



Nice one Maccas

I NEVER thought I'd say it, but thank heavens for McDonalds!



Tired of paying a small fortune for coffee and a bite to eat at Sydney International Airport, I was surprised to find an outlet where the price of a flat white is \$2.95. Glancing up to learn the outlet's name I saw the words McCafe, and a toasted ham, cheese and tomato sandwich was only \$3.95. The coffee was good too! - Jill.

MCI's winning combo

IN their first year of operation since MCI merged with Event Planners and acquired Avanti Events and Pharma Events, they have won the MEA Excellence Award (8+ employees) category for 2010/11.

The world's largest meeting and event management agency, MCI's Australia md, Ray Shaw, reflecting on the company's growth said, "Even though we had the same management and staff, there were significant changes to meld the best MCI had to offer globally with our local systems."

MCI was a state finalist for the Corporate Social Responsibility Award and is a finalist for the Education Award.

"CSR is important to MCI as we are a signatory to the UN Global Compact & we take sustainability for our clients and ourselves very seriously," Ray Shaw said.

Conference Centre 1, Monorail Nil!

PERHAPS not all that surprising is the announcement by Premier Barry O'Farrell, that Sydney's poorly performing monorail is to be pulled down.

Bought by the State Government from Metro Transport Sydney (MTS) for \$19.8 million, it is now slated for removal in two to three years.

"The monorail is not integrated with Sydney's wider public transport network and has never been truly embraced by the community," O'Farrell said.

Now at the end of its economic life, O'Farrell went on to say that the NSW Government could not justify costly upgrades like the purchase of new vehicles required to keep it running."

NSW Transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian said tearing down the monorail would remove any constraints on the proposed new convention centre development in Darling Harbour, due for completion by 2015-16.

The buyout, she said would give the Government greater flexibility when planning future public transport, in particular the proposed extensions to the light rail network.

"Our options have increased in relation to how we integrate the convention centre with other modes of public transport."

Built in 1988, O'Farrell felt that



the Monorail's use-by date has arrived, "and that is certainly the Government's position," he said.

"The real problem with the monorail I think for most Sydneysiders is that it doesn't actually go anywhere that you want to go," he concluded.



IT'S understandable that Australian geography is a weak point for int'l visitors, however according to the questions Flight Centre staff have been asked, it seems that Aussies are no different.

"Can I catch a train from Fiji to NZ?"

"Can I get Australia money out of ATMs overseas?"

One traveller baffled by the concept of international time zones, said, "I know it's a long flight but how is it that I take off at 10am in Sydney and land in Vancouver on the same day?"

Another Aussie asked what their duty free allowance was in Tasmania while another checked that shops in Perth would take the same currency as Brisbane!

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 Wiru 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



WIN a \$500 Travel Card

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When only the best will do



THE organisers of the Luxperience high-end experiential travel trade event hosted a launch at the Sydney Park Hyatt (**BEN** Fri) and **BEN** was there to capture these snaps.

At the event, Luxperience founder Rosemarie Sama also spoke about how in a companion promotion, adventurous travellers can now submit photos of their 'Most Amazing Travel Experience'.

The winner will enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime Orion Expedition Cruise exploring Australia's Kimberley coast, valued at \$25,100, and along the way is required to produce a daily blog of the expedition with video footage on the Luxperience website and Facebook page.

Entries are invited until 30 May at luxperience.com, with the winner to be announced on 15 June.

Luxperience founder & ceo Rosemarie Sama said: "We are

more than a business exchange.

"We are a community providing meaningful connections, keeping leading players and the world's most exclusive travel providers constantly in touch."

Pictured above at the launch event are: Sharon Smith and Robert Miletic, Intercontinental Sydney; Louise McAlpine, Destination NSW and Stuart Rigg, Southern Crossings.

Inset above: Tere George, Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts and Rosemarie Sama, Luxperience.

Below is The Luxperience Team: Shaun Murphy, Katrena Friel, Helen Logas, Angelya Vassiliadis-Balaguer, Rosemarie Sama, Michelle Papas and Laura Molesworth.



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Meeting in Malaysia

19 product managers from Australia and New Zealand met with 80 sellers from across Malaysia, at an event jointly organised by Tourism Malaysia and Malaysia Airlines.

Held at Berjaya Times Square on 23 March, the event saw product managers from companies including The Travel Corporation, Flight Centre, Pinpoint Travel Group and STA Travel.

Attendees were able to explore Kuala Lumpur, take part in one-on-one meetings and post family tours to Penang & Langkawi.

Now in its fourth year this Tourism Malaysia Buyers Meets Sellers event provides a successful forum for Tourism Malaysia to showcase the diverse range of products and opportunities they have on offer.

Shahrin Mokhtar, director Tourism Malaysia Sydney commented, "This environment allows us to educate Australian and New Zealand industry partners on the exciting products, destinations, and opportunities on offer for travellers."

Off-Site gets fresh

SPORTING a fresh new look, Off-Site Connections Event Solutions is revitalising its image by

adopting a dynamic new logo (pictured right) and unveiling a more contemporary image, one they say that better reflects the company's many different dimensions as they enter their 17th year.

Millie Lou, Marketing manager said its team "pushes creative boundaries & delivers exceptional events for your budget to meet objectives, suit audiences and exceed expectations."



