information visit www.crowneplazahuntervalley.com.au and www.altogetherperfect.com.au. Courtesy of Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley and the Altogether Perfect campaign, promoting business events in the Hunter Valley, Newcastle and Port Stephens. Prize is valid for 12 months subject to availability. Contest open to all **BEN** readers.



business events news

14th January 2015

NYC delegate discounts

NYC & Company has launched the Delegate Discount Pass, available to all attendees, exhibitors, meeting planners and event staff.

Meeting and convention visitors were "crucial" to New York City's travel and tourism industry, NYC & Company ceo Fred Dixon said.

The Pass offered discounts at more than 70 NYC & Company member organisations including



restaurants, tours and attractions around the city, aiming to give delegates the opportunity to experience the city at an affordable price, it said.

The Pass is valid to 30 Jun, with details regarding the rest of the year to be made available at a later date.

The company said the city saw an estimated 6.1m meeting and convention delegates last year, up from 5.9m in 2013.

BestCities adds Bogotá



BESTCITIES Global Alliance has added Bogotá, the capital of Columbia, as its first South American partner.

BestCities board chair Karen Bolinger (pictured centre) said the Greater Bogotá Convention Bureau impressed the Alliance with its enthusiasm and readiness to take on preliminary membership soon after its expression of interest.

"The inclusion of a South American partner is important not only for our geographical growth but equally for our strategic expansion.

"This important foothold into another emerging market will enable us to tap into new clients and provide our alliance partners with important business and learning opportunities."

Airport funding to boost tourism

THE Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) has said the NSW government's commitment of \$50m for regional airports would boost tourism access for visitors to regional destinations.

Announced last week, the funding, from the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund, has been made available to support airport infrastructure projects that will boost regional tourism.

TTF ceo Margy Osmond said the funding would help achieve improved air access to regional destinations, making them more attractive to visitors, and would spread the economic benefits of tourism, helping to create employment and supporting tourism businesses around NSW.

CLICK HERE to read more.



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Gray's Say

Peter Gray, an independent Motivation Consultant, presents a regular *Business Events News* feature on current issues in the Conference and Incentive industries.



WHAT PRICE PROFESSIONALISM?

OVER the Christmas holidays I had some disturbing news; that someone I have known and respected as an ethical and efficient conference and incentive operator has left the industries he has known so well for a good many years. His reasons were plain enough. He felt that there were too few people with real integrity left in these industries; that in spite of the illegality many were accepting undeclared commissions or providing 'under the table' marketing support, as a result of which many clients are being ripped off.

At the same time I also heard about another operator becoming embroiled in a disagreement with a client who was demanding a full refund for a holiday because she found the hotel not to her liking...although she managed to stay on for the length of time she had booked. The hotel agreed to refund her the cost of the accommodation but unfortunately couched this in such a way as to suggest that the client was getting a full refund of everything!

We hear almost daily about tourists who demand upgrades from hotels with the threat that if they're not forthcoming they will send a negative report to Trip Advisor.

What has happened to ethical behaviour these days? Does

everything come down to the common denominator - money?

I can recall long discussions at AIA conferences (the forerunner of the IA) about incentive operators who accepted undeclared commissions - something that has been illegal in Australia for many years. I know of many who were solidly against this practice but who were in the forefront of those who did it. Whatever happened to being honest with clients? In my book, 'honest' means free of deceit, being truthful and sincere. No one should question that it is right for an incentive practitioner or a PCO to charge a management fee that reflects the effort they have put in to a project. However, the 'greed is good' philosophy comes into play - from both sides - and some find it satisfying to put one over on a client, without ever thinking that the client could be doing exactly the same.

After many years of saying they're going to do it, it's about time that some (not all by any means) in the conference and incentive industries cleaned up their act.

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