



## Welcome to the week

Wet, wet, wet in Sydney but still BEN's news gets through!



AIME is fast approaching – 21-22 April with pre AIME events and promotional visits in full swing this week.

For some, we'll be heading to Melbourne on Friday night to join pre AIME famil tours and hosted buyer functions that start this Saturday.

In this issue, read our CENTRES of Attention conference centre column - and should you have a news update to communicate, tell us about it in 200 words.

Send your information to [jill@businessesnews.com.au](mailto:jill@businessesnews.com.au) for inclusion.

## Win MEA registration

WITH early bird registration for the upcoming MEA 2012 'Open your Mind' conference now closed, guests who register and pay before 2nd March have the chance to win a complimentary registration for a VIP client or business colleague.

The conference will take place in Sydney 21st-24th April, and as a special bonus 36 places have been donated by BridgeClimb and East Sail to allow delegates to experience two of Sydney's iconic activities - [meetingevents.com.au](http://meetingevents.com.au).

MEANWHILE MEA has also announced that Karen Teong, director of sales & events at Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre, is the lucky winner of three luxurious nights' accommodation at The Darling during the event.

## Return to the 'mothership'!

THE Japan National Tourism Organisation (JNTO) held a MICE lunch seminar on Friday, at Sydney's Ocean Room, with a strengthened commitment to promote Japan as a world-class business events destination to Australia.

The event saw suppliers and incentive and conference planners interact during informative networking sessions, and gave an update on Japan following last year's tsunami and nuclear safety issues.

Emphasising Japan's nuclear safety, the JNTO's Stephanie SNG said, "Japan's natural radiation level is at a safer point than the natural radiation in Sydney," advising that it is only in the country's north, around the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, that a 'Do not travel,' 30 to 80 km precautionary zone exists.

One on the best barometers for travel according to JTB, the largest travel company in Japan, is that school travel has returned.

"Schools were the first groups to leave after the tsunami, said Kathy Papadimitriou, MICE division supervisor, groups and incentive travel.

"We now have 30 schools going over in September and many

corporates who postponed trips last year are back with enquiries," she said.

Terry Carter, general manager procurement & facilities at Fujitsu in Australia who visits Japan on a regular basis and who is full of admiration for the country, said he is once again taking customers



and staff to their head office in Tokyo and to other cities in Japan.

"I always like to showcase the rest of this incredible country," he told *Business Events News*.

Cathy Favalaro, Four Seasons regional director of sales, said the hotel group is getting a lot of enquiries from Japanese companies in support of the 'mothership'.

"We have done a lot of work with incentives but groups need to book well ahead if they want to stay at our new 57-room boutique property, Four Seasons Tokyo at Marunouchi," she said.

The JNTO will be at AIME next week showcasing Japan.

Favalaro is pictured above with Yuki Hino and Norie Sugisaki from Japan Airlines.

## CENTRES of Attention

Gail Sawyer from the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre has provided this update on the latest BCEC happenings.

BRISBANE Convention & Exhibition Centre is set to host its first event this week in the brand new BCEC on Grey Street, the Centre's newly opened boutique expansion.

More than 130 local business and industry leaders will attend the first Business South Bank networking event for 2012 in the Centre's premier event space, the Sky Room and Terrace which has commanding views of the skyline.

This is just the first of a total of 44 events booked into the new venue in February.

Guests will be treated to a specially selected menu of cocktail canapés from the Centre's new menu planner, timed to coincide with the opening of BCEC on Grey Street.

To celebrate the newly expanded facilities there is now an even greater focus on seasonal menus, greater product choices and more flexibility, with the produce-focused menus showcasing the diversity of locally grown food but also delivering on the Centre's commitment to sustainable choices.

This is the first of a number of scheduled showcase events designed to introduce both national and local industry and business leaders to the new venue which is specifically designed for the smaller and medium sized meetings with an extra 20 meeting rooms and event spaces including two tiered auditoria for 400 and 600 - more info from [gails@bcec.com.au](mailto:gails@bcec.com.au).

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## 2012 AIME Update

### Wedgewood fires up at AIME

**INTERNATIONAL** destination management company, Wedgewood Travel Group, is to launch their business tourism services at AIME.

