



Off we go again...

AS we ford every stream and gutter in this latest Sydney



downpour, the **BEN** team is about to travel hither and thither.

Yours truly to check out the new Qantas Business Class seating en route to Thailand, to the rather splendid Soneva Kiri resort on south-east coast of the Gulf of Siam, set on the island of Kood.

Soneva Kiri is a Six Senses property so you know it's going to be pretty special.

Then there's the MEA Conference which promises to be a beauty and the Arabian Travel Mart in Dubai later next week.

So, keep your eyes out for next week's issues, which are sure to be packed full of info - Jill.

EEAA raises concerns over SICEE

WHILE the announcement of a \$1 billion investment in the redevelopment of the Sydney International Convention Exhibition and Entertainment (SICEE) precinct and Darling Harbour has been welcomed, the Exhibition & Event Association of Australasia has expressed misgivings about some aspects of the project.

Joyce DiMascio, the general manager of the peak body, said the industry remained concerned about the provision of a temporary facility for large exhibitions during the three-year construction period.

"This renewal will be a great boost for Sydney and Australia as

we invest in infrastructure to keep us competitive in a global business events economy and we welcome the Government's commitment," she said.

"However the interim period does pose some challenges.

"While the industry understands some disruption will be inevitable, the government is yet to find suitable alternative



venues for the 65 large exhibitions and events that will be displaced over the three years," she added.

DiMascio said EEAA was working productively with Infrastructure NSW to find alternative facilities for smaller exhibitions and events but no venues have yet been found for major shows such as the Sydney International Boat Show, the Australian International Motor Show, Fine Food Australia, Reed Gift Fair and others requiring between 15,000sqm and 30,000sqm of exhibition space.

"You can't shut down Sydney for three years."

DiMascio further cautioned that to take away the trade and consumer events through which companies exhibit and sell, impacts on business and employment in both the NSW and the Australian economies".

The proposal of Moore Park as a possible solution for large events was not a viable one, DiMascio said.

"You cannot hold the Boat Show at Moore Park.

"We would like the government to explore the expanded show ground at Barangaroo, White Bay and other sites as a matter of urgency," she concluded.

Hilton rewards

A NEW MICE campaign launched today in China by Hilton Worldwide will reward event planners when they book and confirm meetings at any of the 30 Hilton Worldwide hotels in Greater China.

Participating brands include Hilton Hotels & Resorts, Conrad Hotels & Resorts, Waldorf Astoria and DoubleTree by Hilton.

"With this campaign, we hope to help companies hold the most successful events, and also recognise and reward planners for their continued support," said Philippe Garnier, vice president - sales and marketing, Asia Pacific, Hilton Worldwide.

Planners will get to choose from a list of rewards as well as earn Hilton HHonors Points toward their next stay.

Specifically, planners who book a meeting with at least 15 delegates can choose any two of the following five rewards - one complimentary coffee/tea break session; complimentary use of internet in meetings as well as guest rooms;

5% rebate on final master bill' a 30% reduction

in meeting room rental for a subsequent meeting taking place within three months; or double Hilton HHonors Points.

Further, bookings of at least 50 rooms will entitle planners to one additional reward from the following: an additional 100,000 Hilton HHonors Bonus Points, which is sufficient for a two-night complimentary stay at any properties within the Hilton Worldwide portfolio; one complimentary cocktail reception; or a one-time complimentary use of a break-out room.

To find out more, visit - hilton.com.cn/chinameetings.



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.



What is Hawaiian Airlines main hub?

Hint! Visit www.hawaiianairlines.com.au

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

Click here for terms & conditions





crumbs!

AN anesthesiologist in Las Vegas has launched a hangover cure service for people who consume too much alcohol.

Cruising the casino strip in a bus on Saturdays & Sundays, he offers his 'Hangover Heaven' a rehydrating IV therapy (\$130) or imbibers can add anti-nausea medicine and vitamin treatments (\$150). Treatment takes half an hour to 45 minutes.

A 76 year old man who has spent 20 years living on a Japanese island – Sotobanri - has been naked almost the entire 20 years he has lived there.

He has no outside contact except a few times a month when he makes a trip for food and fresh water.

