



FLIGHT CENTRE WORLD DMC PLAN

RETAIL travel giant Flight Centre has announced plans to create a worldwide Destination Management Company (DMC) offering a range of tourism services including hosting for conferences and events.

Under the plan, Flight Centre will form a joint venture with the Thien Minh Group in which a series of DMC businesses among the two companies will be combined with Vietnam-based operator Buffalo Tours (**pictured**).

Flight Centre will increase its equity in the new venture and plans to acquire or launch similar businesses in other key regions to create a worldwide DMC network.

The managing director of Flight Centre Travel Group Graham Turner said the deal represented the first major step towards creating a global DMC.

"We believe there are huge opportunities in the in-destination sector and it has



become one of our key strategic growth areas for the future," Turner said on Fri.

"Today's agreement will fast-track our growth in this sector and establish the foundations for a global DMC that will deliver essential and valued services to travellers when they arrive at their destinations."

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has three pages of news.

Sofitel's AV

AVPartners has appointed Mitch Tucker as managing partner at Sofitel Gold Coast Broadbeach in Queensland.

Tucker will be responsible for delivering creative conferences, corporate events and meetings at the luxury hotel.

He was previously AVPartners' sales manager at RACV Royal Pines Resort, also on the Gold Coast.

SOS for CWT Meetings & Events

CWT Meetings & Events has announced it will offer the services of International SOS to its clients.

The Carlson Wagonlit Travel division said it was the first time a global corporate meetings and events service had included the product as part of its core offering.

"This is a groundbreaking safety and security offering – which in today's changeable times is of paramount importance to everyone, wherever they are," said Cindy Fisher, senior vice president and global head, CWT Meetings & Events.

"By collaborating with International SOS, we have created a new gold standard for the rest of the industry to aim at."

Under the scheme, CWT M&E customers can now access pre-travel advice and integrate further International SOS Services such as Event Medical Support Plan into their program.

The agreement also allows customers to subscribe to medical and security alerts and use a travel risk assessment tool.

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See what's new in Melbourne conference and meeting venues in the April issue of *travelBulletin*.

CLICK HERE to read **travelBulletin**



TIE LINE-UP REVEALED

THE Travel Industry Exhibition & Conference has revealed details of the new two-day seminar added to its format this year, offering a range of Australian and international speakers under the theme 'Agents of Change'.



Sydney's Luna Park will play host to the event on 20-21 Jul before it moves to the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre on 25-26 Jul.

In both cities the conference will be opened by Zelda la Grange, who will share her experiences from 19 years as an aide to the late South African President Nelson Mandela.

Top Australian professional Instagramer Lauren Bath has also been added to the line-up of speakers.

The chef turned photographer will share insights into her Instagram success along with what travel agencies and other businesses need to know to

grow their online communities.

David Paterson, event director with Exhibitions and Trade Fairs, said the event was a unique opportunity for Australia's travel agent community.

"As Australia's trade only travel event, conference delegates will be inspired to shift their current thinking, recognise their brand value and find insight into how they can increase their customer base."

The free exhibition held alongside the conference will give visitors an opportunity to view products from airlines, hotels, destinations and more.

CLICK HERE for more info.

Hilton expands with Saudi venue

HILTON has opened the largest conference facilities in the city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia, featuring a grand ballroom capable of hosting events for up to 1,600 people.



The Hilton Makkah Convention Hotel is the group's 12th property in Saudi Arabia and overlooks the city's sacred mosque, Al Masjid al Haram.

It features eight multi-purpose meeting rooms and boardrooms, plus three restaurants.

The hotel offers 764 guest rooms, including 16 suites.

Alice addition

ACCORHOTELS will add the Chifley Alice Springs Resort to its network in Jul, rebranding it as the Mercure Alice Springs Resort.

The 139-room resort is undergoing a \$2 million upgrade of its rooms and facilities, and is in the final stages designing an outdoor amphitheatre which will pose as a multipurpose venue for conferences and other events.

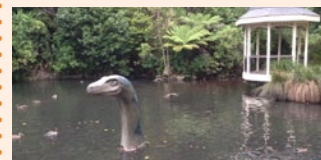
The hotel's in-house Indigenous workshops and cultural sessions for event delegates will also be run from this space.

Mercure Alice Springs Resort will join Mercure Darwin Airport Resort and the Mercure Kakadu Crocodile Hotel among 12 AccorHotels properties in the Northern Territory.



