



The Star stars

AFTER hearing very little from, or about, The Star



Sydney (except their celebrity filled openings or past negative publicity) the cone of silence was broken on Tuesday night when they opened their snazzy Marquee nightclub and uber trendy venue to some 650 corporate and industry guests.

Located on the entire top tier of The Star's new Pirrama Road harbourside entrance, the venue's 20,000 sqft of floor space covering four venues, presented four moods.

Tutu clad dancers gyrated and posed, lights strobed and music pumped.

Considering the numbers, full marks to The Star for never missing a beat.

The F&B service was spot on and the polite and efficient wait people were a shining example of good staff training.

RUMOUR has it that a 4000 pax event venue will open at The Star in January and if accurate, should help ease some of the strain on Sydney's event space with the closure of the SCEC, at the end of 2013 - *Jill*.

Holiday Inn turns 60

FROM humble beginnings as a roadside inn in Memphis Tennessee in 1952, to now having more than 3375 Holiday Inn branded family properties worldwide, including 17 hotels in Australasia, Holiday Inn turns 60 this month.

Their story in Australasia begins from Holiday Inn Sydney Airport, their first hotel in Asia Pacific to introduce paperless check-in, to Holiday Inn Gagudju in Kakadu.

Holiday Inn will also be the first international hotel brand to open its sixtieth hotel in Greater China - the upcoming Holiday Inn Resort Changbaishan.

Accor says it's "strictly business"



YESTERDAY'S World of Accor showcase, the company's ninth annual client event held at the Sofitel Wentworth Sydney, saw a capacity crowd take the opportunity to meet Accor hotel representatives from across ninety countries.

During the event Accor released the findings of the latest Accor Asia Pacific Business Traveller Survey 2012, a report that found that unlike some of our politicians and union officials, it is "strictly business" for Australian corporate travellers.

Of the 2,586 respondents in eight countries across the region, Australian business travellers were found to be the least inclined to mix business and pleasure while travelling on company time and money.

Highlights included that Australian and NZ travellers were least likely to extend their trip to take a holiday or to visit friends and family.

They did, however attend meetings more for networking and internal company purposes than their Asian counterparts who were much more focused on developing client relationships.

It's a 'boys club' - with almost three quarters of business travellers who responded to the survey male, highlighting the disparity among the sexes.

The key to business travel, it was once again proven, is a comfortable bed and a clean bathroom - which were more important to respondents than

having free hotel internet.

Looking at the remainder of the year, more business travel is planned than at this time in 2011.

This type of traveller is unlikely to always post comments on social media.

They also prefer to book trips themselves and would like to see more personalised services in hotels, including dedicated check-in counters for loyalty card members.

What's more NZ business travellers love us and we love them, the survey points out!

Overall the outcome for Australian and NZ travellers is that they draw a distinct line between business and pleasure and corporate travel is still overwhelmingly skewed towards male road-warriors.



Pictured: Virginia Percival from The Conference Event & Function Specialists with the event's host, the one and only Larry Emdur.

Abu Dhabi Website

ABU Dhabi Tourism has advised that their Business Tourism Planners guide (**BEN 23 July**) is now available for download from an updated website: <http://mice.visitabudhabi.ae/>

Grand Mercure Adelaide

ADELAIDE's iconic Grand Mercure Mount Lofty House continues to be the premier destination for special functions and conference retreats following the hotel's second triumph at the Australian Hotels Association (AHA) South Australia (SA) Awards for Excellence.

This premier destination for special functions, conference retreats and whimsical weddings in the past 12 months has seen significant growth, development and continued improvement of the hotel's conferencing and event service and facilities.

In another victory for the hotel, food and beverage manager Varun Gambhir was also recognised by the AHA SA receiving the coveted Hotel Industry Rising Star Award.

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Crown to build 'six star' hotel



AT a time when Perth and Western Australia are in urgent need of additional luxury hotel and short term accommodation,

Crown Limited is to undertake the development of a new six star, luxury hotel to be known as Crown Towers Perth.

The investment in the 500 room, luxury Crown project is expected to be \$568 million and will add to the suite of hotel accommodation at Burswood Entertainment Complex, giving a big boost to the local economy.

