



## Face off

YOU may have read (with awe and appreciation, of course) our regular Face to Face feature in **BEN**, a 'Getting to Know' of industry leaders, and noticed that some of the questions are a little...strange.



I find out-of-the-ordinary questions are a great way to get to know the real person, and as most of our interview subjects are generally pretty good about answering even the oddest query, it makes for interesting reading.

My favourites include Japan National Tourism Organization director Maiko Zenki, who said she would have liked to have organised a name plate in front of each apostle at the Last Supper, CWT Meetings and Events ANZ director Wayne Castle, who said he had once attended an exhibition of preserved human bodies, and Mantra Group director of MICE Paul Wilson, who said he would create a wolkat, or wolf/meerkat hybrid.

**MEANWHILE** Jill will be back in the saddle from Monday, taking her column back with a bang.

*Alex on behalf of Jill who is away*

## Ballarat convention centre

**THE** newly elected Victorian government has committed to a four star hotel and convention centre in the Ballarat Station precinct.

Premier Daniel Andrews said at the launch event last week that Labor was delivering on its pre-election promise and moving ahead with a \$25m redevelopment of the site.

Minister for Regional Development Jaala Pulford said the project had been fast-tracked, with the Premier saying Regional Development Victoria was currently working on the governance arrangements.

The site would be a public private partnership, he said, and there had been "significant interest" from the private sector in developing the site.

The hotel and conference complex was estimated to generate up to \$38m in private



sector investment, the Premier's office said.

The project was expected to boost jobs and tourism for Ballarat, with the Premier saying the region did not have "a moment to lose" in beginning works.

A construction start date would be flagged once governance and planning had been completed, he said.

The Premier's office said previous Master Plans would be consulted in the planning.

## Sunshine wins #SoMeT15AU



**BUSINESS** Events Sunshine Coast (BESC) has locked in the 2015 Social Media Tourism Symposium (#SoMeT15AU), estimated to be worth \$300,000 to the region.

Set to be held from 22 to 23 Jul at the Events Centre, Caloundra, the third annual Australian convention was expected to see 200 delegates attend, BESC said.

BESC manager Pippa McCreery said the event would have extensive flow-on effects for the region, starting the year in a positive direction.

**CLICK HERE** to read more.

## EEAA welcomes ICC Sydney progress

**THE** Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA) has welcomed the news that construction on the International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney) is on track (**BEN** 14 Jan).

EEAA ceo Joyce DiMascio said the site had completely transformed over the past 12 months, and it was good to know that construction was progressing according to the timetable shared with industry.

## WIN WITH CROWNE PLAZA HUNTER VALLEY



**BEN**, Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley & the Altogether Perfect campaign are offering one night's accommodation in a Deluxe Room with breakfast for two at Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley to celebrate the opening of the Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley Conference and Events Centre later this month. Experience adaptable spaces that can be perfectly tailored for your next event at Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley, which offers the largest conference centre in the region, nestled amongst the Semillon vineyards and majestic Brokenback Ranges. To enter, send your answer to the following question to [comp@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:comp@businesseventsnews.com.au).

**3. The new Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley Conference and Events Centre is the largest conference centre in the Hunter Valley - true or false?**

Hint: [www.crowneplazahuntervalley.com.au](http://www.crowneplazahuntervalley.com.au)

For more information visit [www.crowneplazahuntervalley.com.au](http://www.crowneplazahuntervalley.com.au) and [www.altogetherperfect.com.au](http://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.

## \$300k to Snowy Mtns

**TOURISM** Snowy Mountains has received a \$300,000 grant to aid with its destination marketing program.

The funding comes from the Regional Visitor Economy Fund and would aid with promotion of the 2015 and 2016 ski seasons as well as enhancing current marketing campaigns, NSW Minister for Regional Tourism John Barilaro said.

**CLICK HERE** to read more.

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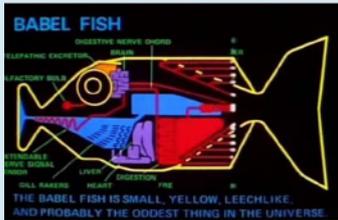
# business events news

16th January 2015



## crumbs!

IT'S not quite the Babel fish but it's almost as good - the Kyoto Convention and Visitor Bureau has launched a 24 hour translation service for those attending international events in the city.



Available in five languages, including English, Chinese and Spanish, the service has been rolled out across 824 hotels and ryokan since its launch last summer, *Travel Daily News Asia-Pacific* reported.

Apparently, hotel staff can call the translation service, where the call is then taken by an interpreter, to speak with the visitor and solve the query.

The service has got to work better than a method *BEN* staff used in the past when faced with language barriers - Google Translate.

From our (dusty) memories, we unintentionally ended up calling the French person involved 'snake eyes' - whoops!

## Sheraton in Samoa



**STARWOOD** Hotels and Resorts Worldwide has debuted its Sheraton brand in Samoa with the Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Resort.

This followed a multimillion dollar conversion and was the first internationally-branded resort to debut in Samoa, Starwood said.

The hotel offers a 144 sqm meeting space with 133 rooms.

## New TEQ app, site

**TOURISM** and Events Queensland (TEQ) has launched its new-look website, Queensland.com, as well as a new mobile app.

The site brought together the state's 13 international tourism websites into a single platform, with information available in eight languages, TEQ said.

TEQ ceo Leanne Coddington said the app, This Is Queensland, took users through five stages of a holiday, including planning, booking and sharing.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more.

## ibtm arabia partner

**IBTM** arabia has confirmed that the Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau will be the premier partner for the event, to be held from 10 to 12 Feb at the St. Regis Hotel Saadiyat Island Resort.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information.



## Sitting Pretty

# Qantas A380 to Dallas

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

**Qantas** recently debuted its Airbus A380 superjumbo on flights between Sydney and Dallas Fort Worth in Texas, USA. The route was established three years ago and has been very successful, leading to the deployment of the "world's largest aircraft on the world's longest route". *Business Events News* was on the inaugural A380 service.

## THE SEAT

Qantas A380s are equipped with 72 of the carrier's second generation SkyBeds. Arranged in a 2-2-2 configuration, the seats are 55cm wide and have a pitch of just over two metres (80 inches). They offer everything you'd expect - a power outlet, on-demand inflight entertainment via a pop-up screen in the armrest, and a USB charger.

There's plenty of storage space in the large overhead lockers and window seats also come with a side compartment. When it's time for sleep, the SkyBed reclines into a fully flat position, and there's a soft cover and a duvet, plus pyjamas, making for a comfortable night.

At the front of the aircraft is a lounge area with a sofa and video screen, and there's also a self-service bar.

## ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

Qantas offers an extensive range of on-demand video and audio entertainment. A large selection of new release and classic movies is available, with Oscar Winners a particularly popular choice. There's also a wide choice of television shows including a number of box sets so you can catch up on some 'binge viewing'.

## SERVICE

Being the inaugural A380 flight to Dallas Fort Worth, Qantas pulled out all stops to make it something special. Meal options included a number of Texan-themed choices, and passengers were also able to pre-order their meals if desired via the Select on Q-Eat service.

Unfortunately Qantas has ceased offering chauffeur drive on its US routes, but once at the airport, the service is impeccable as you are whisked through check-in and then head to the Qantas lounge. On the return leg, premium passengers can also experience the Dallas Fort Worth lounge offering which now includes a First Class lounge area.

After take off the crew offered friendly, attentive service, and to top it off we enjoyed a fabulous US welcome on arrival by none other than Qantas ambassador and Hollywood hunk John Travolta.



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