

**Inshallah!**

BEN is today coming to you from the world's largest natural spa - the Dead Sea, Jordan where an international conference "Seizing tourism market opportunities in the time of rapid change" began yesterday at Dead Sea Jordan's King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre.

Considered a significant event for this Middle Eastern landlocked Kingdom, it is a conference that coincides with the celebration of 200 years since the rediscovery of Petra, one of the seven wonders of the world.

Jointly organised by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), it is hosted by Jordan Tourism and brings together key public and private sector tourism leaders.

Business tourism is seen as an important part of Jordan's overall tourism vision, with Jordan Tourism planning to hold a meetings and incentive style exhibition, similar to that of IMEX and EIBTM, in 2015 - Jill.

**Closure fuels spend in Victoria**

THE Global economic downturn and the planned closure of the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre are some of the drivers that will see Accor's Novotel Glen Waverley and Novotel Melbourne on Collins undergo refurbishment



programs, a move that reflects Accor hotel's confidence and continued investment in Victoria.

Accor's regional general manager for VIC/TAS/SA, Scott Boyes, says the upgrade of the company's Victorian hotel inventory reflected the state's aggressive commitment to winning major events and conferences for the state.

"The continuing global economic uncertainty and steep declines on the local and international stock exchanges does threaten business travel, but Victoria's reputation as the state to hold major events and conferences has given us the confidence to spend significantly on upgrading our accommodation," he said.

"The planned closure of the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre in 2013 will give Melbourne even greater opportunities to win major conferences and events, but it is essential that the city continually upgrades its accommodation

infrastructure if we are to compete strongly against other cities both within Australia and in the Asia Pacific region," Boyes added.

Over the past 12 months, more than \$25million has been invested in the Victorian hotel market by Accor with refurbishment programs taking place at CBD and regional hotels under the Sofitel, Grand Mercure, Novotel, Mercure, All Seasons, Ibis brands and Formule 1 brands. "We have already been able to quantify the benefits of major refurbishments.

"For example, the recently re-branded Mercure Melbourne Treasury Gardens closed a large proportion of rooms during its \$4million refurbishment program, but experienced a 10% increase in revenue following completion of the program," he said.

Novotel Glen Waverley will invest \$5.6 million on a refurbishment of all 200 accommodation rooms while the 309 room Novotel Melbourne on Collins will be upgraded to complement the newly added Premier rooms, and a refurb of its conference facilities.

The hotel's bathrooms will also be fitted out with the completion of the refurb planned for Oct.

**Temple experience**

BOOKERS of events at Sea Temple Resort & Spa Port Douglas, Sea Temple Surfers Paradise or Sea Temple Resort & Spa Palm Cove are being offered the opportunity to win the "ultimate Sea Temple experience".

The incentive is in place for confirmed bookings before 31 Aug 2012, with a \$5000 prize on offer including four nights at one of the resorts plus airfares from the winner's nearest capital city.

Conference organisers receive one complimentary room per 20 full paying rooms, one complimentary day delegate per 20 delegates, one welcome drink per delegate for all on-site dinners plus complimentary lunch upgrades, parking, wifi and more.

Room prices at the Palm Cove property start at \$219, or \$249 at the other two Sea Temples.

For more information and bookings contact the Sea Temple sales office on 07 3222 1181 or email qldsales@accorpacific.net.

Last chance Venus

TOURISM Queensland reminds us that the Transit of Venus, occurs today, the last time that we mere mortals will be able to see the planet in full flight.

Named after the Goddess of Love and Beauty, it is one of the rarest of celestial phenomena and the six hour event occurs as Venus passes directly between the earth and the sun - creating an inky black spot against the face of our brightest star.

The next transit won't be seen until the year 2117, so budding astronomers should cast their eyes skyward, safely behind a pin-holed piece of cardboard.

Etihad To Brazil

COMMENCING from June 2013, Etihad Airways has announced plans to fly to Brazil, the airline's first South American destination.

The service will be the first direct air link between Abu Dhabi and any South American country and will mean Etihad serves all of the BRIC high growth nations.

"Brazil is a logical next step for us", said ceo James Hogan.

