



Mea Culpa

WE have been a bit remiss not to say thank you for all the encouraging emails we have received since *Business Events News* was launched on 01 Feb.

Not all of you would know that until the end of Mar BEN has been going out to some 50,000 recipients thrice weekly.

From April we fly free from the Travel Daily readership and will continue with our own.

Sign up free today, and don't forget to share your comments, breaking news and stories - info@businesseventsnews.com.au.



Success is sweet for SCEC

WINNING the top four categories for the second year running in MEA Awards is not a bad way for the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre (SCEC) to enter a year that will see its redevelopment start.

The awards include those for Venue over 500, In-house AV Services and Banquet and Catering through to Corporate Social Responsibility. with Centre chief executive Ton van Amerongen saying they are thrilled by the wins, which follow a record four national MEA awards for the venue last year.



The Centre will now enter the MEA national awards in the four categories it has won at the State level, as well as an additional national category of Education.

"Not only do we have a world class venue, we have a world class team of professionals working here.

"My thanks go to every one of them for their continued efforts to ensure the success of our clients' event," van Amerongen said.

"In our continuing quest to provide the best possible service for our clients, we launched a range of new products and programs in 2011.

"Feedback has been great, with our client satisfaction rating reaching a record 87.3 per cent last year as a result.

"To collect these MEA awards in recognition of our work is the icing on the cake," he concluded.

Certain to float your boat!

DESCRIBED as the perfect mix of technology, elegance and exclusivity, the *MSC Preziosa* has joined the MSC Cruises fleet.

The fleet's 13th addition as well as the precious fourth ship in the series of Fantasia-class ships, they include *MSC Fantasia*, *MSC Splendida* and the long-awaited *MSC Divina*.

The contract to take over a

140,000 ton cruise ship follows the termination of the agreement with the original owner - believed to be the former Libyan govt.

Preziosa boasts 751 cabins, 26 lifts, and 18 decks, four main restaurants, two speciality restaurants, 21 bars, a casino, four swimming pools, 12 whirlpools, a bowling alley, a sports area with playing fields, a fitness centre, a children's area and superb MSC Aurea Spa.

The MSC Yacht Club, an exclusive feature of all Fantasia-class ships in the MSC fleet,

allows privileged passengers staying in its 69 exclusive suites to take advantage of the private bar, solarium, hydro-massage pools, and the spectacular glass-walled observation lounge.

A butler service will offer assistance at check-in, transport luggage, unpack, serve traditional English afternoon tea and arrange for cigars and beverages, book tables at restaurants, treatments in the Spa, ad hoc excursions and even arrange private parties.



Oaks room & brekkie

OAKS Hotels & Resorts in Melbourne along with the Cosmopolitan Oaks on Collins and Oaks on Market, are offering a special winter conference deal including a free night accom plus buffet breakfast for two with any event booking over \$1,600.

On offer from June to August, it can be for used up to six months after the conference date - see oakshotelsresorts.com.

Mongolia's Blue Sky

A brand new hotel in Mongolia - Blue Sky Hotel & Tower has become Preferred Hotels & Resorts' first member in the country.

Located in Sukhbaatar Square, the heart of Ulanbaatar's business centre the hotel comprises 200 rooms and features a dedicated executive floor complete with a lounge and additional benefits, such as five restaurants & recreational facilities, including an indoor pool, gym, sauna and three jacuzzi's.

With one of the largest function spaces in the city it offers state-of-the-art visual and lighting equipment, and can cater for up to 500 delegates across its two ballrooms and 3 function rooms.



Booming Times in WA

THE Perth Convention Bureau is predicting that the 2011/12 financial year will finish on a high for the Bureau and its members.

When asked how Perth and WA stands in the business events market, the bureau's chief executive officer Paul Beeson was confident that WA was in a strong position with partners forecasting a bumper year and current bureau sales figures supporting this.

At the end of January, 105 conventions & incentive groups had been secured by the bureau for WA, representing an estimated 42,585 delegates & \$71,457,811 in DDE, ensuring the organisation is well on track to achieve its biggest ever target of \$101m.

Western Australia is the powerhouse of one of the world's strongest economies, while the capital city is undergoing the biggest urban transformation in its 180 year history with the implementation of the Perth Waterfront Development.

