



Super Sydney

WITH such a line-up of cultural and sporting events being held in the final seven days of May, its no wonder it is being dubbed as 'Sydney Super Week'.



Top of mind is Vivid Sydney – the 18-day festival of light, music and ideas. **BEN** counts itself lucky to be invited to numerous Vivid related pre and post events that stretch from light displays in Darling Harbour, Circular Quay, The Rocks and out to The Concourse at Chatswood - hosted by both Government agencies and five star hotels.

On Wednesday night Darling Harbour, Pyrmont and The Star treated visitors to a Vivid Laser-Fountain Water Theatre preview with water jets shooting 30 metres into the air and a Pyrmont Pyro digital fireworks display illuminating Pyrmont Bay Park.

Sporting-wise there's the Super Rugby Grand Final rematch between NSW Waratahs and Crusaders at ANZ Stadium on 23 May; State of Origin game one at ANZ Stadium on 27 May; AFL Indigenous Round match featuring Sydney Swans v Carlton at Sydney Cricket Ground on 29 May; Sydney FC taking on Premier League giants Tottenham Hotspur at ANZ Stadium on 30 May - not to mention the Australian Badminton Open at Sydney Olympic Park from 26-31 May.

MEANWHILE we wish the organisers and delegates at the MEA2015 Conference being held on Hamilton Island from Sun-Tue a first rate conference and await the details of MEA's new Event Show Sydney. *Jill*



Hey, big (incentive) spenders!

BUSINESS Events Sydney has released new research showing that Asian incentive delegates provide the highest yield for the city, outpacing holiday visitors by up to 9.4 times.

The new *Asian incentive events in NSW: expenditure and retail impact* report released by BESydney at IMEX this week builds on previous research commissioned by the organisation which aims to accurately quantify 'new money' flowing into destinations that host conferences.

Developed in collaboration with the University of Technology, Sydney, the study measured the expenditure of both delegates and organisers.

"It's important that governments and communities understand the benefits that business events bring to their destinations, so they get the right support," said one of the researchers, Deborah Edwards.

BESydney ceo Lyn Lewis-Smith said the destination had seen 20% year-on-year growth over the last ten years in the value of events secured from Asia, with the market now accounting for almost half of the total business secured and delivered each year. Shopping pursuits were revealed as a key part of the delegate experience for Asian visitors, with the group most likely to be drawn to Western brand names at retailers.

On average international incentive delegates spent \$974 per day - versus \$151 for a holiday arrival, with the biggest spending on clothing, handbags and shoes, followed by souvenirs, jewelry and toys.

More than two thirds of respondents considered Sydney as either the 'best incentive event destination' or 'better than most incentive event destinations'.

The full report can be downloaded by **CLICKING HERE**.

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news plus a full page from ([click](#))

- Travel Industry Expo

MEA keeping mum

FOLLOWING the announcement earlier this year that Meetings and Events Australia's (MEA) would be hosting Sydney's only events trade show in August (and despite efforts to inveigle more information out of them) MEA is still keeping tight-lipped about details of the new Event Show Sydney, saying it will be revealed to those attending the MEA2015 National Conference on Hamilton Island, next Monday 25 May.

Dates, venue and sponsors, and how delegates can be a part of the event will be revealed at the opening plenary.

MEA ceo Linda Gaunt said, "Our members, particularly those who will travel to Hamilton Island for the conference, are the people and businesses that will make the Event Show Sydney work and they deserve to hear the details first hand."

Spectacular Uluru inspires



ABOVE: This group of business events professionals recently experienced the wonder of the Red Centre during a famil at Ayers Rock Resort.

The visit saw them experience the resort's Indigenous cultural experiences which can be worked into a conference or incentive.

They came during the annual Tjungu Festival over the Anzac Day weekend, and enjoyed a

special Sounds of Silence dinner with a bush tucker inspired menu by celebrity chef Mark Olive.

The trip also saw them touring around Uluru and Kata Tjuta.

Pictured above from left are Joanne Thornton of Solterbeck; Natalia Marzagao, Travel Management; Sarah Fletcher, Willett Marketing; and Sharnel Bor, Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia.

Tourism Portfolio adds Southern Ocean

KANGAROO Island's Southern Ocean Lodge has recognised the significant potential of the MICE market, with the appointment of Tourism Portfolio to represent the luxury property to the small group and incentive sector.

Tourism Portfolio director Donna Kessler said "There is no doubt that this spectacular property has enormous appeal to small groups and incentives looking for a world-class experience with a distinctly Australian flavour."

Southern Ocean Lodge founder James Baillie said the appointment would help establish the property as a "MICE market leader," with the Tourism Portfolio collection also including The Byron at Byron, Chateau Elan and Lake House Daylesford.



crumbs!

TEAM building exercises involving Scrabble just got a whole lot more complicated.

The official dictionary compiled by the makers of the popular word game has just been revamped, with more than 6,000 new words added to the lexicon.