Win Richard Branson's new book



This week, **Business Events News** is giving readers the chance to win a copy of Richard Branson's new book: 'Screw business as usual' 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

What email address do you use to contact our groups department in Australia?

Hint: www.vsflyinghub.com





Hats off to The Queen



THE Berkeley, a luxury London hotel in fashionable Knightsbridge, is paying homage to the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in true majestic style with the launch of 'Prêt-à-Portea – The Royal Collection'.

From 29th May to 9th June 2012, biscuits, fancies and choux buns will be transformed to resemble the most memorable hats worn by the Royal Family, marking The Queen's 60th anniversary on the throne.



business events news

28th March 2012

tony wragg's techtalk Technology made simple for small business

Take it to the 'cloud'

CLOUD computing (the delivery of hosted services over the internet) is without a doubt the IT trend that has brought the most benefit to small business.

We live in a global business environment, and up to now, small businesses have had difficulty competing with the big players because they could not afford the associated IT costs.

Cloud computing has changed all that, allowing even the smallest companies to compete against the largest. It does this in four key ways:

Communications services like email, instant messaging, phone systems and video conferencing are all available over the cloud.

This includes: Voice Over IP Technology (saving on phone calls); online video conferencing (saving on travel) and email hosting services like Google's Gmail (saving valuable storage space).

File Sharing allows users to access (at the same time) digitally stored information – such as documents, videos and computer programs – via the cloud.

This can include your clients, giving them the opportunity to



get directly involved as the work is being done.

Software is usually not cheap, and buying something like MS Office for each employee is costly for any small business.

Using cloud-based services (eg Google Apps) will save you money and let you collaborate online.

Back up is an important part of any business. Again, the cloud has the answer, with scores of cost effective back-up solutions available over the internet.

Services like Apple's iCloud, Microsoft's Skydrive, and favourites like Dropbox, make full use of the cloud and are available to most users for free.

To check out the latest tech news for small business visit Tony Wragg's TechTalk at: www.tonystechtalk.com.au



Kangaroo Island Feastival

AN event worth noting is the six day, nine dining options feastival taking place as part of the Kangaroo Island Seafood Feastival from 27th April – 2 May.

Showcasing the island's stunning locations and local produce, the launch dinner 'Coopers My BBQ Rules Feastival' - features celebrity chef Pete Evans, while 'An Evening with Simon Bryant' will begin with an introduction talk about what fish is indeed "good fish,"

from both an environmental and flavour point of view.

The Feastival is the initiative of well known MICE industry identity, Nick Hannaford who now runs LifeTime Private Retreats on beautiful Snellings Beach.



On Wednesday 2nd May Nick is presenting a lunch at Middle River - "Wirritjin" - Black Fella White Fella Dreaming - Our land to your hand.

The dreamtime lunch will take in the first settlement Christmas dinner (and the eating of possum, fish and the meeting of Mathew Flinders) to modern seafood inspired by paper bark cooking and native produce, for details see - life-time.com.au.

Abu Dhabi looks to lead

A reported 5% growth experienced in Abu Dhabi's hotels and hotel apartments during Feb this year, has in part been attributed to Abu Dhabi's hosting of the World Ophthalmology Congress 2012, which attracted in excess of 10,000 participants.

"The World Ophthalmology Congress delivered huge direct and indirect economic benefits to the city in the region of US\$45.5 million (AU\$43.5 million)," said Mubarak Al Nuaimi, international promotions manager, Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (ADTCA).

Figures released by ADTCA show that during last month some 184,296 guests stayed in the emirate's hotels and hotel apartments - accounting for 550,352 guest nights.

The direct economic impact of business events on Abu Dhabi is expected to grow 7% annually over the next eight years to reach AED5.1 billion (AU\$1.3b) by 2020.

Setting keen targets for its MICE business for the coming eight years, ADTCA hopes by 2015 to see the emirate viewed as the region's leading meetings destination and ranked among the world's Top 100 meeting destinations.

"Abu Dhabi is in better shape than ever to secure major convention bids with the availability of over 20,000 rooms in the emirate's 127 hotels and hotel apartments," Al Nuaimi said.

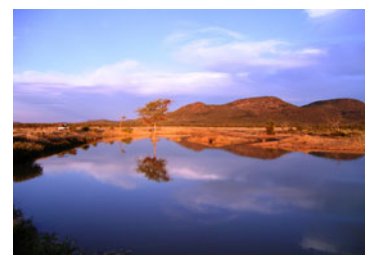
Within five years, the ADTCA anticipate that the emirate will be seen as a leading regional meetings destination with 10 times the number of MICE events currently held and the number of MICE visitors and yield quadrupling.

Safari incentive pkg

'SOMEWHERE In Africa,' a leading Southern Africa destination specialist, has released a 'Safari Season' incentive package based on a minimum of 50 passengers.

Sue Wallace from Nemonic Concepts, the Australasian representative of Somewhere in Africa said, "Southern Africa is our passion and our aim is to always create and deliver something new and exciting for every client."

The package is priced from \$2350pp twin share and includes return airport transfers, meet and greet, 4 night's accommodation at The Table Bay including brekkie, Cape Town orientation, Winelands activity with lunch, half Day Discovery of Robben Island, dinner at Gold Africa Museum, farewell dinner with entertainment, two night's at Ivory Tree Lodge -all meals, four game drives, a number of dinners and a specialist tour director and gratuities.



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