Crown Limited's investment in the Burswood complex will take their interest to more than \$1.3 billion since its acquisition in 2004.

This together with the total cost of acquiring Burswood of almost \$900 million, takes Crown's total investment in Perth to some \$2.2b.

With construction expected to commence in early 2013 and completion likely to take three years, it will see hotel room capacity at Burswood increase to nearly 1,200 rooms.

The new hotel, comprising 500 rooms in addition to restaurants, bars, resort and convention facilities, will be located on land currently owned by Burswood as well as land to be acquired from the State, adjacent to the existing complex.

Crown Limited has committed to modernising and expanding the facilities to bring it up to the standard of a world class resort.

Expanded conference and meeting facilities and an expanded and modernised casino and accompanying food and beverage outlets are all part of the mix.

MEANWHILE Crown has also set its sights on Sydney, signing a two year exclusivity deal with Barangaroo developer Lend Lease for a new harbourfront hotel.

THERE have been some rather unusual bets taking place during the London Olympics with London betting houses wagering on almost anything.

Some of the craziest include UFOs at the opening ceremony, athletes being snapped eating Big Macs, the athlete's village running out of condoms and there was even 33-to-1 odds that flamboyant London Mayor Boris Johnson will accidentally set his hair on fire with the Olympic torch.

Who's sorry now?

Macau forges ahead

THERE's much happening in Macau to increase tourism to this vibrant destination.

A rise that has seen 28 million people visiting in 2011, an increase of 12% on the previous year, while the first six months of 2012, saw almost 13 million visitors, an increase of 8.51% on the corresponding months in the previous year.

Numbers of visitors from Australia are also on the increase, improving by 7.67% compared with the corresponding January-June period last year.

"I can see this trend continuing as more and more hotels, attractions and activities are unveiled," said Helen Wong, general manager of the Macau Government Tourist Office in Australia and New Zealand.

New tourist attractions, large contemporary international hotels, bars, restaurants and high-end shopping precincts are just some of the lures.

The Asian centre's peninsula has erected a Butterfly Pavilion, with close to 1000 colourful butterflies from different parts of the globe.

The Venetian on the Cotai Strip, has the Fun Ice World where a self-guided tour allows visitors to see copies of some of the world's famous buildings – all carved from ice.

The newest addition to Macau's

Vegas-style Cotai Strip - Sands Cotai Central - provides an extra 1800 international standard hotel rooms and suites with a further 4000 set to be added in September with the opening of the new Sheraton Macao.

Apart from boasting the largest Holiday Inn and Conrad in the world, this precinct in reclaimed land linking the Macau isles of Taipa and Coloane, will have the world's largest Sheraton brand.

The three properties, together with Shoppes Cotai Central retail complex, are all part of Sands Cotai Central that will eventually add 5800 hotel rooms, 10,000 square metres of meeting space and 100 shops to the global Asian centre.

Around A\$1 billion has been invested in the latest project, its opening marking another milestone for Sands China Ltd (a majority-held subsidiary of global integrated resort developer Las Vegas Sands) in helping Macau reach its potential as an international business and leisure tourism destination.

The Holiday Inn will have more than 1200 guest rooms and suites with more than 600 rooms at the Conrad while the Sheraton Macao is set to open its doors with more than 4000 guestrooms and suites, and 9290 square metres of function space.

Jetstar MEL to Hawaii

A new, non-stop, Jetstar service between Melbourne and Honolulu has been announced with the route to debut from 15 Dec, in time for the summer holiday peak season.

The service which was suspended in 2008, comes with capacity expansions to other destinations including an increase of Jetstar's Sydney to Phuket services to four flights a week.

Jetstar Bali flights from both Melbourne and Sydney will also increase to daily, with the additional long-haul capacity to Indonesia, Hawaii and Phuket providing up to 19,000 extra seats a month for outbound holidaymakers.

MEA Health & Safety

MEA will present their next Professional Development session 'New Work Health and Safety (WHS) Legislation replacing the OHS Legislation in NSW.'

To be held on Tuesday 21 August at Bayside 201, Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, a panel of legal and industry experts will examine and answer common questions such as the key changes in the Work Health and Safety Legislation in NSW, sexual harassment, workplace bullying laws, duty of care, insurances and employee entitlements, employee legislation and obligations for the casual work force and volunteers and the right insurance for volunteers and contractors.

