

**Bula!**

IF it's Friday, it must be Fiji.

That's how things are shaping up in the BEN office.



I'm looking forward to returning to this island nation, it has been far too long.

It's always been a favourite destination of mine and in the capable hands of the Fiji Visitors Bureau, a group of meeting planners and myself will be checking out all things new, refurbished and upgraded.

Importantly, the group have been gathering stationery items and useful gifts for school kids and schools badly affected by the devastating floods that wreaked so much damage.

Enjoy today's issue as it is full of goodness and check out Monday's issue for more information on the Fiji situation.

**Dubai's PCO team**

**PETER** Payet is the head of Dubai-based Congress Solutions International, and says that his team of 18 dedicated PCOs is ready and waiting to meet the needs of any major conference planned for the emirate.

Speaking with **BEN** at Arabian Travel Market in Dubai this week, he said that CSI, which is part of destination management company Arabian Adventures, is able to handle a range of groups right through to thousands of delegates.

A typical 3 night itinerary might see delegates housed at the huge luxury Atlantis or Madinat Hotels, and take part in city tours with a dhow lunch on the first day.

The next day might see themed activities on Dubai's beaches followed by a gala dinner on the 123rd floor of the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest tower.

The trip would conclude with a dune rally and desert dinner - [congresssolutionsinternational.com](http://congresssolutionsinternational.com).

**Melbourne's Master stroke**

**THERE's** no doubting Melbourne's position as the events capital of Australia, a fact that is about to be reinforced yet again, during what promises to be a most exciting Winter Masterpieces program.

The program, announced on Wednesday at the InterContinental's Etch restaurant by Tourism Victoria's Don Richter and attended by some of the curators of the exhibitions, gave an insight into what can be expected.

The line-up includes such crowd pleasing exhibitions as *Napoleon: Revolution to Empire*, *The Wonders of Ancient Mesopotamia* and *Wallace and Gromit's World of Invention*.

For instance who knew that Napoleon had a hand in exploring Australia?

This Napoleon exhibition being held from 2 June – 7 October will provide, in addition to the answer, an insight to French art, culture and life from the 1770s.

At the other end of the spectrum is *Games Masters*, 28 June - 28 October at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI), a testament to Melbourne's reputation as the major creative hub for Australia's videogames industry.

In an Australian first for the Melbourne Museum, *The Wonders of Ancient*

*Mesopotamia*, is presented in collaboration with The British Museum from 4 May.

Artefacts from Mesopotamia, one of the world's great ancient civilizations are on show – a region now occupied by modern Iraq, north east Syria, and south east Turkey.

Then from 18 May to November, the world-famous inventor and animated television personality Wallace and his faithful dog Gromit will be at Scienceworks as part of an interactive exhibition called *Wallace and Gromit's World of Invention*.

Things get even more epic towards 2013 when the multiple Tony and Olivier Award-winning *War Horse*, will commence in late 2012.

This much admired production will be staged at the Arts Centre's State Theatre, opening 31 December for a 10-week season.

Big things are also promised when KING KONG - Live on Stage premiers at the Regent, early 2013 before heading to Broadway.

And if that wasn't enough, Opera Australia will present *Der Ring des Nibelungen (The Ring Cycle)* at the Arts Centre, Melbourne.

Now, there's every good reason to hang your hat onto at least one of these productions.

**Competition winners**

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Kate Whittaker, Canberra Convention Bureau Inc and Louisa Debono, Cooper Grace Ward Lawyers who were the Monday and Wednesday winners of an overnight stay at Novotel Northbeach Wollongong.

**MEANWHILE** the six week Hawaii competition is being run for one more week and all BEN readers are in with a chance to win this fantastic trip courtesy of **Hawaii Tourism, Hawaiian Airlines and The Kahala Hotel and Resort**.

All the current questions are on our website and if you choose to enter you can send through all of the answers at the conclusion of the competition, on 11 May.

**Stay at Novotel Northbeach**

This week, **Business Events News** is giving readers the chance to win one night accommodation in an Ocean View Balcony Room and buffet breakfast for two people courtesy of the Novotel Northbeach Wollongong.

Novotel Northbeach Wollongong is a 4.5 star luxury hotel located on the beach and is within easy walking distance of the city centre, shopping malls, cinemas, restaurants, sporting grounds and tourist attractions of the beautiful Illawarra region.

