



Vale John Hemmes

AN ICON of the hospitality industry, John Hemmes, died last week



after a long battle with cancer.

Founder of the multi-million dollar family empire the Merivale Group, Hemmes' foray with his wife Merivale into hospitality and later, with son Justin and daughter Bettina, had its roots in the fashion industry with the opening the House of Merivale and Mr John in the late 50s.

From here grew the move into restaurants and bars, and accommodation with the opening of the Establishment Hotel.

Today, through the efforts and determination of this Dutch immigrant, those inner-city eateries and suburban drinking spots include some of the hippest and most fashionable places to dine, play and hold events.

These venues include Ivy, The Establishment, Mr Wong, El Loco in Surry Hills, The Slip Inn, Manly's Papi Chulo and the Coogee Pavilion to name a few – an empire now worth a reported \$500m.

Thanks, Mr Hemmes.

MEANWHILE as there is many a slip between 'the cup and the lip', the number of Jehovah's Witnesses at Etihad Stadium (BEN 06 Mar) was 70,000, not 700,000.

That's an awful lot of door knockers!

Jill

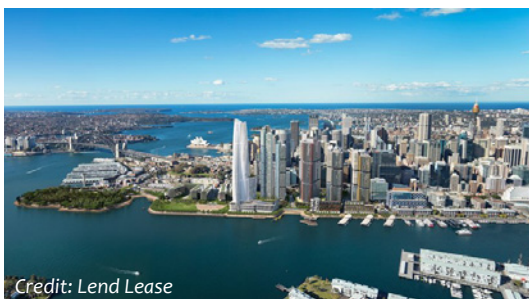
Hotel move sees event space

THE move of the Crown Sydney Hotel from a harbour pier to the north-west corner of the Barangaroo South site would see a new park created that would

provide a separate event space for gatherings of up to about 10,000 people.

The proposed six star international hotel will have 350 rooms, a function centre, and, according to the 2013 project submission, a number of function rooms and meeting spaces, including meeting facilities in the hotel podium.

Developer Lend Lease submitted a revised concept plan for Barangaroo South to the NSW Department of Planning



Credit: Lend Lease

and Environment last week for approval.

The modified concept plan would see a new larger park of about 9,000 sqm created adjacent to Hickson Road, which would provide a separate event space, a request for Director-General's Requirements said.

More than half of the 7.68 hectare site would still be dedicated to public space, Lend Lease said.

CLICK HERE to read the full list of changes.

Destination Oz reg

TOURISM WA has reminded tourism businesses that registration to attend the Destination Australia conference is open.

To be held on 17 Mar at the Ivy in Sydney, the conference would focus on how the country could attract more high-yielding international visitors, Tourism WA said.

Registration is \$300.

CLICK HERE for more information.

AIME - have your say

REED Exhibitions has released its feedback survey for AIME.

If you are looking to have your say about this year's AIME, which saw a number of changes, including issues with the appointment booking system (BEN 27 Feb), a gala dinner instead of a welcome function and a new brand (BEN 23 Feb), you can use the personalised link emailed to attendees.

Virgin's conference boost

TAMWORTH is to get a six times a week Virgin Australia service starting from 25 May.

Announced by the Deputy Premier Troy Grant and Member for Tamworth Kevin Anderson on Thursday, along with a \$6m boost for regional conferencing (BEN 06 Mar), Grant said that increasing the flights would improve Tamworth's attractiveness to businesses and tourists.

SA event funding deadline

SOUTH Australian regional events need to get applications for funding in by 26 Mar, when applications for both the Community Events Development Fund and the Regional Events and Festivals Program close.

The Fund offers up to \$5,000.

CLICK HERE to read more.



Events ben Calendar

This week's **BEN** events calendar is brought to you by **Gold Coast Business Events**.



16 MAR

Ni hao WA 2015; Aravina Estate, Yallingup; for more visit: www.tourism.wa.gov.au

18 MAR

Gold Coast Connect Sydney, InterContinental Sydney; for details: www.visitgoldcoast.com

24-26 MAY

MEA Conference 2015; Hamilton Island; for more visit www.meetingsevents.com.au

9-11 JUN

ibtm america; Chicago, USA; visit: www.ibtmamerica.com

18-20 JUN

This Is Gold Coast Business Exchange 2015; for details: www.visitgoldcoast.com

6-9 SEP

Luxperience; Australian Technology Park, Sydney; see: www.luxperience.com.au

10-11 SEP

MICE Asia Pacific Exhibition 2015; Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre, Singapore; more info at: www.miceasiaexhibition.com

17-19 NOV

ibtm world; Barcelona, Spain; see: www.ibtmworld.com

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@businesseventsnews.com.au.

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Mentors, mentees sought

CONVENTIONS and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) is calling for more mentors and mentees to take part in its 2015 Mentorship Program, set to launch in June at CINZ MEETINGS.

The program provided PCOs with additional professional and personal advice and was open to CINZ members, the organisation said.

It would run over a seven month period, it said.

CLICK HERE to find out more.

Preferred Hotel Group to one brand

PREFERRED Hotel Group has rebranded to one "master" brand, Preferred Hotels and Resorts, as of 05 Mar.

With one brand website, the company said the shift showed its commitment to a consumer-focused approach.

CLICK HERE for more.

Planners want int hotels

THE availability of internationally recognised hotel brands in Tasmania would sway 63% of event planners' decisions when it came to considering the state for business events.

