

**BENificent!**

IF you go down to ABEE today (and tomorrow), you're sure of a big surprise.

And if you are reading **BEN** at ABEE, the industry's fastest growing on-line business events newsletter, head over to the **BEN** stand C31 to meet our very own "BEN" who is giving 'sweets to strangers!'

Meet the rest of the team and go in the draw to win an incredible \$500 dinner for two at The Star and sign up as a subscriber, if you haven't already done so.

You'll find everything you wanted to know about the business events industry, in addition to newsy, even gossipy (in the nicest possible way) stories and destination pieces - Jill.

**Mercure holds the key**

IN less than a year since construction began, Mercure Gladstone has this week officially opened for business.

The contemporary 60 room, 4.5 star hotel sits within the Southern Great Barrier Reef region, home to one of the world's best diving sites and alongside the Yaralla Sports Club, which offers free access to hotel guests.

Said to be one of the most exciting developments to hit the Gladstone region, it has state-of-the-art leisure and meeting facilities, including five contemporary conference and event spaces catering for up to 1,000 delegates.

This places the Mercure in a strong position to host large MICE groups which in turn means more business for the region.

What's more, guests can tee off from one of three 18-hole golf courses and upon presentation of a Mercure Gladstone room key, gain free entry to Gladstone's local cinema.

Now, it doesn't get better than that!

QF goes for Coolangatta gold

GOLD Coast business tourism authorities have heartily welcomed the return of Qantas flights to the region, after a four year hiatus during which the group has only offered low-cost Jetstar services to the Gold Coast.

Qantas ceo Alan Joyce made the announcement at Gold Coast Airport on Mon this week, with the aggressive move seeing 21 flights per week - three every day - from Sydney to the Gold Coast.

Jetstar will maintain its presence on the Gold Coast too, according to Joyce, but the return of Qantas will see the existing Jetstar lounge refurbished and upgraded into a Qantas Club.

Qantas will also install its next generation automatic check-in systems at Gold Coast Airport, continuing its strong focus on the corporate market.

"With the massive development of south-east Queensland, the Gold Coast is Australia's sixth-largest city and a fast-growing premium market," Joyce said.

"Our customers have told us that they want a premium leisure and business service, complementing Jetstar's existing services as part of our two-brand strategy, and we are responding to that demand," he added.

Qld Tourism Minister, Jan Stuckey, who's also the local member for the Gold Coast, said the new Qantas route is "going to put us back on the map as a business destination".

She said business events were

very important to the recently elected Queensland government, adding that she hoped the move would lead to more utilisation for the Gold Coast Convention Centre.

MEANWHILE according to Martin Winter, ceo of Gold Coast Tourism, the return of Qantas will enable the region to make the most of "opportunities which were previously missed".

He said that there were many advantages to having the Gold Coast on the Qantas map, with his organisation to "invest heavily into the success of the flights".

"Our research shows that not being able to connect baggage through to the final destination has been a barrier for Qantas international travellers coming to the Gold Coast for business events," he told **BEN**.

Winter said the return of QF would also make it easier for premium leisure passengers to redeem airline loyalty points for a Gold Coast trip.

He highlighted the strong range of top-end product on the Gold coast including "exclusive retreats and six-star hotels".

"Now these travellers - honeymooners, well-heeled holidaymakers and international passengers - will be able to enjoy a fantastic weekend on the Gold Coast travelling business class".

Winter is **pictured** second from left with Michael Curtis, Gold Coast Airport; Simone Holzapfel, Gold Coast City Council; and Mike Dwyer, Main Beach Travel.

Circus, circus fun

HERE'S an idea to build into a meeting or event, or for a limited time only to enjoy with an after work drink.

The Hilton Sydney's multi award winning Zeta Bar has launched Coney Island - a Friday night concept that promises evenings of the unexpected, perfectly paradoxical and the weird and wonderful.

Held every Friday starting at 6pm until the end of October, the Zeta Bar will be magically transformed into an extravagant entertainment event complete with 1950 inspired cocktails with progressive and fun elements.