Hickey takes on Geelong

THE soon to be installed Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) director, Andrew Hiebl departs from his post as convention bureau manager of Business Events Geelong, welcomes Terry Hickey into the role.

Hickey who comes to the position with more than 25 years of senior management experience, the last seven of which have been as deputy executive director of GOT.

In this senior role, Hickey oversaw many facets of the regional tourism body, including business events.

"I believe that Terry will provide strong leadership and help this vibrant industry sector flourish in Geelong and the Great Ocean Road," Hiebl said.

MEANWHILE The ninth edition of the Great Ocean Road Planners Guide has just been released offering information on what is needed to plan everything from large international conventions in Geelong to a conference or team building event on the Great Ocean Road.

Vivid colour throughout Sydney



ABOVE: As events go they don't get much better than Sydney's spectacular Vivid Light event (as pictured above).

And, don't even get us started on La Traviata on the harbour - if you missed that then you missed something special.

Vivid Sydney which features a giant interactive game of Tic Tac Toe, animatronic dancing lamps, fibre optic sea grass and a luminescent game of hopscotch,

each year transforms Sydney after dark into a free interactive light artwork.

It all starts from Friday 25 May and will run until 11 June, with the city lighting up each night from 6pm until midnight.

Festival director Anthony Bastic said the event grows each year "with artists raising the creative bar by combining new low energy light technologies with design and innovation."

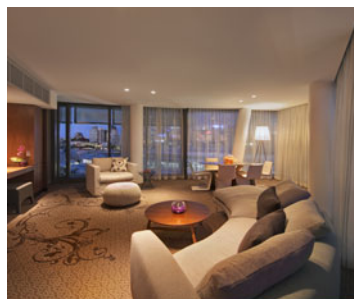
A highlight of Vivid this year will be 'Lighting the Sails' in which "cutting edge German projection artists" URBANSCREEN transform the Sydney Opera House in a spectacular display of 3D mapped projections.

Breaking The Star's hex

WITH The Star weathering its fair share of negative news lately, The Darling, Sydney's newest hotel, is shining its way into the best books by being named in the annual list of best new hotels in the world by Conde Nast Traveller.

Features of The Darling that were highlighted include the many art pieces, harbour and city views, the 16 treatment room luxury spa and the contemporary Japanese restaurant Sokyo which is located in the lobby.

Designed as a stand-alone hotel, it has its own arrival experience, amenities and clearly, alluring personality.



Peppers conf. specials

PEPPERS in the NSW Southern Highlands have conference specials at their two properties.

Peppers Manor House, Sutton Forest have an accommodation rate from \$199, while Peppers Craigieburn has one from \$179.

Both include buffet breakfast and are available for all new bookings prior to 30 June.

In addition both offer a free Camp Fire dinner within the hotel grounds, based on a minimum of 20 nights and a free one night accom including breakfast.

Further, both properties have day delegate packages starting from \$65pp.

Just 1.5 hours drive from Sydney they offer golf courses, DaySpas and other activities outside of the meeting room.

Mantra's strong qtr

THE Mantra Group reports a strong start to 2012 with a 5% increase in revenue and a 7% growth in RevPAR for the quarter between Jan to Mar.

Highlights include Perth where a 31% RevPAR growth was driven by strong rate growth as a result of the region's mining boom.

Even in a competitive market like Melbourne, Mantra's six CBD properties managed to remain ahead of the market in both occupancy and rate with a 4.2% increase in RevPAR year on year.

The Mantra's association with Pat Rafter & the Australian Grand Prix, have also paid dividends.

Bob East, Mantra's ceo, also attributes the uplift in CBD to increased activity in the mining sector and consistent leisure travel capitalising on major events and festivals. The business sector was also a strong factor.

Secrets are Essential for Success at Work



This week *Business Events News* is giving readers the chance to win a book on the '88 Essential Secrets for Achieving Greater Success at Work' courtesy of Strategic Resources International (SRI).



SRI is engaged by clients each year to generate higher sales, find new revenue channels and motivate teams to perform at higher standards of client engagement and customer service.

To win one of these books be the first to answer the question to - comp@businesseventsnews.com.au.