This is according to the National Event Planners Research conducted by Enterprise Marketing and Research Services online on behalf of Business Events Tasmania (BET) between September and November last year, which saw 279 responses from event planners.

Sixty three percent of the 263 planners said the availability of internationally recognised hotel brands would increase their likelihood of considering the state for business events.

Of the roughly 140 respondents who had organised a business event or conference in Tasmania, 92% said they would consider Tasmania again for a business event.

Affordability once in the state

(27%), Tasmania as a unique destination (26%) and beautiful scenery (23%) were highlighted as advantages while venue capacity or a lack of infrastructure (34%), air access (32%) and climate (26%) were identified as major barriers to holding a business event in the state.

Sixty six percent of respondents said the establishment of a dedicated convention centre would make them much more or somewhat more likely to consider Hobart as a business events destination.

BET ceo Stuart Nettlefold told **BEN** at AIME that the state was set to see more than \$435m of infrastructure recently completed, in progress or due to start, including the \$35m Macquarie Wharf One and a \$16m silos hotel and conference centre redevelopment in Launceston (**BEN** 02 Mar).

CLICK HERE to read the research in full.

Music to my Ayers

HANG your corporate retreat hat onto this first time appearance by the Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO) when it performs a series of three intimate concerts led by Richard Tognetti at Ayers Rock Resort from 30 to 31 Oct.

The ACO Uluru Festival will feature special guests ARIA winner William Barton playing didgeridoo and ARIA nominee Steve Pigram, while other highlights will include works by Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks, Rameau, Peter Sculthorpe and J.S. Bach.

There are three exclusive dining events and a poolside welcome dinner on Friday night, a long lunch featuring tastes of the Outback and a celebratory gala dinner on Saturday night.

Concert packages start from \$395 per person.

For more information or to book, contact

ayersrockresort.com.au/acoulurufestival.

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business events news

9th March 2015



EVENT organisers looking to do a good deed could turn their attention to the Dancing Man, who was targeted by a nasty piece of work on Internet site 4chan, *SMH* reported.

Photos were posted of him dancing and then looking sad with the comment "Spotted this specimen trying to dance the other week. He stopped when he saw us laughing."

A campaign by LA activist Cassandra Banks has seen US\$35,000 raised to get the man, identified as Sean from London, to LA to dance with more than 1,700 female friends, and Pharrell, *SMH* said.

NZ 2015 event planners guide

CONVENTIONS and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) has released its 2015 event planners guide, with a new luxury section.

The 180-page guide has a four page section for each region of the country and a venue size index, with figures for capacity, CINZ said.

A flipbook version of the guide will be made available at www.conventionsnz.co.nz.

GC destination update

THE latest destination update for the Gold Coast Tourism Corporation details a new marquee at Canungra Valley Vineyards for up to 200 guests and more.

CLICK HERE for more.

Six more proposals for Tassie parks EOI

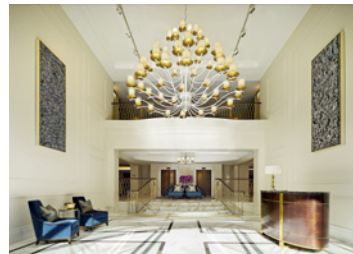
SIX more proposals, including to develop new accommodation south of Cape Sorell Lighthouse, have been invited to proceed to stage two of the Tasmanian government's Expressions of Interest (EOI) for tourism offerings in National Parks and the World Heritage Area (**BEN** 10 Sep 14).

Other proposals included heli-canyoning at Cradle Mountain and the development of a 12km circular walk at Mt Paul, Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage Matthew Groom said.

Twenty one proposals had been invited to proceed to stage two, with four more projects still to be considered for stage one assessment, the Minister said.

CLICK HERE to read more.

Langham imagery available



THE Langham, Sydney has unveiled imagery following its \$30m make over last year (**BEN** 25 Jul 14).

This refurbishment saw the hotel close in July to undergo works including to its lobby (**pictured**), dining areas and ballroom.

It reopened in December (**BEN** 08 Dec 14), with the hotel in a soft open phase, the hotel said.

CLICK HERE for the images.



Getting to Know: Melbourne's new Plenary

by: Bruce Piper

THE Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre unveiled the new "Plenary" branding for its massive centrepiece meeting room just after AIME, with a gala event open to the public featuring presentations from thought leaders Chris Riddell and Rachel Botsman. Although the 5,500 seat hall has been in place for some years, MCEC is aiming to highlight its flexibility and "international renown in the business events industry" to showcase the huge hall to a wider audience and in particular attract more concerts and performances.

Plenary "deserves its own unique identity," according to MCEC ceo Peter King, who said the branding will allow it to become a Melbourne venue in its own right. Plenary has adaptable acoustics and adjustable walls, and its reputation for flexibility is well-deserved because as well as handling events for over 5,000 delegates it can also be transformed into three self-contained rooms for more intimate performances. It can also host a banquet for 1,500 or a cocktail event for 2,000.

The room is equipped with the latest in technology, with MCEC's IMAGINE able to facilitate any requirements such as lighting to set a specific mood right through to live video streaming. During the Plenary launch, some of these innovations were highlighted, with Riddell interacting with the giant screen via his smartphone, and a virtual reality transformation of the space as part of the launch presentation.

Conveniently located next to the MCEC's large exhibition space as well as the South Wharf precinct and a range of other meeting and networking areas, Plenary's setting also offers a unique view of Melbourne for delegates. The Hilton Melbourne South Wharf is also part of the complex, making it currently the only convention centre in Australia to offer on-site five star accommodation.



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