The company founded in 1979 by Aidan and Alda Ford, provides complete destination management services in several countries including United Kingdom, France, Spain, Germany and the United States.

Aidan Ford, the managing director and founder of the Wedgewood Group said they are delighted to be exhibiting at AIME and to engage with this dynamic market. "Our experienced and inventive

approach will provide the Australasian market with opportunity to connect with one of the leading DMC operations on the international scene," he said.

"By utilising the benefits of the Wedgewood group experience, the client's investment and unique travel experiences are fully optimised" Mr Ford added.

You can meet the Wedgewood Group team on stand 4234 or see [wedgewoodusa-dmc.com](http://wedgewoodusa-dmc.com).

### Raffles is ravishing

**TWO** of Asia's great classic hotels, Raffles Hotel Le Royal, Phnom Penh and Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor in Siem Reap, will be exhibiting at AIME on the Fairmont Raffles Hotels International Stand No. 3510.

Originally opened in 1929 and 1932 respectively, they're the only two luxury hotels in Cambodia which pre-date the civil war and Khmer Rouge era.

Director of sales and marketing Gareth Walters will available for appointments throughout AIME.

### Precious Palazzo

**VISITORS** to the Palazzo Versace stand at AIME (stand 1742) will be given the opportunity to pamper themselves in luxury, with a prize draw for a signature bathroom amenities gift pack.

Valued at \$850, the prize includes a midnight black Egyptian cotton bathrobe along with a towel embroidered with the House of Versace logo.

There's also a range of his and her petit perfumes and bespoke bathroom amenities.

Palazzo Versace will also promote its new "must-have" MICE offer which rewards those who confirm proposals within two weeks a 5% discount.

The package also includes complimentary one hour drinks and canapes on arrival, a reduced requirement for complimentary rooms and upgrades, as well as zero caps on upgraded rooms per night.

### Taiwan wants MICE

**THE** Taiwan Tourism Bureau has officially launched a new subsidy policy to further encourage overseas incentive groups.

Grants and incentives include cultural performances, planning assistance and souvenirs, and for first-time incentive groups numbering more than 150 the bureau will also provide a free gala dinner.

The Taiwanese delegation at AIME will include representatives from conference bureaus, DMCs, hotels such as the Regent Taipei and the Hotel Royal Chiao Hsi, along with professional conference organisers.

For more information see Taiwan on booth 5038.

### Free AIME app

**REED** Travel Exhibitions (RTE) organisers of AIME, have launched an official Smartphone event application with ShowGizmo, available to download free to registered visitors, exhibitors and media with Android, Blackberry and iPhone devices.

The move is designed to keep attendees up-to-date on everything taking place, and allows them to plan their time, access AIME's program, exchange information and collect brochures, make connections, and receive real time alerts and news before, during and after the event, all in the palm of their hand.

Sally de Swart, RTE director for AIME, said the introduction of the ShowGizmo app was a great opportunity to utilise technology in a meaningful business context.

"Up until now the only option at exhibitions was to exchange business cards and collect literature - the ShowGizmo app means information can now also be shared digitally which may be more convenient for some attendees," Ms de Swart said.

To get the app use the password 'aime2012' to download it from [showgizmo.com](http://showgizmo.com).

### AsiaWorld on show

**AIME** delegates can learn about the major facilities available at AsiaWorld-Expo on Hong Kong's Lantau Island, with the venue recently named as one of the top three Convention/Exhibition Centres in Asia.

The integrated centre offers huge capacity for exhibitions, seminars, shows and "mega conferences" - for more info see [www.asiaworld-expo.com](http://www.asiaworld-expo.com).

### St Regis Bangkok deal

**STARWOOD** luxury property the St Regis Bangkok is offering an Exclusive Meetings Package for AIME, which it says gives the opportunity to host a meeting or special event in the Thai capital's "most luxurious hotel" which opened on 01 Apr 2011 - more details on stand 3208.

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# business events news

13th February 2012

## FCm Japanese move

**FLIGHT** Centre's FCm Travel Solutions has announced a major new partnership with Japanese MICE and business travel specialist, TOPTOUR Corporation.

