



AYERS ROCK RESORT UPGRADE

VOYAGES Indigenous Tourism Australia has today unveiled the outcome of an extensive upgrade of its Desert Gardens Hotel in the Red Centre, elevating the property to “a new level of sophistication and style”.

The relaunch, which covers all 218 rooms as well as the on-site Mangata Bistro & Bar and the Arnguli Grill & Restaurant, will help the resort capitalise on strong demand, with the stunning Field of Light installation (pictured) now in place until 31 Mar 2018.

Voyages' Karena Noble told *Business Events News* the Field



of Light, which features 50,000 handcrafted illuminated solar-powered globes, had been an outstanding success, focusing the eyes of a global audience on the destination.

But the Field of Light is just one aspect of the resort, with the iconic Uluru and Kata Tjuta

providing an ongoing drawcard underpinned by continuing development by Voyages.

The introduction of a free guest activity program has been very popular with visitors, and Noble also cited the success of the company's Indigenous employment strategy which is providing hospitality training and now sees 35% of the resort staff from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.

 business events news
on location at
Uluru

Today's issue of *BEN* is coming to you courtesy of Ayers Rock Resort in the Northern Territory.

THE latest stage in a program of constant investment by Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia will today see the formal opening of the new look Desert Gardens Hotel at Ayers Rock Resort, providing an enhanced accommodation option for visitors to the iconic property.

Voyages is hosting several key industry partners for the opening, which also coincides with the start of the 2017 Tali Wiru season - the resort's magical fine dining experience under the stars which is a hit with incentive groups.

The property is seeing strong demand, both from domestic and international leisure visitors as well as conference organisers utilising the Uluru Meeting Place facilities - see ulurumeetingplace.com.au.

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has four pages of news.

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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**



Spotlight: Yas Viceroy ballroom



THE Yas Viceroy is one of Abu Dhabi's most recognisable hotels, namely due to the giant Yas Marina Formula 1 Circuit which wraps around and underneath the buildings.

The hotel accommodates droves of racing fans for the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, proving it is capable of large-scale events.

Yas Viceroy's ballroom (**pictured**) is spread across 504m² and can be broken down into three separate spaces.

It opens out to a space commonly used for cocktail receptions and the ballroom can accommodate 200 people through to 600 when arranged into a theatre-style configuration.

The space is used by a broad range of industries mainly for conferences, but also caters for incentives.

Twelve other meeting rooms, which are perfect for break out sessions, are located nearby.

Yas Viceroy is also home to a variety of top-class restaurants and nearby Yas Island's theme parks and the airport.

ROCKPOOL ON STAGE

ROCKPOOL Dining Group chefs, led by Neil Perry, will cater to the World's 50 Best Restaurants 2017 awards ceremony in Melbourne next Wed.

The team will cook for 800 guests using Australian ingredients at the pre and post awards events, to be held at the Royal Exhibition Building.

To begin the evening, the pre-awards menu will feature simple cocktail-style bites.

An artistic installation or 'still-

life' will be the centerpiece to the annual celebration of global gastronomy in Melbourne.

Perry said it was an honour to deliver menus for the iconic event using Australian produce to the global chefs.

"We really want to showcase Australia's outstanding produce and celebrate the sustainable fisheries and dedicated farmers."

Rockpool's new events space, Alfred Place by Rockpool Events, will host the event's after party.

Tank Stream's private dining



SYDNEY'S Tank Stream Hotel now offers city businesses a private dining room, boardroom and function space as part of its Le Petit Flot restaurant.

With full audio-visual facilities available for corporate events and launches, the private room can seat 24 in a boardroom format, 32 in banquet style and up to 40 for cocktails.

The hotel is near Wynyard in central Sydney and also provides accommodation and conference packages.

PCOA: Perform under pressure

THE Professional Conference Organisers Association (PCOA) is hosting a webinar series with Michael Licenblat.

The 'Perform Better Under Pressure' session will be held on Tue 04 Apr from 1.30-2pm.

The webinar will help participants manage 'pressure triggers', lift personal productivity when dealing with multiple pressures, learn how to remain motivated and adapt to change and disruption.

CLICK HERE for more details.

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Catering team on the coast

RUMBA Beach Resort on Queensland's Sunshine Coast has enlisted one of Caloundra's leading hospitality providers, Alfie's Moo Char & Bar, as the in-house catering team for its recently refurbished conference facility.

"Our collaboration with Alfie's Moo Char Restaurant means we can deliver our event guests both a great venue and a unique foodie experience," said Rumba Resort's general manager Bill Darby.

"Our venue catering and functions menus have been created to celebrate the freshest of local ingredients with a farm-to-gate-to-plate philosophy," he said.

EVER wondered what your hound is really thinking?

A conference in Sydney is aiming to uncover just that.

The Delta Institute, an Australian dog research and training organisation, is hosting 'Inside of a Dog' from 07-09 Apr, its first ever canine behaviour conference.