NEW Zealanders have been left wondering whether Scotland's Loch Ness Monster has made a guest appearance in Wellington this week as part of a new exhibition in the capital.

Visitors to Wellington Botanic Gardens were doing double-takes after a model plesiosaur was installed in a pond in the lead-up to the Age of Dinosaurs exhibition, the *Dominion Post* reports.



The Nessie lookalike will soon be joined by other dinosaurs including a T-Rex and a velociraptor.

Blueprint for Australian events

LONDON-BASED communications and events agency Blueprint has expanded its global footprint, with the opening of a new office in Melbourne to be headed up by David Ducker.

With offices in the UK, Dubai and now Melbourne, Blueprint's client base includes international automotive manufacturers, retail networks, technology businesses and entertainment distributors.

The company delivers marketing communications, live events, video, VR and digital systems, with existing clientele in other markets including Porsche, VW, Audi, Sony and Lend Lease.

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Events Calendar

WELCOME to the **BEN** events calendar.

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

30 APR - 2 MAY

MEA Conference; International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC); for more info see: www.meetingsevents.com.au

14 - 18 MAY

ATE 2017; International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC); details at: www.tradeevents.australia.com

24-25 MAY

This is Gold Coast PCO Famil; Gold Coast; for more info visit: www.visitgoldcoast.com

25 - 27 MAY

This is Gold Coast Business Exchange; Gold Coast; apply here: www.visitgoldcoast.com

31 MAY - 1 JUN

CINZ Meetings 2017; ASB Showgrounds, Auckland NZ; for more info visit: www.meetings.co.nz

20 - 21 JUL

The Travel Industry Exhibition & Conference; Luna Park Sydney; register here: travelindustryexpo.com.au

25 - 26 JUL

The Travel Industry Exhibition & Conference; MCEC Melbourne; register here: travelindustryexpo.com.au

28 JUL

Get Global – Where the World Meets; International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC); read more: www.getglobal.com.au

Brisbane Airport events venue



PULLMAN and **ibis** Brisbane Airport hotels are on track to open in Oct, along with an adjoining 300-seat pillarless ballroom (**BEN** 27 Aug 15).

The project will feature 1,735m² of conference, meeting and event space and will be capable of hosting up to 600 delegates.

Facilities include eight conference and meeting rooms, boardrooms and a business centre, within walking distance of the domestic terminal.

Brisbane Lord Mayor Graham Quirk said as recently as three

years ago the city had been forced to forgo 120,000 visitors due to a lack of accommodation.

“However, hotels such as the Pullman Brisbane Airport and ibis Brisbane Airport hotels will help address this shortage and allow the city to attract world-class events,” Quirk said.

The development will be owned by Anthony and Scott Flynn’s Flynn Property Group, the owner of the Novotel Brisbane Airport.

The Pullman and ibis hotels, **pictured**, will begin accepting bookings from next month.

Geelong shows mysterious side

BUSINESS Events Geelong (BEG) last month treated more than 80 guests to an inaugural Mystery Dinner.

Hosted at Clyde Park Vineyard in Bannockburn, the themed evening highlighted some of the region’s top event suppliers.

“We wanted to create excitement around the event and keep our guests guessing,” said BEG’s Mark Day.

“The evening was designed to break down perceptions that the region is remote because in reality, it’s under an hour’s drive from Melbourne CBD,” he said.

BEN ON *BEN*



Each month Business Manager for inPlace Recruitment, **Ben Carnegie**, writes his observations from the recruiter’s perspective to help job hunters find the perfect job. Ben has over 15 years working in five-star hotels and the MICE industry and has worked on some of Australia’s biggest events.

The importance of mentoring

I CANNOT stress to you how much benefit there is having a mentor external to your place of employment. I will be graduating from the TIME program (Travel Industry Mentor Experience) this month. Not the first of these programs I have done either. Having a mentor gives you accountability to someone outside your manager but not just for your job, but for your life! I’ve found that having someone to challenge your way of thinking both personally & professionally helps you to achieve more out of each and every day. Mentors help you discover for yourself what you think is important to you and guide you on how to get there. Not doing the work for you but bringing the best of you to the surface. Whether a formalised program such as TIME or just someone you meet with regularly for career advice, it’s all good. A big thank you to SKAL Sydney North for the ‘Skalarship’ too!

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