



Christchurch!

IT'S Wednesday and MEETINGS 2015 hosted buyers have returned from their eye opening famils.



Renewed interest in Christchurch saw **BEN** on a Christchurch/Canterbury famil.

As well as a Hassle Free Tour of the city in a red London double-decker bus we hovered over it in Garden City Helicopters - the scars still visible below from the 2010/11 earthquakes.

Everywhere there's building activity, innovative container cafes and restaurants and architecturally forward newbuilds.

Cranes reminiscent of Sydney prior to the Olympic Games dot the skyline and in picturesque Hagley Park visitors continue to punt lazily along the Avon River.

Out of adversity comes opportunity and for town planners the city's misfortunes have provided a blank canvas from which to work and when it is finished we're told it will be the safest city in the world.

Already up and running is the Temporary Cathedral - a church that is available for functions and where Moveable Feast Caterers served our breakfast.

The family run Commodore Hotel escaped with minor damage as did the Chateau on the Park, which has just announced new owners.

Beyond the city premium experiences abound at Peppers Clearwater and Peppers Bluewater, Melton Estate Winery, Heritage Springs Hotel and at Hanmer Springs Thermal Pools and Spa - even private pool functions.

I guarantee you've never seen anything like it your life! *Jill*

MEETINGS 2015 kicks off

MORE than 5,600 appointments are set to take place this week in Auckland, with business events experiences from 18 regions of New Zealand showcased under one roof

at Conventions and Incentives New Zealand's (CINZ) annual MEETINGS trade show.

As well as pairing together exhibitors and buyers, the event features masterclasses for PCOs as well as a celebrity speaker showcase - not to mention the MEETINGS mentorship program which allows delegates to gain the maximum benefits from networking.

CINZ ceo Sue Sullivan said the organisation was seeing "strong interest in New Zealand as a place to host great conferences, incentives and events".

Sixty Australian event organisers have seen it for themselves, after touring some of NZ's regions in



the lead-up to MEETINGS.

Key sponsors of the event include Air New Zealand along with ASB Showgrounds, Peek Exhibition and Centium Software.

More than 600 conference, event and incentive organisers are attending the show, along with 190 exhibitors.

Sullivan said New Zealand was set to capture a share of the growing business events market, with plans for new convention centres in both Auckland and Christchurch (see **page 3**).

Sullivan is **pictured** above at the official opening of MEETINGS this morning with speaker and mentor Ngahihi O Te Ra Bidois.

BE Cairns roadshow

EIGHTEEN business event suppliers from the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef region will showcase their wares at the upcoming annual Business Events Cairns and Great Barrier Reef roadshow.

Taking place on 21 July in Brisbane, 22 July in Sydney and 24 July in Melbourne, at each event one lucky guest will win a holiday for two to the region.

For more info **CLICK HERE**.

Today's issue of BEN

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

- Pullman Hotels & Resorts

CINZ of the future

'**EMERGING** Talent,' a new networking and educational series was launched today at MEETINGS by CINZ by chief executive Sue Sullivan.

Aimed at developing the careers of its members' "future leaders," Sullivan said that for those looking to take their careers to the next level, the program ticks all the event coordinators and sales account manager boxes.

"Emerging Talent will provide our industry's future leaders with personal and professional development opportunities, as well as a solid network base to support their development," she enthused.

The first session kicks off in Auckland on 27 July, and making it affordable for smaller business, the cost has been kept low at \$30.

"These sessions can become part of members' performance reviews and objectives," she said.

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EAs & PAs heading North

PULLMAN
Sydney Hyde Park pulled out the stops last Thursday evening in a bid to win the hearts and minds of 100 EAs and PAs and threw in Pullman ambassador Justin North to seal the deal through live demonstrations of his Tapastry menu, a concept specially designed for the brand across Australia.



Adding weight to the event, Pullman representatives from hotels across their Australian network of 13 hotels and resorts, mingled with the guests who were pampered with hand massages from the team Vie Spa, while sipping French Taittinger champagne in the other.

Henrik Berglind, vice president sales, distribution & revenue

management for AccorHotels said, "With the Pullman events experience we are showcasing a new attitude with the brand here in Australia, and we offer an unmatched portfolio of locations from city centres to resort destinations such as Port Douglas and Bunker Bay."