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SILVERSEA CRUISES CORPORATE & INCENTIVE PRESENTATION AND COCKTAIL EVENING

Karen Christensen, General Manager, Director of Sales & Marketing, cordially invites you to a Corporate & Incentive Presentation and Cocktail Evening on Wednesday 18 July, 6pm to 8pm at the Museum of Sydney, Bridge St, Sydney NSW 2000. Please register your interest by calling **1300 306 872** (press 3, press 1) or email apevents@silversea.com





crumbs!

HIGHWAY to heaven, perhaps?

A cemetery tour, The Beliefs, Attitudes and Customs trail that explores the rich diversity of faiths, traditions and funeral practices, has been devised by Adelaide's West Terrace Cemetery and follows on from the success of the cemetery's Heritage Highlights tour, which welcomed more than 7500 visitors in its first 12 months.

This latest self-guided interpretive trail looks at the religious customs such as those of Muslims and Jews.

For instance Muslims are buried on their sides facing Mecca and Jews use pebbles instead of flowers to mourn the dead.

Such is the success of the cemetery's first tour it was named the best new tourism development at the South Australian Tourism Awards, last year.

Adelaide Cemeteries Authority tourism officer Tony Amato said, "It explores the evolution of cremation in South Australia and the establishment of the first modern crematorium in the southern hemisphere."

"It touches on Victorian death and mourning, society's attitudes to stillbirth and the destitute, from settlement through to present day, as well as the concept of body donation for the purposes of scientific research."

Toga's Mascot property

IMPLEMENTING a compelling growth strategy for Toga's international apartment hotel brand – Adina Apartment Hotels and servicing a growing need from travellers to be accommodated in apartment style accommodation, Toga Hotels is to open a new property in late 2013, to be known as Adina Apartment Hotel Mascot.

Located less than 1km from



Sydney Airport on Bourke Road, the new hotel will feature: 123 apartments with a mix of 51 studio apartments, 66 one bedroom apartments six two bedroom apartments, an onsite restaurant and bar, two conference/function rooms, onsite parking and a gym.

Meeting the accommodation demand from local businesses, along with leisure and business transit-travellers, Mascot train station is less than 250 metres away.

The full service apartment hotel has been designed to make time in transit more comfortable, while for business travellers, the apartment offers space for small meetings, along with conference rooms for larger events.

Allan Vidor, md of Toga Group, said: "Adina Apartment Hotel Mascot represents another great milestone for Toga Hotels."

Adina Apartment Hotel Mascot is the fourth new Adina Apartment Hotel to be announced this year following Bondi Beach, Norwest and Royal Randwick Racecourse.

Some like it hot!

BOOK a room at the Banyan Tree Phuket during Thailand's hot summer season and depending on how high the temperature is, you get a discount.

For example, a guest booking a stay on 3 July when the recorded temperature at noon is 33° celsius would enjoy a discount of 33% off best available rates for accommodation, together with 33% off spa services and gallery purchases, and daily breakfast for two persons.

Guests who opt for the Banyan Tree's ultra-luxurious DoublePool Villas could stand to save up to US\$412 off their room at this discount rate.

The offer is valid for bookings of a minimum of two consecutive nights at best available rates made from 1 to 20 July for stays from 1 July to 30 September.

Discounts are capped at 40% at each of Banyan Tree Spa, Banyan Tree Gallery, Angsana Spa and Angsana Gallery.

Ramage joins Dusit

THAI hotel group Dusit International have appointed James Ramage assistant vice president of sales with a primary responsibility to drive topline performance among the group's hotels and resorts, through the development and execution of tactical and strategic sales initiatives, and to strengthen partnerships worldwide.

Ramage brings with him almost three decades of experience in the travel and hospitality industry including more than fifteen years managing sales, business development & marketing teams in Europe, Australia, China & Thailand.

Most recently he was regional director of sales and marketing for Starwood and previously held positions with Marriott hotels in London, UK and Florida USA.

Stay at Novotel Brisbane Airport



This week, **Business Events News** is giving readers the chance to win one night accommodation in a standard room for two adults plus full buffet breakfast courtesy of **Novotel Brisbane Airport**.

Novotel Brisbane Airport is perfectly positioned as the only hotel located within the Brisbane Airport precinct and featuring 157 contemporary rooms, restaurant and bar, rooftop heated swimming pool, and state of the art conference centre ideal for meetings, conferences and events.

To win be the first to answer: comp@businessnews.com.au

How many hotels are there in the Brisbane Airport precinct?