To win the one night stay be the first to answer the question to:

[comp@businessesnews.com.au](mailto:comp@businessesnews.com.au)

**The Grand Ballroom at Novotel Wollongong Northbeach can cater for up to how many delegates?**

Hint: [novotelnorthbeach.com.au](http://novotelnorthbeach.com.au).

Click here for Terms & Conditions



WOLLONGONG NORTHBEACH





Dubai shows its environmental colours

GREEN isn't normally a colour that you associate with the desert, but Dubai is set to change all that with a concerted program to encourage its hoteliers to reduce carbon emissions at their properties.

This week 19 hotels were honoured in the Dubai Green Tourism Awards at Arabian Travel Market, with the winners selected from around 1000 environmental initiative entered in the competition.

Prizes went to hotels ranging from two to five stars, as well as hotel apartments which were assessed on an extensive criteria of environmental, economic and social issues including energy saving, nature conservation and community involvement.

The program launched in 2009, and for this latest crop of awards assessors were brought on board from the Dubai Municipality and the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority, making visits to shortlisted properties to examine their initiatives.

Dubai rates its hotels for their environmental performance, and the top tier now includes 79 properties which saw their consumption of electricity reduced by 10% along with a 17% reduction in water consumption.

Top prize in the category for five star hotels went to the Jebel Ali Golf Resort & Spa, with the InterContinental Festival City in second place



followed by the Hyatt Regency Dubai.

The four-star hotel winner was Novotel Deira City Centre, while the Ibis Al Barsha took out first prize in the three-star hotel category.

The Green Tourism Award for Deluxe Hotel Apartments went to the Savoy Suites, while the Savoy Park took out first prize in the Standard Hotel Apartments category.

And the Holiday Inn Express Airport took out the top award for Dubai's two-star hotels.

Pictured above is Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing Director General, Khalid bin Sulayem presenting the Green Tourism Awards awards at Arabian Travel Market on Tuesday.

WATCH out, its time for accountability.

According to USA Today, the latest round of an ongoing debate over the reliability of hotel reviews on TripAdvisor and other travel review sites, U.K. management company Kwikchex is launching a ratings system that ranks the sites on a sliding scale.

According to Tnooz.com, Kwikchex will award as many as five stars for sites where reviewers are identified and the purchase of a product or service is verified, and as little as one star for those that have little means to authenticate their content.

The company has 'provisionally' given Booking.com five stars, TripAdvisor and Yelp two stars and Google reviews one star.

WIN A TRIP FOR TWO TO HAWAII



During April and May, Business Events News is giving one lucky reader the chance a win an amazing holiday for two people to Hawaii, courtesy of Hawaii Tourism, Hawaiian Airlines and The Kahala Hotel and Resort.

The prize includes Hawaiian Airlines return airfares from Sydney to Honolulu, and five nights accommodation in an Ocean View Room at The Kahala Hotel and Resort.

Over 6 weeks, we will feature a different question in every Business Events News issue. There will be 15 questions in total, which will also be posted on our website. At the end of the month the subscriber with the most correct entries and the most creative response to the final question will win this fantastic holiday to Hawaii.



Which of The Kahala Hotel & Resort's function spaces has indoor/outdoor capabilities in view of a beautiful waterfall?

Hint! Visit www.kahalaresort.com

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

Click here for terms & conditions



Buying a Fiji island

THE idea of taking a whole island has to be a compelling one for an incentive group.

Toberua Island Resort in Fiji is doing just that by offering groups of up to 30 people the opportunity to charter the whole island for just AUD\$4000 per night (normally more than AUD\$6000 per night).

Their fifteen Premium, Deluxe and Tropical traditional ocean front bures, have been recently refurbished and decorated in authentic Fijian style and offers comfortable contemporary furnishings.

Nestled into the water's edge and dotted around the island they have soaring 27 feet ceilings, are fan cooled and come with



private indoor/outdoor bathrooms, a covered deck, hammock, beach chairs, refrigerator and tea and coffee making facilities.

Toberua say they can keep any group entertained and ensure nothing is had but fun through an offering of activities that include a golf course, snorkeling, sailing, windsurfing, fishing, a salt water swimming pool, volleyball, table tennis, a spa and for the more adventurous sport fishing and night snorkelling.



