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Turn out the lights

AM I the only person who has trouble with hotel room lights?



You arrive back late at night to a room ablaze with every conceivable light.

You hit the master switch when you get into bed but nothing extinguishes the desk, free standing lamp nor the wall lights.

The hunt goes on to find the elusive switches.

There's usually one pesky control that refuses to be located.

In desperation you grab a towel and throw it over it offending light and finally get some sleep!

Today's issue won't help you sleep because it is so jam-packed with exciting news and information for you to enjoy - Jill.

Peppers Parihua offer

PEPPERS Parihua Martinborough, the latest addition to Mantra Group's collection of Peppers resorts and retreats, is offering day delegate and accommodation packages.

These start from \$55pp for a full day delegate package (based on a minimum ten delegates) and include room hire, morning & afternoon tea, lunch, refreshments upon arrival, plus a complimentary whiteboard, flipchart and arrival pack.

Accommodation rates start from \$220 per night - offer valid until 20 December.

The resort lies in the heart of the Martinborough wine region, a one hour drive from the Wellington CBD and has purpose built conference and meeting facilities for up to 80 delegates.

Set in park-like gardens with picturesque views of surrounding vineyards and the Tararua Range, accommodation includes 28 suites and villas or garden and lakeside cottages with a capacity for up to 60 guests at a time.

See peppers.com.au/parihua.

Wellington 'In the Spotlight'



THE establishment of a new Sydney-based BDM has resulted in Positively Wellington Tourism's Convention Bureau hosting a 15-strong trans-Tasman contingent.

With the potential to bring millions of dollars worth of new business to the capital, the three-day 'Wellington in the Spotlight' familiarisation took in the city's hotels, venues, sights and activities.

PWT ceo David Perks said "The Australian visitor market is thriving for Wellington's \$2200 a minute tourism industry, with a 16% increase in direct arrivals into Wellington Airport in 2011 - five times the national growth.

"Now that we've built a significant profile platform, we're in a position to target the conventions sector across the Tasman much more aggressively," he enthused.

The conference and incentive market is estimated to be worth close to \$100 million per year to the capital, but trans-Tasman business currently makes up a relatively small part of the sector.

"Over the past six months we've really started to see the benefit of having a dedicated presence in Australia.

"The conventions sector is one where you need to form face-to-face relationships, bring them to the source and aggressively bid for business," Perks added.

The Bureau – a business unit

within PWT - has set itself a lofty target of increasing the value of the Australian conventions and incentives market by 60% to \$7m in the space of just three years.

The group is pictured above overlooking Wellington.

Hong Kong's control

DESTINATION Asia reports that a new team building activity being offered in Hong Kong to MICE delegates allows them the opportunity to gain an insight into Shaolin martial arts and Zen meditation.

The instructors, all trained at China's legendary Shaolin Temple and who teach at the Hong Kong Shaolin Wushu Culture Centre, are able to tailor activities to individual client requests.

In addition to physical training, participants can also learn the art of ancient Zen meditation, a practice which offers total control of body and mind.

These ancient techniques, which normally take decades to master, give delegates an insight into these demanding disciplines, with a variety of other training courses available.

WIN A TRIP FOR TWO TO HAWAII



During April and May, **Business Events News** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win an amazing holiday for two people to Hawaii, courtesy of **Hawaii Tourism, Hawaiian Airlines** and **The Kahala Hotel and Resort**.

The prize includes Hawaiian Airlines return airfares from Sydney to Honolulu, and five nights accommodation in an Ocean View Room at The Kahala Hotel and Resort.

Over 6 weeks, we will feature a different question in every **Business Events News** issue. There will be 15 questions in total, which will also be posted on our website. At the end of the month the subscriber with the most correct entries and the most creative response to the final question will win this fantastic holiday to Hawaii.



Hawaiian Airlines are introducing a new aircraft from 25th April ex Sydney. What aircraft is it?

Hint! Visit www.hawaiianairlines.com.au

Email your answers to: hawaii@businesseventsnews.com.au

Click here for terms & conditions





crumbs!

O'REILLY'S in the Gold Coast Hinterland have a cliff-hanger dining experience...3000 feet above sea level.

It starts with a 4WD drive to Moonlight Crag where they have created a cliff top dining venue with breathtaking views.

Guests enjoy a private dinner with bush inspired cuisine as the sun sets against a backdrop of the Macpherson Ranges.