Hint: novotelbrisbaneairport.com.au

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Business awards

BRISBANE's Lord Mayor Graham Quirk is encouraging all members of the business community to take part in the prestigious Lord Mayor's Business Awards 2012 program.

To nominate for this city-wide search or another inspirational Brisbane business, or to view past winners & finalists see: lmba.com.au.

Winners of each of the business categories will automatically go into the draw for the Optus Business Platinum Award - celebrating outstanding business achievement.



SEC gm honoured



STEVE Romer, general manager of the Sydney Entertainment Centre was awarded with one of the industry's highest honours when he was named Australia's Venue Management Professional of the Year by the Venue Management Association, last week.

One of the event industry's highest honours, Romer was presented with the 2012 award at the VMA's annual congress gala dinner at the RACV Royal Pines Resort on the Gold Coast.

The award which recognises a career in venue management, was presented by association president Brian Morris who paid tribute to Romer's role both at the Sydney Entertainment Centre and within the VMA.

"This is a well-deserved recognition of the hard work that Steve has put into developing the Venue Management Association as a Councillor and as president, as well as the impact he has had on the industry over the years," Mr Morris said.

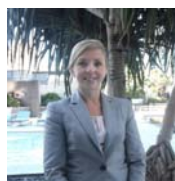
Romer, a long-term member of the VMA, served as president from 2008 to 2011, as well as serving as a board director of the International Association of Venue Managers.

Mantra's three amigos

THE Mantra Group has announced three new management appointments to its Gold Coast hotel operations team.

Vince King has been promoted to area manager Surfers Paradise Hotels; Katie Scholes general manager, Mantra Circle on Cavill and Ben O'Reilly is the new regional revenue manager for the Gold Coast.

King, well known in hospitality circles has under his control Mantra Legends Hotel, of which he will remain gm, as well as Mantra Wings, BreakFree Aloha, BreakFree Beachpoint, BreakFree Cosmopolitan, BreakFree Imperial Surf and BreakFree Longbeach.



Katie Scholes has broad experience in sales, reservations and rooms management

which are elements critical to Mantra Circle on Cavill's success.

Revenue specialist Ben O'Reilly, previously with the Federal Hotel Group is responsible for the Group's 22 properties on the Gold Coast across the Peppers, Mantra and BreakFree brand.



He will work closely with Gold Coast property general managers, reservations teams and revenue managers.

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Industry helps to cure Fiji kids

COMMENT and inspiration has followed on from **BEN** readers, based on stories we ran last month to assist Fiji's flood victims.

Now comes this initiative from the Accor team to raise funds for Cure Kids Fiji.

The event being held in Fiji 15th-19th October will see Accor colleagues help put smiles on the faces of the beautiful children of the South Pacific island nation.

They will spend five days taking part in the 'Accor Extreme Challenge to Cure Kids Fiji Islands' which involves swimming, kayaking, running, community challenges and more.

The ultimate goal is to raise a lot of money to help Cure Kids in the Fiji Islands and to do so they are recruiting their

friends, family, colleagues, clients (and anyone else that will help!) to raise at least \$8,000 by 1st September this year.

This money will be used to buy vital medical equipment and fund research projects that are an absolute necessity to save sick children's lives in Fiji.

To find out more about the event and all the work currently being funded by Cure Kids in Fiji - curekids.org.nz/about/fiji.html.



WIN A TRIP FOR TWO TO VANUATU



During the months of May and June, **Business Events News** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win an amazing holiday for two people to Vanuatu, courtesy of **Air Vanuatu** and the **Grand Hotel and Casino**.

The prize includes Air Vanuatu return airfares from Syd/Bne/Mel to Port Vila, and five nights accommodation in a Harbour View Room including continental breakfast daily at the Grand Hotel and Casino.

Air Vanuatu offers daily flights from Australia, just over 3 hours away. Complimentary inflight service and the friendliest smiles in the Pacific!

Grand Hotel and Casino offers a relaxing yet sophisticated French style setting, in a prime waterfront location in the heart of the shopping, business and entertainment district. 74 rooms with floor to ceiling windows, own private balcony, Internet access in all rooms and 24 hour room service. We also cater for conferences sizes between 10 - 80 delegates and for groups up to 130 people.

Q.11: Can Qantas Frequent Flyer Points be earned and redeemed on Air Vanuatu International flights?

Hint: airvanuatu.com

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

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