What is the outstanding feature on the Home Page of the Strategic Resources website?

Hint: strategicresources.com.au





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Caffeine to go

THE lobby of the Novotel Rockford Darling Harbour, a multi-use business and social meeting hub, has a new lobby café, Brew.

Brew café provides a convenient place for a barista coffee, a quick takeaway breakfast for those on the go, healthy sandwiches and freshly baked sweet treats.

The idea was to create a 'real life' cafe for guests catering to the changing cafe trends.

Importantly, functional amenities include large communal tables, wireless internet access and a complimentary Mac corner, with both internal and direct external access from Harbour Street.

The area also expands capacity for conference and banquet dining in combination with the current Ceezens restaurant.

Getting connected in NZ

THE fact that some of the best business relations are made in a relaxed social atmosphere, is one of the reasons why CINZ MEETINGS



2012 has put together an extensive social program for buyers and exhibitors at this year's expo in Auckland.

"This year's social program is designed not only to give people a chance to let their hair down but to also showcase some of Auckland's amazing venues, suppliers and its superb hospitality," says MEETINGS event manager Jeanette Stanton.

The successful debut last year of the MEETINGS Breakfast Speaker Showcase is back; on the Wednesday night there will be an evening of sumptuous food, drinks and entertainment, while the final night will be held at Club Curiosity at the new Viaduct Events Centre where a cocktail

style evening is planned.

MEETINGS 2012 officially wraps up on the Thursday night, after which hosted buyers who have extended their Auckland stay will enjoy a day on beautiful Waitemata Harbour learning to sail an ex-America's Cup yacht, have lunch at one of Auckland's most prestigious waterside venues, and a trip to a hidden rainforest.

The day's activities will be followed by a casual farewell dinner at Euro Restaurant, the flagship restaurant of MasterChef New Zealand judge Simon Gault.

MEETINGS 2012 will take place at the SkyCity Convention Centre Auckland 13-14 June.

For more information visit www.meetings.co.nz.

GETTING TO KNOW: Elephant Safari Park and Lodge, Bali

For incentive organisers wanting to give their clients something to remember, Bali's Elephant Safari Park and Lodge is a unique offering which they'll be telling their friends about for a long time after they visit.

Located in the highlands of Bali near Ubud, this popular tourist attraction was expanded three years ago with the addition of a purpose-built 25 room luxury lodge where small groups can make the most of their elephant experience.

The Elephant Safari Park boasts 29 Sumatran elephants who have all been rescued from other parts of Indonesia where these majestic beasts are used for logging. Now they all live in the park, along with their personal mahouts, and spend their days entertaining visitors to the tune of Henry Mancini.

And when they say the lodge is purpose-built, they mean it - outside each room is an elevated platform where you board your "Elephant chauffeur" to dinner each evening. The phone rings about five minutes before mealtime - "the elephant's coming" - at which point you take position at the door ready for the unique transfer to the restaurant.

It's in the middle of *Eat, Pray, Love* territory - and the one and only Julia Roberts visited the Safari Park with her children when she was making the movie nearby.

As well as its unique pachyderm paraphernalia, the resort boasts all the usual five star touches - delicious breakfasts, a top-class restaurant serving a variety of delicious Indonesian and western cuisine, spa treatments, meeting areas and a gymnasium.

There's also an intriguing museum housing elephantine artifacts collected by the owner, Australian Nigel Mason who established the park in the 1990s.

In-house guests get the opportunity for lots of interaction with the elephants, including free access to the three daily elephant shows, being able to get into the water with the elephants at their morning bathtime as well as taking leisurely strolls on the back of one of the beasts through the nearby settlements.

There are also lots of other activities available in the neighbourhood, including rafting, kayaking, cycling and trekking in the spectacular Balinese rainforests.

Believe it or not, the resort is popular as a wedding venue where you can naturally induce one of the elephants to be part of the wedding party - think Dumbo the ringbearer!

The Elephant Safari Lodge is a great example of sustainable tourism, in which the rescued elephants and their keepers provide a tourist attraction which also supports the surrounding villagers who are contracted to provide food and other services for the resort. For more information see www.elephantsafariparklodge.com.