AUSSIES behaving badly.

A Croatian tourism official was fired for saying she did not want "drunken and crazy" Australian and New Zealand tourists coming to Dubrovnik.

"This summer season we've had an increased number of visits from young people from Australia and New Zealand and we were not delighted," Pave Zupan Ruskovic said.

"It would be better if they did not come," she added.

Qantas switches its baggage allowance

FROM next month, Qantas will change its international checked baggage policy from a weight system to a piece & weight system.

New allowances include one piece of checked baggage up to 23kgs for non-Frequent Flyer and Bronze Economy class passengers on international flights, except North and South America.

First and Business class passengers get three pieces of checked baggage up to 32kgs.

Passengers exceeding their allowance (except for travel from Japan) are able

to pre-purchase extra allowances at discounted rates online before travel, while Qantas Frequent Flyers can pay using points.



Fairmont Resort Blue Mountains

EMERGING like a phoenix out of its recent 'Fawlty Towers' episode under previous ownership, the Fairmont Resort Blue Mountains' extensive renovation is almost done.



BEN spent last weekend getting reacquainted with this iconic hotel, purpose built for the conference market and already running at 95% occupancy.

For all intents and purposes the hotel's expansive lobby, accommodation, dining and function areas are completed.

The comfy leather lounge chairs in the foyer are back-restored and re-covered.

Downstairs in Embers Bar & Lounge the welcoming log

fire, always a popular gathering place, is ablaze once more - both summer and winter.

"Guests love it," said GM Geoff York, clearly proud of the \$10 million regeneration.

"We are still a work in progress, however when much of the work is completed in June we will have a 175 seat auditorium for seminars, screenings and entertainment.

"We are also constructing a balcony off Jamieson's restaurant for al fresco dining, painting and carpeting our 500 seat ballroom and pre-function areas, as well as giving a soft refurb to our nine function/breakout rooms."

On completion in the second

half of the year, a two-storey day spa and the re-commissioning of their high ropes adventure course will see the Fairmont become the first Accor MGallery hotel in NSW.

"MGallery hotels are not 'cookie cutter' hotels say York but about originality and authenticity - hotels with their own story to tell," York said.

"Ours is about being

uniquely located in the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park, the culinary excitement that our award winning executive chef Rebecca Kaye has brought to the hotel and our guest service."

Pictured above is Jill with the

group over the weekend out for a morning bushwalk.

Left is the entrance to the newly refurbished property and below

some of the yummy food on offer during High Tea at the Fairmont Resort Blue Mountains.

Conference Day packages at the Resort start from \$70 per person per day or tailored packages can be built to suit particular needs.

For more details about the property or packages visit the website at www.fairmontresort.com.au.



New GM at Rydges Plaza Cairns

FOLLOWING the transfer of Lisa Krause to Darwin, Fareid Taheri has been appointed general manager of the Rydges Plaza Hotel in Cairns.

With a hospitality career spanning 10 years, he was formerly regional food and beverage manager for Rydges Hotels and Resorts in Sydney.

Taheri has held a number of F&B management positions across Australia as well as in the US where he worked at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel.



The power of one!

IF anyone needed convincing about the power of on-line communication - newsletters, Twittering, blogging etc, to get their message to a limitless audience, then listen up.

Tourism Queensland has teamed up with Australia's number one blogger Darren Rowse, an influential social media whiz with a claimed audience of more than five million, to invite some of the world's best bloggers to Queensland to experience the Great Barrier Reef.

Tourism Queensland CEO Anthony Hayes said 10 lucky bloggers from anywhere around the globe would win a five-day trip to Queensland, teaming up with Darren on the Great Barrier Reef to also receive some blogging training.

Entering is simple: interested bloggers just have to tell them in 150 words why they would make the ideal 'Queensland Blogger Correspondent'.

"Our aim is to attract other highly creative bloggers to Queensland and show them firsthand our unforgettable world-class tourism experiences.

If you've got what it takes visit probblogger.net.



Sydney's Event Showcase evolving

A NEWLY formed Sydney's Event Showcase Advisory Committee, seen as an essential component in bringing the industry closer together to deliver inspiring and innovative content for this year's RSVP Showcase, has been established by the show's owners, Exhibition & Trade Fairs.

"I strongly believe that the incorporation of this Advisory Committee will offer insights into what works, what can be improved on, and how best to evolve the show to stay ahead of the curve," said Valerie Percival, Advisory Committee member and special events manager of IBM Australia.