## CONTACT US:

### Publisher

Bruce Piper

### Editor

Jill Varley

### Contributors

Bruce Piper, Chantel Long

### Advertising:

[advertising@](mailto:advertising@businessesnews.com.au)

[businessesnews.com.au](http://businessesnews.com.au)

**P:** 1300 799 220

**F:** 1300 799 221

PO Box 1010

Epping, NSW, 1710

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## A resonating confs

**WHEN** the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine's (ISMRM) 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting & Exhibition convenes at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre on Saturday, more than 5000 clinicians and scientists from over 50 countries around the world specialising in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) will convene in Melbourne.

The ISMRM is a world-wide multidisciplinary society dedicated to the development and application of all aspects of magnetic resonance to medicine and related fields.

Karen Bolinger, ceo of the Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau (MCVB), which won the Meeting for Melbourne, said she, along with her colleagues at the MCEC, were looking forward to welcoming delegates to the city.

# Impressive Yokohama

**YOKOHAMA's** list of convention bid wins, starting with the International Stem Cell Research – the first in Asia – this year to the International Congress of Psychology in 2016, one cannot help but be impressed.

Associations considering holding their meetings in Japan will be pleased to learn that Japan ranks second in Asia for the highest number of attendance, according to the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA).

When ranked with other countries, Japan is 12<sup>th</sup> in the world in 2010 in terms of number of convention delegates with information technology and biotechnology the leading industries in Yokohama.

International conventions also receive special attention with the Yokohama Convention & Visitors Bureau offering special support and assistance to meeting planners who meet their criteria.

For congress delegates who want to unwind after the work is done, Yokohama is a great



jumping off point for day trips into the Tokyo area, and to the old feudal capital of Kamakura.

A Yokohama Travel Guide smart phone app in multiple languages is currently available for visitors.

Kana Nomoto from Yokohama CVB made the comment, "According to the World Justice Project, Japan is among the top 5 out of the global 66 for Order and Security.

"Japan's public order and security record is well known around the world, and as such international delegates can explore the city on their own without any apprehension."

"Yokohama is easily accessible from two international airports, Haneda and Narita," she said.

## GETTING TO KNOW: Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok

For more than 135 years, the Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok, one of the world's most luxurious hotels in Bangkok has straddled the Chao Phraya River, which winds its way from Bangkok and empties out into the Gulf of Thailand.

Step inside this paragon of contemporary luxury with a rich history and stories of distinguished travellers who have called the Mandarin their home in Bangkok and you are greeted by enormous hanging baskets strung from the ceiling, spilling over with large white orchids and huge, temple-bell light fittings.

These are just some of the features of a refurbishment that took place in late 2010 to the hotel's main lobby and reception area, items which included new upholstery, carpeting and furniture.

Styled by renowned interior designer Jeffrey Wilkes, the creative mind behind the 2009 renovation of all the hotel's 338 guestrooms in the River Wing Building, it's a renovation that has ensured that the lobby continues to be a landmark in Bangkok, often described as the 'Living Room' for sophisticated travellers.

Most compelling for those of a literary mind is the Mandarin's traditional association with several world-renowned authors, writers who have given inspiration to name ten out of its thirty-five suites after the authors who have resided at the hotel.

The most in demand suites in The Authors' Wing, built in 1876 are its four famous suites: Joseph Conrad, Somerset Maugham, Noel Coward and James Michener.

Others in the River Wing are Barbara Cartland, Gore Vidal, Graham Greene, Wilbur Smith, John le Carré, Jim Thompson, Norman Mailer, Captain Anderson and Kukrit Pramoj.

Each suite is designed according to the authors' personality within the written page or in real life.

For example the Barbara Cartland Suite reflects the femininity of the romance novelist, while the Sultan of Brunei, Elizabeth Taylor and Michael Jackson are a few of the more modern day individuals who have called Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok their "home away from home".

For meetings, the hotel has two locations for events offering two distinct areas for a function or meeting.

The Ballroom, for instance is both a grand and entirely versatile space with its historic appearance, high ceiling, extravagant chandelier and river life murals.

Other prestige spaces are able to be seamlessly transformed into the most contemporary setting, and an exclusive oasis on their facing river bank.