Circus-inspired freak shows, tarot card readers, a tattooist, funfair games of coconut shy, strongman acts, hot dog stands and circus sideshows will be featured.

Rent a Resort For Exclusive Events



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EEAA launches a stronger voice

AFTER consistently campaigning over the past 12 months to advocate the importance of the exhibition and events industry, the EEAA (Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia) is to launch a new brochure today, at ABEE (Australian Business Events Expo) in Sydney.

Describing ABEE as a powerful showcase for the industry and a strong platform from which to grow membership, EEAA gm Joyce DiMascio said, "As our membership grows, so too does the voice of the exhibition and event industry. "ABEE is an ideal platform for us to connect with organisers, venues and suppliers to present the benefits of being involved in the Association.

"The exhibition and event industry leverages the power of face-to-face so it is most fitting to use ABEE as the launch pad for such an initiative."

The centrepiece of the membership drive is an eight-page brochure (pictured) that outlines the value of exhibitions and the benefits of joining the Association.

It features testimonials from six leaders in the exhibition sector who describe the worth of being actively involved with EEAA.



Debbie Evans, ceo of Reed Exhibitions said "it provides an opportunity to network with like-minded organisers and suppliers" while Jodie Richmond, ceo of ETF explained that it is "a vehicle to fast-track knowledge of the industry and reach out

to new suppliers and networks".

Jim Delahunty, ceo of ExpoNet added that ABEE is "a good forum for throwing around ideas to improve exhibitions and events".

Helen Mantellato, DOS of Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre said the Expo is a platform to "building a greater voice and shaping the future of the industry".

Matt Pearce, ceo of Diversified Exhibitions added that "EEAA's advocacy sends a collective industry message more powerful than the fragmented message of individuals"

Agreeing, Domenic Genua, marketing and events Manager of Boating Industry Association of NSW explained "it's where you can find people who can help you become a success".

DiMascio said the Association was ramping up its communications to remind marketers of the effectiveness of the exhibition channel in reaching a highly engaged and motivated audience.



Throw out your wallet, here comes the future

IF you've already pointed your mobile phone at a cash register instead of pulling out a credit card to pay for your groceries, you're aware that technology is changing the way we pay.

According to the online payments company PayPal, that style of checkout is new, but not revolutionary.

"That's just putting your credit card on your mobile phone," says Adrian Christie, a spokesman for PayPal Australia.

"It is tremendously difficult to start up new payment networks



because of the chicken-and-egg challenge," he said.

He prefers to talk about what will be possible in the future.

You walk into an electronics retailer, see a stereo you like and scan its barcode with your phone. The retailer will instantly know whether you're a repeat customer and might offer you a discount. You might even have received an offer on your phone when you arrived at the mall, as an incentive to walk into the shop.

When it comes to paying, you will be able to use your phone to access funds in a savings account or credit card and to claim loyalty points.

The phone will also store your electronic receipt in its "digital wallet".

"If the digital wallet was used by more people, it might say to you 'do you want to add that stereo to your home insurance policy?," Christie says.

"This battle is not going to be won on technological innovation, it's going to be won on consumer innovation."

To check out the latest tech news for small business visit Tony Wragg's TechTalk at:

www.tonystechtalk.com.au.

Story adapted from an article in the Sydney Morning Herald



WIN YOUR AMERICA FIX ON ROUTE 66 WITH COSMOS!

Share your celebrity moment with us & you could win a trip for two to America including a 16 day tour & flights, courtesy of Cosmos. See facebook.com/BusEvNews or businessnews.com.au for more details on this great prize and how to enter



Pictured is Paula Farrell, Travelport with Darren Percival

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AHA awards Pensione

PENSIONE Hotel Perth took out the best Mid-Range Accommodation honours in the Australian Hotel Association WA awards last week, just months after completing a major refurbishment.