Advisory committee members are: Leona Watson, Cheeky Food Group; Mark Magennis, Decorative Events & Exhibition; Meri Took, Staging Rentals & Construction Services; Tracy



Wood, Functionality; Jeremy Garling, Fourth Wall Events; Lexi Walker, KPMG; Mark Taylor, Belle-Laide Events; Paul Davison, Centre Technical Production and Design, Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre; and Felicity Zadro, Zadro Communications.

Sydney's Event Showcase will be held at Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre 15 – 16 August.

It is co-located with the Australian Business Events Expo.

The announcement of the Sydney committee follows the postponement of the Melbourne RSVP event this year (**BEN 29 Feb**).

See sydney.rsvpvent.com.au.

New exhibitors for MEETINGS

ALMOST 20 new exhibitors have signed on to take part in MEETINGS 2012 being held in Auckland's Skycity – 13, 14 Jun taking the current numbers to 170.

"We're thrilled to see so many new exhibitors joining us this year. They all have exciting products and services to offer and their participation highlights the growing diversity of our industry," says

MEETINGS event manager Jeanette Stanton.

Among the new exhibitors is the Kawerau Bungy Centre run by A J Hackett Bungy.

For more information go to www.meetings.co.nz.



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Conferences under fire in US

A NUMBER of top US gov't officials have been forced to resign after details of a lavish conference in Las Vegas in late 2010 became public.

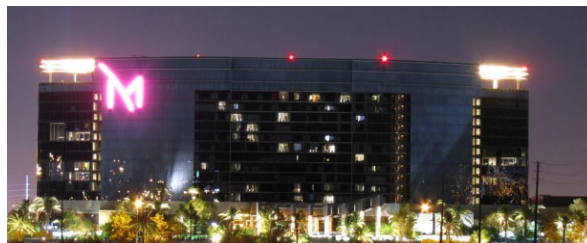
The US General Services Administration - an agency which manages office space and furnishings for government departments - spent more than US\$820,000 on the four day

Artisanal Cheese Displays" - not to mention a \$75,000 team building exercise in which attendees assembled bicycles.

Martha Johnson, the head of the General Services Administration, along with her top two deputies, have resigned in the wake of the report.

The exposure is bad news for the meetings industry in the US,

with a White House spokesperson confirming a new directive from the Office of Management



event at the M Resort Spa Casino.

An audit of the 300-attendee conference released this week detailed a range of expenses which attracted negative publicity, including use of clowns and mind readers to entertain delegates between sessions.

However what has particularly drawn anger is a guarantee by organisers that they would spend more than \$42,000 in additional catering charges in exchange for the resort offering a capped price on accommodation to comply with government rules.

US taxpayers also footed the bill for a number of gifts for delegates including a commemorative coin set and 150 "American

and Budget ordering that all government agencies review expenditure on conferences.

The Obama administration plans to lower travel and conference costs by as much as US\$1.2 billion, with the *New York Times* reporting that the Labor Department had already eliminated over 100 conferences.

Do you scare easily?



This week, *Business Events News* is giving readers the chance to win a double pass to the new ghost tour of a haunted mansion in the historic Macarthur region courtesy of The Crystal Shop in Camden and Visit Macarthur.

New adults-only ghost tours have been launched at the historic and haunted convict-built homestead of Gledswood in the Macarthur region just one hour from the Sydney CBD. Ideal for groups, the 90-minute torchlight tours run every Friday night and end with a light supper at Gledswood's old cellar door to help brave, ghost-busting souls calm their nerves.

To win a ticket for the scary experience be the first to answer:

comp@businesseventsnews.com.au

The Gledswood cellar was built by whom?

Hint: thecrystalshop.com.au.



Who's who of Brews!

THE newly rebranded Mercure Canberra hotel - formerly known as Olims - will host the fifth annual Canberra Craft Beer Festival on Saturday 14 April.

The hotel is owned by the Schwartz family, which also operates the Schwartz Brewery.

As well as tastings, activities will include beer and food matching, prize draws, a beer quiz and even a jumping castle for the kids.

More German groups?

CONFERENCE and incentive groups from Germany may be further encouraged to visit Australian shores with an expansion of the codeshare relationship between Etihad and German-based airberlin.

Effective immediately the airberlin AB airline code is appearing on Etihad flights to Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.