Pictured above at the event are Vilay Khounsady of Suncorp; Amy Ward, Holiday Apartments Sydney; Justin Jones, PMAP; and Pagan Doyle, Oliver Wyman.

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New Adelaide Aloft

STARWOOD Hotels & Resorts has today announced the debut of a new Aloft Hotel in Adelaide.

Aloft Adelaide is set to open in 2018 as part of a new mixed-use development set to reinvigorate the inner city that features an "exciting mix of sustainably designed residential, retail and dining spaces, cycle-ways and an integrated village square".

It's designed by global architecture firm Woods Bagot, with the property featuring 200 rooms, a 24-hour fitness centre and 500 square metres of flexible meeting space.

Starwood regional vice president Sean Hunt said the meeting areas are complemented by a striking rooftop bar and lounge overlooking the city - underneath a cantilevered glass bottom rooftop pool.

It's the third Aloft planned for Australia, with the new Aloft Sydney Pitt St scheduled for next year and a new Aloft Perth set to open in 2017.

San Fran back onto Qantas radar

SAN Francisco may be more in focus for Australian meeting and incentive planners after today's announcement that Qantas will resume flights to the city later this year.

The news comes as part of a major expansion of the partnership between Qantas and American Airlines, which will also see AA add a daily flight from Sydney to Los Angeles to its network from December.

That means there will be five airlines operating between Australia and the USA mainland, with Qantas and AA joined by United Airlines, Delta Air Lines and Virgin Australia - not to mention Hawaiian Airlines and Jetstar which both fly to Hawaii.

American Airlines hasn't flown to Australia for more than 23 years, having previously operated a one-stop service from Dallas Fort Worth to Sydney via Honolulu.

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business events news

10th June 2015

Gatsby props

SYDNEY Prop Specialists is offering an extensive range of art deco props and period set pieces to transport guests back to New York's Long Island during the Roaring Twenties.

The Great Gatsby Dinner theme scales well for large venues, while other options such as a Gatsby table setting suit smaller gatherings - 02 9558 8999.

Record result for IT&CM China 2015

THE ninth annual IT&CM China conference concluded late last month with a new record of over 13,000 business appointments conducted over the 3-day event.

A key development was the presence of close to 500 quality buyers across the MICE, association and corporate markets - and for the first time there was an 80/20 split between Chinese and international buyers reflecting the surging outbound and domestic demand in China.

This year's IT&CM included a range of educational initiatives including two Association Days and six new Campfire knowledge sessions which catered to specific delegate niches including suppliers, PCOs & corporates.

Topics included effective selling at trade shows, harnessing mobile for events & meetings ROI, technology trends, and understanding the Chinese corporate travel market.

IT&CM 2016 is scheduled for 06-08 Apr next year.

Hanmer Springs deal

HERITAGE Hotels is offering a special MEETINGS 2015 deal for conference bookings at its Hanmer Springs property.

A range of "tempting complimentary extras" can be selected by conference organisers, with the choice including a free half hour canape package suitable for a welcome function, or every 15th room free or a \$10 food and beverage credit per night per room.

To qualify bookings must be made before 31 Jul 2015 for events taking place before 30 June 2016.

Heritage Hanmer Springs is about 90 min drive from Christchurch Airport and has conference space for over 100.

Sydney-Hunter flights

CROWNE Plaza Hunter Valley and Novotel Newcastle owner Jerry Schwartz has announced a new seaplane service which will connect Sydney with the Hunter Valley and Newcastle.

Blue Sky Airlines will operate a six-seat Lake Sea Fury LA3250 aircraft which is relocating from Hamilton Island to start the services later this year.

Regular charter flights would start in Oct running twice daily from Fri-Mon for \$250 per leg.

The flights from Rose Bay will land at Cessnock Airport, next to the Hunter Valley Conference & Events Centre, helping establish the area as a 'premium' destination for time-poor guests.

Christchurch draws on empty



IT'S currently no more than a gaping expanse of open space, however according to Tim Hunter, chief executive of Christchurch and Canterbury Tourism (CCT) and Christchurch and Canterbury Convention Bureau, more than 15 large conferences are set to book into the new Christchurch Convention Centre once the start up date is announced (watch this space) with completion expected in the last quarter of 2018.

Two large medical congresses in 2019 are anticipated to bring in 2000 international delegates, depositing an estimated \$4 million into the Christchurch coffers.

"The new Convention Centre will augment our conference capability in Christchurch by 50% and will make bigger international conferences possible again," Hunter said.