There's some element of outrage in the reaction to the move, which has seen teenage slang terms such as "lolz" and "shizzle" become acceptable.

There are also SMS abbreviations such as "newb" (for newbie) and "obvs" for obviously.

And it gets worse - or even more "ridic" (ridiculous - yes, that's in too) with other additions including bezzy (best friend), waah (interjection meaning wailing) and dench (excellent).

The official dictionary is used to judge Scrabble tournaments, with a compiler saying that social media had now provided much more evidence of the use of informal English than ever before, according to the UK *Telegraph* newspaper.

A VERY special event has kicked off the 2015 Alaska season for cruising giant Princess Cruises.

Guests staying at the Denali Princess Wilderness Lodge were delighted when a helicopter arrived carrying the season's first catch of Copper River king salmon.

That was the end of a long journey, with fishermen hooking their catch in Cordova, about 500km away as the crow flies.

The fish were then flown by Alaska Airlines to Anchorage, where a chopper picked them up and flew them to the lodge where they were expertly prepared by chef Jeff Elliott - wowing the attendees at the launch.

Auckland advocates

THE NZ city of Auckland will be represented on the world stage by fourteen "distinguished thought leaders," under the new Auckland Business Events Advocate Programme.

Representing sectors such as health, medical, education and information technology, the advocates will work closely with the Auckland Convention Bureau in a program which is the first of its kind in New Zealand.

Auckland mayor Len Brown said the representatives were highly regarded both home and abroad for their passion in their field as well as their dedication to promoting Auckland as a business events destination.

He said that in 2013 the sector contributed NZ\$236 million in direct spending to the Auckland economy, with the city's Business Events Plan targeting a doubling of that figure by 2023 and increasing delegate days from 1.98 million to 2.55 million.

Most of the Auckland advocates have already previously been involved in successful business event bids for the city.

Outrigger Noosa deal

OUTRIGGER Little Hastings Street Resort and Spa in Noosa has a conference special from \$319 per person per night. It includes one bedroom apartment accommodation, full buffet breakfast and full day delegate package including morning and afternoon tea and buffet lunch.

Book by 31 August and hold your event prior to 15 December with a minimum spend of \$5000 and receive a bonus free half hour welcome reception including beer/wine and soft drinks - email noosa.confsales@outrigger.com.au

TFE's 'game-changing' platform

VENUE bookers will be offered real-time quotes and availability at TFE Hotels' portfolio of 70 properties in Australia, New Zealand and Europe, via a new MICE platform developed for the company by hospitality technology firm iVvy.

The partnership will give TFE more centralised control over MICE booking and inventory functions, with the tool scanning availability right across the group.

This will enable "cross sell functionality," giving TFE the ability to deliver solutions for

clients faster than competitors.

TFE, which is growing strongly through its joint venture with Far East Organisation and its takeover of the Rendezvous Hotels portfolio, has placed a high priority on the business events segment.

The company has already this year relaunched its 'Events with Benefits' loyalty program.

"TFE Hotels is in a fortunate position to offer a wide range of market leading MICE facilities and offer even more choice to our meetings and conference customers," said ceo Rachel Argaman.

Brands encompassed by the new iVvy solution will include Adina Apartment Hotels, Medina Serviced Apartments, Vibe Hotels, Rendezvous Hotels, Travelodge and Hotel Kurrajong Canberra.

TFE also recently appointed former Carnival Australia senior vice president Tammy Marshall as its new chief operating officer.

Lindeman Island's \$600m makeover



THE Whitsundays' cyclone battered Lindeman Island, mooted since 2013 to undergo a \$200 million redevelopment, has resurfaced again after White Horse Australia Lindeman Pty Ltd gained a \$600 million 'coordinated project' status for its redevelopment.

The Company, with links to one of China's largest advertising and media groups, seeks to build five resort precincts, including a six-star spa resort and a five-star eco resort, including a 50-berth marina and a small golf course.

State Development Minister Anthony Lynham said the development, within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, is the first co-ordinated project in Queensland in 18 months.

"This marks the beginning of a process, including a comprehensive environmental impact assessment, towards a development that could create more than 800 constructions jobs a year over a four-year construction period," he said.

Shangri-La rewards

SHANGRI-LA Hotels & Resorts has launched a new Business Travel Programme, which is designed to reward SME clients for business stays.

Joining the program, which includes an online corporate account portal, enables registered businesses to take advantage of preferential rates and special benefits at the group's almost 80 properties around the world.

Once qualified as a Business Travel Account, a unique code is assigned for employees to reserve accommodation online or via the Shangri-La mobile app.

Benefits include up to 10% off the Best Available Rate at all hotels and selected resorts under the Shangri-La, Kerry, Hotel Jen and Traders brands.

To qualify organisations must generate a minimum of 50 room night bookings annually across participating hotels, not already have a corporate rate agreement with Shangri-La, and travel agents or wholesalers are not eligible.

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