The Waterfront Development is being delivered by the State Government and supported by the City of Perth; Perth Waterfront will cover nearly 10 hectares of prime land and feature a 2.8 hectare inlet surrounded by landscaped terraces, boardwalks and promenades, fringed by shops, cafes, restaurants and other entertainment venues.

The State Government will be investing \$2.6b into the project.

Sunshine Coast offer

BUSINESS Events Sunshine Coast is offering free cocktail parties, brekkies, accommodation and 20% off a range of products and services during its winter campaign for bookings from May to August with a minimum of 30 attendees - DrinksAreOnUs.com.au.



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THREE Japanese tourists found themselves in an embarrassing situation after their GPS led them to drive right into the muddy waters of Moreton Bay.

The trio were trying to get to North Stradbroke Island in Qld when they took the wrong turn.

They travelled about 500m through mangrove mud, apparently unaware of the 15km of water separating them from their destination.

ACCLAIMED Italian composer Ennio Morricone's concert at Elder Park was interrupted for 40 minutes on Friday night, when a scheduling mix-up led to Clipsal 500 race noise intruding on the Adelaide Festival's gala event.

Ramada adds regional growth

ADDING weight to the Sunshine Coast's already solid reputation and its depth of brands, the Ramada Hotel and Conference Centre Marcoola Beach was officially opened last Thursday.

The beachfront property which was formerly known as SurfAir on Marcoola Beach will continue to be managed by Resort Management by Wyndham, part of the Wyndham Vacation Resorts Asia Pacific group.

The event was attended by the Sunshine Coast business and tourism community including Steve Cooper, ceo of Sunshine Coast Destination and Councillor Debbie Blumel, mayoral



candidate.

The name change was a move to rebrand the property to the internationally renowned Ramada brand and to attract more domestic and international travellers in the leisure and business market.

Mr Cooper said he recognised the contribution that Wyndham Hotel Group will bring to the region and the much needed stimulus needed during challenging economic times.

"The introduction of Ramada to the Sunshine Coast underpins an exciting opportunity for the property in the business events sector and a real growth opportunity for the Marcoola Beach area."

Barry Robinson, ceo and managing director of Wyndham Vacation Resorts Asia Pacific and managing director for Wyndham Hotel Group said, "Wyndham Hotel Group will continue to grow with franchise brands and management agreements in destinations across Australia and New Zealand and it is great to have the support of these local communities."

Pictured from left are: Damien Keenan gm; Debbie Blumel; David Ray and Steve Cooper.

A peachy addition

The 127 guestroom, Mansion on Peachtree, in Buckland, Atlanta, is to be rebranded to the Mandarin Oriental, Atlanta in May.

The hotel's meeting rooms includes a 130 seat Ballroom.

Virgin Atlantic lets the Cow out of the shed



This week, **Business Events News** is giving



readers the chance to win a pampering gift pack of Cowshed skin products courtesy of Virgin Atlantic.

For over 26 years, Virgin Atlantic has been one of the world's leading long haul airlines. The carrier's dedicated Groups Sales team offers tailor made solutions to meet the needs and objectives of its clients.

For your chance to win, simply be the first to answer the following question to -

comp@businesseventsnews.com.au

How many FOC seats do you receive when you book a group of 20 or more with Virgin Atlantic?

Hint: www.vsflyinghub.com



WIN A 2-NIGHT ULURU ENCOUNTER



To celebrate the \$10million redevelopment of Ayers Rock Resort's Uluru Meeting Place conference centre **Voyages** is offering a great prize to **Business Events News** readers.

The Uluru Meeting Place will feature striking contemporary interiors that reflect the Indigenous heritage of the location. Facilities include a new ballroom that can comfortably seat 420 people as well as a second ballroom that seats over 300. These two rooms combined can create a large area that is ideal for events and trade shows.

The prize includes two return economy airfares to Ayers Rock Resort from the winners nearest Australian capital city, return airport transfers, two nights accommodation in a newly refurbished room at the Sails in the Desert Hotel, dinner at the intimate Tali Viru fine dining experience and a Desert Awakenings Small Group Sunrise tour.

All you need to do to be in the running to win this great prize, is to email your answer to the below question by COB on Friday 30th March to: voyagescomp@businesseventsnews.com.au

The most creative answer will win this fantastic prize.

In 25 words or less tell us what Uluru means to you



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