"Once up and running it will deliver eight to 100 major events per year and, unlike its predecessor, will be able to operate two 700-person conferences at the same time improving the productivity of the venue by 40%," he added.

The centre, with a design concept pictured above, is likely to trigger the construction of a

number of new hotel properties once the development gets formally under way.

"These new hotels will not only service the conference market but provide much needed summer accommodation for our inbound tourism market that are back in high levels of growth," Hunter explained.

While there is no word yet who will manage the Convention Centre, Accor has been chosen as the preferred operator for the master planning and development stage of the project.

13 key anchor projects are currently underway to underpin the future of the city, none more than seven storeys in height with Christchurch officially declared a low-rise destination.

Hunter said that much thought had been given to the spaces around the venue with laneways, restaurant, bars, retail and inner city accommodation.

The total cost of the convention centre is estimated at about NZ\$300 million, all of which is being provided by the government and which will "generate millions of dollars of new economic activity in our city centre on an ongoing basis," Hunter added.



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business events news

10th June 2015

Ita lends her wisdom to BESydney

ITA Buttrose shared the secrets of her success with more than 300 event planners, executive assistants and industry suppliers last week at Business Events Sydney's annual Business Events Exchange (BEx).

Themed 'sparkling connections' delegates enjoyed networking and education with the stunning backdrop of Vivid Sydney.

Buttrose stressed the importance of making the right



connections in business, while other presenters provided an update on the new ICC Sydney.

BESydney gm event delivery Robyn Johnson also launched the enhanced BESydney Event Service - formerly AccessNSW - which is an enhanced self-service tool on the BESydney website that "takes all the legwork out of planning an event in Australia's harbour city".

BESydney ceo Lyn Lewis-Smith is pictured above at the event with Ita Buttrose AO OBE.

Insight custom groups

INSIGHT Vacations has ramped up its offerings for customised incentives and group tours, with the company able to tailor specific activities across the globe.

Insight, which also runs guided holidays in Europe, North America, South America and India, has a burgeoning groups department and has in the past catered for special interests such as gardening, food & wine, art and culture and more.

Group departures can be either branded or unbranded, with the company offering strong buying power and local expertise.

MD Joost Timmer told **BEN** the company is currently quoting a number of group departures for 2016, with sizes generally numbering around 40 passengers - groups@insightvacations.com.au.



STAGING Connections was definitely thinking ink when it helped deliver the creative concept at the recent Australian Hotels Association gala dinner.

Taking place at Crown Perth on 18 May, the backdrop was "smokey, fluid graphics" themed around ink being poured into water.

The abstract idea, developed by the WA Staging Connections team, aimed to reflect the event's invitation "evoking ambient energy and emotion in a unique way".

The vision of slow-motion footage showing coloured inks being poured into water (**below**) was projected onto a 3D modular set built from interlocking aluminium extrusion and perspex panels, slowly filling the room from the floor to the ceiling.



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

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\$50,000 Taiwan MICE promo

AUSTRALIAN businesses are being invited to participate in an international competition being staged by MEET TAIWAN, the organisation which promotes the country to the global business events market.

Dubbed the *Asia Super Team: Team Up for Good* initiative, the competition aims to highlight Taiwan as a premium destination for incentive travel while at the same time supporting charitable causes in the Asia-Pacific region.

The grand prize is an incentive travel package to Taiwan valued at over US\$50,000, plus a \$5,000 donation to charity.

To participate, businesses can make an online submission of a proposal which is then voted upon by the public to determine an Australian finalist.

That finalist will then attend a global grand final in Taiwan alongside the winners from five other countries for a five day tour exploring the diverse experiences available for meetings and exhibitions in Taiwan, encompassing local culture,

environmental sustainability and community support.

The itinerary proposal should showcase a passion for and understanding of Taiwan's incentive travel offering, and contestants can share their submissions via social media to help attract the highest number of public votes.

It's an initiative of the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA) - and this year is the first time Australia has been included in the promotion.

Other participating countries include Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

Registration and proposal submissions are being accepted from now until 30 August 2015, with public voting opening on 03 August and running until 30 Aug.

Participants who log into their social media accounts to vote will also be entered into a draw to win round-trip flights to Taiwan courtesy of China Airlines.

To sign up and for more information see the website at asiasuperteam.meettaiwan.com.

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