Beating others in the hotly contested 3-3.5 star category, 8Hotels founder and ceo, Paul Fischmann said he was extremely pleased that the AHA had recognised the extensive time, money and effort which had been dedicated to the property, previously named Aarons Hotel Perth, since 8Hotels began managing it at the end of 2011.

"After completing a major refurbishment which included new carpets, furniture, bedding, soft furnishings and paint, saw the installation of reverse cycle air-conditioning and the renovation of most bathrooms, the hotel really looks great," Fischmann said.



Carlson expands in India

THE Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group has announced the opening of the Radisson Kandla, in Gujarat and the Radisson Blu Ghaziabad, near New Delhi, bringing the group's growing presence in India to 99 hotels in operation or under development.

"Our hotel brands are well represented in key cities such as Chennai, Delhi, and Hyderabad.

In Delhi and the NCR (National Capital Region) alone, Carlson Rezidor has 19 operating hotels open and operating today," said Simon C. Barlow, president, Asia Pacific, Carlson Rezidor Hotel group.

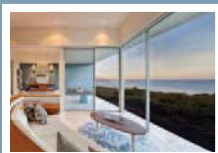
"To further our expansion and

continue our growth momentum, we are establishing hotels in emerging cities such as Kandla, India's largest port as well as Ghaziabad, which is listed as among the top 10 most dynamic cities in the world by Newsweek."

The 117 room Radisson Kandla with 55,000 sqft of meeting space, and the 147 room Radisson Blu Ghaziabad with pillarless function rooms that can accommodate up to 1,500 guests, are both well positioned to be successful in capturing high end business and leisure travel, in line with the growth of their respective destinations, he said.



Win a luxury stay at Southern Ocean Lodge



During the months of August and September, *Business Events News* is giving one lucky reader the chance to win an amazing two-night stay at the exclusive Southern Ocean Lodge, Kangaroo Island courtesy of Baillie Lodges.

The prize includes two-nights accommodation for two people in a Flinders Suite with breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, open bar with premium wines and spirits, in-suite bar, signature experiences and return island airport transfers.

To be in the running simply answer the 17 questions and the final creative answer which will be featured in *BEN* on 21 September.

The person who answers ALL the questions and has the most creative response will win.

Email your answers to:

baillielodges@businesseventsnews.com.au

Q2: Name the closest capital city to Southern Ocean Lodge?

Hint: www.southernoceanlodge.com.au
Click here for Terms and Conditions

The big W experience



INTEL has unveiled *The Ultrabook Experience*, a worldwide series of collaborations with some of the world's most loved brands including W Hotels Worldwide.

The aim is reported to advance the next generation of innovators in travel, film, business, fashion and design to do extraordinary things with the power of the Ultrabook device inspired by Intel.

The first collaboration between Intel and W Hotels worldwide launches in Australia this week with *Four Stories*, an innovative screenplay competition that invites aspiring filmmakers worldwide to submit original screenplays from today until 30 August.

Each story will be set in a W Hotel in a different location around the world and feature the Ultrabook as a central element of the script.

For more information visit www.intel.com.au/fourstories.

Collis joins Crowne Plaza Adelaide

INTERCONTINENTAL Hotels

Group has appointed Linda Collis as the new hotel general manager for Crowne Plaza Adelaide.



In her role Collis will oversee the hotel's operations, reporting to Bill Edwards, IHG director of operations, Australasia.

Collis replaces Brendon Meppem who transfers to Malaysia to manage Holiday Inn Kuala Lumpur Glenmarie.

Most recently Collis was area director of sales and marketing, based at Crowne Plaza Surfers Paradise, overseeing the sales and marketing functions for Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Vanuatu.



ISN'T this the pits!

The powers that be in Panaji, India are considering developing closed mines as a tourism activity.

The draft proposal states that "mineral-related tourism would be promoted with a view to create awareness, educate the masses and provide employment opportunities to the local people".

While promoting 'mineral related tourism,' isn't concrete right now, the idea is to create geological parks wherever feasible.

HOW reassuring?