Speakers include Matt Crouch, executive lawyer, Bartier Perry, Katherine Hawes, law lecturer at International College of Management, Sydney and Dominic O'Hearn, business manager NOSH Hospitality - see www.meetingevents.com.au.





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Caravan conference

DURING the recent Caravan, Camping and Touring Industry and Manufactured Housing Industry Association of NSW (CCIA) Conference, ceo Lyndel Gray said that the industry is a leading contributor to the State's tourism performance.

Held in July at Leura, it was opened by the Minister for Fair Trading, The Hon Anthony Roberts MP.

Themed 'Still Ahead of the Game' the conference attracted an impressive 202 delegates.

"The sector delivers over 25% of visitor nights in regional NSW and the passion and enthusiasm shown by conference attendees will ensure a bright future for the sector" said Gray.

"The attendance figures were also a reflection of the high quality of speakers presenting throughout the two days."

Hilton's 7million point give-away

A **NEW** incentive program that recognises and rewards top meeting bookers, 'FROM MICE TO MILLIONS', has been announced by Hilton Worldwide.

Available in more than 90 of their participating regional hotels and resorts, the new Asia Pacific MICE campaign invites regional bookers to take part in a challenge for a chance to win up to two million Hilton HHonors points.

With a total of seven million Hilton HHonors points up for grabs, bookers will be able to use these points towards free nights at Hilton Worldwide's portfolio of hotels or redeem a wide range of productivity tools for themselves or their companies, such as laptop computers, mobile phones and printers from the HHonors global mall which is online at HHonors.com/Shopping.

To qualify for the challenge, bookings need to be made between 01 August and 31 December, to hold a meeting or event between 01 August and 28 February 2013.

At the end of the campaign, the overall top booker, based on

highest cumulative revenue generated throughout the campaign, will be awarded two million Hilton HHonors points.

In addition there will also be a regional challenge where the top bookers from five Asia Pacific regions – Australasia; Greater China; South and Southeast Asia; India; Japan, Korea and Micronesia - will be awarded one million Hilton HHonors points.

"We understand that organising meetings goes beyond providing tables, chairs and flipcharts.

"Meetings and conferences are important for business because they are about people connecting and sharing, and we aim to provide them with the most conducive and memorable backgrounds to facilitate this important exchange," said Philippe Garnier, vice president, sales and regional marketing, Asia Pacific, Hilton Worldwide.



Coffs Harbour Novotel takes aim at the MICE market

NOVOTEL Coffs Harbour Pacific Bay Resort played host last weekend to a group of PCO's to showcase the uniqueness of Coffs Coast. It was a famil that kick started with a beach buggy ride – an exhilarating, if extremely windblown experience.

Next they met with the Time out Xperiences team, who started with an ice breaking, teambuilding activity that saw them helping fellow conference organisers into Velcro suits, climbing onto Segways and laser sport shooting.

After many laughs and a few falls, it was as though the group had known each other for years. Those who braved the flying trapeze school, Zip Circus, were also able to tick off a few bucket list achievements after the event.

There was a cooking class with Tony Gill, Novotel Coffs Harbour's executive chef who showed off his culinary skills.

This was followed by a lunch where the cooking skills of the PCO's came to the fore. Saturday evening provided an opportunity to meet and chat with some of Coffs offsite activity and venue operators and was followed by a delightful dinner in Charlie's Restaurant.

Next morning there was an early start with a yoga class on the putting tee which was challenging enough to make the buffet breakfast in Charlie's Restaurant seem well deserved.

Sunday provided a chance to experience the stunning surrounds of the resort & have a hot stone massage or facial in Novotel's day spa, Tranquility.

The famil ended memorably with a one on one interaction with dolphins and seals at Dolphin Marine Magic.



ABOVE: The group is pictured above back row from left - Sally Brown, Marlene Glenister, Tony Handy, Pauline Handy, Rosie Buckley.

Front row: Tracee Mckillop, Amy Kozaruk, Simon Donaldson, Wayne Flemming and Tricia Durrant.



RIGHT: Tony Handy, Pauline Handy, Sally Brown, Wayne Flemming and Tracee Mckillop