TOPTOUR operates 96 offices across Japan, offering clients a range of services including events, special interest, medical tours, group travel, meetings, incentives and corporate travel management.

The move boosts FCm's global network which spans more than 75 countries worldwide.

## OSC boosts Macau

**OFF-SITE** Connections Event Management (OSC) has expanded its Macau-based staff, with the promotion of Creative Director Peter Hassall to the role of Managing Director - Macau.

Other appointments include new General Manager, Mario Yeung and Julia Timmerman as Business Development Manager.

The company said the changes reflect commitment to Macau and its burgeoning events industry "as demand grows in this rapidly maturing destination".

## Virgin revs it up

**VIRGIN** Australia has today been announced as the official domestic airline partner for V8 Supercars, a move that will see the airline transport staff and the majority of teams to the 15 Australian events across the country, as well as one in NZ.

Virgin Australia said it would also offer V8 Supercar fans fares and tailored packages to the races.

## See Alice in flash

**A VERY** clever promotional Youtube video put together by a group of operators in Central Australia, shows what can be achieved when you think outside the traditional marketing square and are prepared to work as a team.

Called 'Alice Business Trip in a Minute,' it demonstrates the teamwork in Alice Springs between Alice Springs Convention Centre, Crowne Plaza, Lasseters Hotel Casino and Imparja Television, who joined forces with 16 local operators to produce an "irreverent snapshot of one woman's business trip to The Alice".

It provides a small taste of the flavours available in this most iconic tourism destination.

Check it out on our website at [www.busesseventsnews.com.au](http://www.busesseventsnews.com.au).



**WE** all know how hospitable the Austrians can be - and a brothel in Vienna is proving it by truly reaching out to the poor.

During the current cold spell in Europe, as temperatures in Vienna hit minus 20°C, the owner of the Red Room Laufhaus has opened his doors to the homeless.

He is giving 10 people a night a bed for free, including a hot shower and a hot meal.

However, he did add, "Other services are not included."

**AN** auction in Romania last month - offering some of the keepsakes owned by the country's late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu - is highlighting just how imaginative some of those quirky corporate gifts can be.

Items on offer in Bucharest included a leopard skin presented to the former strongman by the leader of a country in Africa, as well as some silver doves given by the Shah of Iran.

And one of the most impressive items is a full sized bronze yak, which was a present from China's Chairman Mao.

## Medina sings for La Traviata



**MEDINA** Apartment Hotels has been named the official accommodation partner for the most spectacular event on the Sydney calendar, the inaugural Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour featuring *La Traviata* which begins an exclusive three-week season from 24th March.

Opera Australia's huge production of Verdi's tragic love story features spectacular sets, beautiful costumes, dazzling lighting, fireworks every night and a chandelier that will sparkle with thousands of Swarovski crystals suspended above a giant purpose-built, shimmering stage 9-metres high and 9-metres long.

It will be suspended from a 26-metre crane, blackened out so that it is invisible against the night sky.

The Opera House, Bridge and city skyline will provide a magnificent backdrop to the show.

Audiences will watch the extravaganza from a luxurious 3,000 seat grandstand erected in the Royal Botanic Gardens, on the water's edge. It will have large and expansive hospitality areas at either end.

"This bold adventure will

showcase Sydney to the world and show us as an innovative, creative city that will bring in many interstate and overseas visitors," predicted Anthony Laver, General Manager Marketing Destination NSW at a media briefing at Opera Australia last Friday.

Medina Apartment Hotels across Sydney will offer exclusive accommodation and ticket packages with a lead-in price of \$90 per person, available through Showbiz. There'll also be a Medina Lounge serving drinks and snacks before the show. "La Traviata is set to wow audiences and we're thrilled to be associated with this amazing new attraction. The partnership compliments Toga Hospitality's arts focused suite of partnerships," said Rachel Argaman, CEO of Medina Apartment Hotels.

There'll be an exclusion zone on the Harbour preventing spectator craft from getting too close to the stage. "We don't want boats turning up loaded with beer-drinking yachties and seeing the show for free," said Opera Australia.



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