The event is aimed at pooch lovers, trainers, vets and anyone working in the pet or animal industries.

Speakers include canine cognition researcher and author of *Being a Dog* Dr Alexandra Horowitz, and comedian Kitty Flanagan who is an ambassador for Delta Therapy Dogs.

CLICK HERE for details.

JUPITERS NOW A STAR

QUEENSLAND'S landmark Jupiters hotel today changes its name to The Star Gold Coast as it enters the next phase of a major redevelopment.

More than 800 items and 130 signs have been updated as part of the rebrand, from the 5m sign on the hotel's western facade to smaller touches like uniforms and pillow chocolates.

The move is in line with the wider consolidation of the Star Entertainment Group's brand and comes as the property prepares for the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

With six new food and beverage offerings introduced and 596 rooms refurbished, Star is working to complete a six-

star luxury hotel at the front of the property, due for completion in time for the Games.

The group has also received approval for an additional 200m hotel and apartment tower on the Broadbeach Island site.

The 4.5-star tower will take the property's transformation to a combined investment worth up to \$850 million and could be the first of up to five in a master plan for the site, developed in a joint venture with Chow Tai Fook and Far East Consortium.

The Star Entertainment Group's managing director Queensland Geoff Hogg said the transition to The Star was another exciting milestone in the hotel's 30 year history.

New Zealand convention boom

CONVENTION delegates generated an estimated one million visitor nights and spent NZ\$588 million in New Zealand last year, according to the country's Convention Delegate Survey.

Figures released this week show the number of overseas arrivals to New Zealand for conventions and conferences rose to 66,000 last year, up from 63,000 in 2015.

A total of 1.2 million event days were recorded in 2016, an increase of 19% on the year prior.

About NZ\$72 million was spent by Australian delegates.

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ACT: THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM

venue spotlight

IN THE aftermath of the devastating bushfires that hit Canberra in 2003, the ACT Government came up with a plan to create a national landmark from out of the ashes.

The result is the National Arboretum, a vast garden of more than 44,000 trees growing across a 250 hectare site - one of the world's largest living collections of rare, endangered and significant trees.

It's also a superb venue for events in the national capital, able to host hundreds of guests in its striking modern pavilions which were the subject of several architecture awards in the years after their opening in 2013.

Though most of the trees are still young, the hillside plantings and sculpted terraces of the Arboretum provide a spectacular setting, with views to nearby Black Mountain and as far as Parliament House in the city below.

Occupying lands once covered in pine plantations that were destroyed in the bushfires, the site will eventually be home to 2014 distinct forests of trees from around Australia and over 100 countries overseas.

The largest venue is the Village Centre, with its soaring ribbed roofline and panoramic glass frontage overlooking Canberra. Able to host events for an



average of 300 to 350 people, it caters to gala events, conference dinners, award nights, concerts and weddings, and includes an outdoor terrace to make the most of the views.

For meetings, the Terrace Room is suitable for workshops up to 45 people and can increase to 120 people cocktail-style by incorporating the outdoor Canberra Discovery Garden.

Another venue on site is the Margaret Whitlam pavilion, a separate hilltop building with a peaked roofline and similar views across the city. It can cater for up to 80 guests, theatre-style.

Other spaces around the pavilions and the gardens offer a choice of outdoor venues, including the Bonsai Deck and the Dairy Farmers Hill.

Catering at the National Arboretum is provided by Ginger, led by chef Janet Jeffs who in the past worked alongside Adelaide's Cheong Liew and helped Maggie Beer establish the legendary Pheasant Farm restaurant in the Barossa Valley.

Having spent 40 years as a chef, she has cultivated close relationships with local producers and developed her own sustainable farm at her historic Ballalaba property.

The team at Ginger can create menus and packages for a range of event styles and works closely with local staging teams for production and theming.

Recent events held at the National Arboretum include the Lifeline Gala Ball, the Canberra and Capital Region Tourism Awards and a National Capital Motors staff awards night.

See www.gingercatering.com.au and www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au.

BCD M&E expands its team

BCD Meetings & Events has announced the appointment of Shauna Whitehead as vice president, Global Account Management and Nancy Medoff as vice president Global Sales.

Whitehead was previously with Carlson Wagonlit Meetings & Events where she recently led a North American organisational restructure - and also previously worked with CWT in Australia.

Medoff joins BCD from Marriott International.

Headquartered in Chicago, BCD M&E is an independently managed sister company of BCD Travel.

Victoria gets hearts racing

A TWO-DAY famil for business event organisers gave an insight into the best of Victoria's Gippsland and Phillip Island last week.

The Business Events Victoria event took in several highlights from across the two regions including Lardner Park, RACV Inverloch, Ramada Phillip Island Resort and Silverwater Resort.

Highlights included a lakeside wine tasting, Roa pasta making lesson and a visit to the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit where the famil participants got their hearts racing with a competitive go-kart experience.

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