An Alaska Airlines passenger reportedly looked out of his window and saw a damaged portion of a wing, with a handwritten note above the area saying "We know about this."

The airline said it was there to avoid multiple maintenance reports - but we sure wouldn't want to see that on our flight!

IT&CM launches in India

THE Thailand-based Incentive Travel and Conventions, Meetings Asia trade show, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, will hold the inaugural Indian Incentive Travel and Conventions, Meetings tradeshow IT&CM India, at the India Expo Centre and Mart, Delhi, 21-23 August.

TTG Events who have signed a partnership agreement with the Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI), are sharing resources and expertise to raise awareness about the international event, as well as to enhance the quality and quantity of the domestic buyer registration.

OTOAI is bringing in buyers from its member base across the country, a membership that accounts for 30% of all outbound business from India.

Dove Travels and Vayu Seva Tours and Travels are among the confirmed OTOAI buyers who will be at the event.

EIBTM 2012 offer

NEMONIC Concepts, a "Group Coordinator" for EIBTM 2012, in conjunction with their client Wedgewood DMC group, has two Hosted Buyer spots open to attend the tradeshow in Barcelona from 27-29 November.

Contact Sue Wallace by email at info@nemonicon.com.au.





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Shades of blush!

OKAY, it's not exactly the sort of story we'd run in a business events newsletter but, as we are not adverse to a bit of romance and this is such a clever campaign of Accor, its worth revealing that Brisbane is turning up the heat this winter with a saucy overnight package.

It's one that plays on the *50 Shades* book phenomenon by offering a '50 Shades of Stay' at Quay West Suites Brisbane, The Sebel Suites Brisbane or The Sebel King George Square.

Included in the 50 Shades of Stay package is luxurious overnight accommodation, a bottle of sparkling wine, strawberries with chocolate dipping sauce, lip balm (*lip biting remedy*), room service breakfast for two, satin blindfold, a 'Do Not Disturb' sign and, of course, unlimited memories to take home!

Valid on Friday to Sunday nights.

The promotion can be booked online at accorpacific.net by quoting 50SHADES at time of booking.

Staging greater clarity

AS technology drives new levels of audience interaction, Staging Connections has introduced a brand new custom built webcasting platform called CEOwebcast.

The system further bolsters the company's capabilities to deliver live event communication that allows clients to engage with their audience, where ever they may be located.

The Staging Connections team recognised in client discussions that the ceo of an organisation should have the ability to clearly share his or her message with all the team, whether they are located in their office or across a broad geographical spread.

"Internal Communications is recognised as a difficult task for a lot of companies, from the Fortune 500s right through to small business.

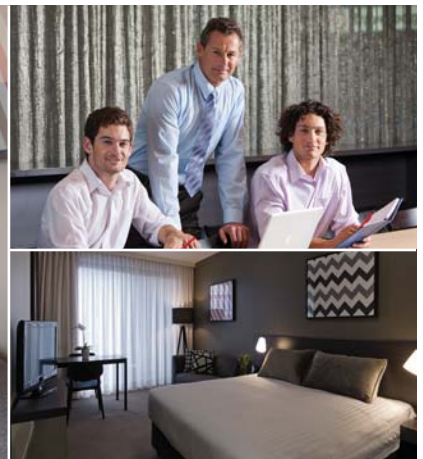
"Its effectiveness relies on a number of variables; the clarity of the message, employee understanding and what the best

medium is to reach everyone," Tim Chapman, general manager Digital, Staging Connections said.

He said the CEOwebcast system had been designed with a greater level of interactivity in mind to encourage live feedback, which has been proven to improve employee engagement.

The platform offers a custom built 'webskin' that mirrors a company's brand guidelines with live chat functionality, enabling employees to ask questions, to ensure that the message is not lost in translation or misunderstood.

An on-demand version provides the opportunity to view the webcast for up to six months for employees who were unable to attend or may be newly employed. As Dana Busic, IP Australia stated, "The webcast initiative significantly expanded the reach of our message with participants logging in from around the country and international locations."



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