



## Pause for thought

**MANY** people who have sipped on a refreshing cocktail at



one of the trendy bars on Bangkok's highest buildings and witnessed the sun setting behind the Chao Praya River, may have done just that at Thailand's tallest building, the Baiyoke Sky Hotel which rises 88 storeys above the Bangkok skyline.

On Monday came the terrible news that three men had plunged to their death from the building's 69th floor after the platform from which they were installing an advertising banner, split. Two men survived.

Police are now checking if the platform was overloaded.

**MEANWHILE**, on a lighter note, the news of a new hotel development in Sydney, the Adina Royal Randwick Racecourse hotel, has been warmly welcomed by the tourism industry - *Jill*.

## Hawaii comp ends

**BEN's** Hawaii competition ends today so get your answers in for all 15 questions by close of business today to be in with a chance to win an amazing holiday for two people 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 - see **page two**.

## Mon & Wed winners

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Melanie Perry, American Express Travel & Rebecca Rodger, CC Conferences & Corporate Events who have each won one night's accom with breakfast at the Mercure Resort Gerringong by the Sea in NSW.

## Meetings push by Star Alliance

**THE** Star Alliance group of airlines has lodged an application with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission for authorisation of its Meetings Plus product, which allows meeting planners to deal with a single airline but access the global networks of all alliance members.

The Star Alliance includes many carriers such as United Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Air New Zealand, Air Canada, Lufhansa, South African Airways, THAI and Swiss International Air Lines.

The ACCC proposal also requests the authorisation of the alliance's Conventions Plus offerings, which have been developed for clients wanting a single point of contact when negotiating ticket prices for large numbers of delegates travelling from around the world.

The Conventions Plus program provides a framework under

which the Star Alliance can seek appointment as the official airline network for such events.



STAR ALLIANCE™

And Meetings Plus, which is new to Australia, provides similar arrangements for travel to corporate meetings that are organised through professional travel managers.

The Star Alliance submission is seeking authorisation for the programs which will allow the airlines "to compete more effectively with Qantas and Virgin Australia and provide an important constraint on Qantas' dominant position in the business travel sector".

Submissions on the application are due at the ACCC by 22 May.

## Geelong gets the edge on MICE

**IN** an Australian first, Geelong Otway Tourism and the general managers of Geelong's major conference accommodation providers have created a Standard Accommodation Contract that makes it easier for professional conference organisers (PCOs) to plan an event in Geelong.

With the intention of giving Geelong an edge over other Australian regional destinations in regard to business events, the new agreement eliminates the need for PCOs to examine multiple and vastly different hotel contracts and allows for a more streamlined approach to negotiations when organising a conference or business event.

General manager of Mercure Geelong, Benjamin Krieg, said "We are excited to be part of this Australian first and exciting initiative for Geelong.

"The introduction of the new Standard Accommodation Contract will ensure that PCOs,

associations, corporate and conference bookers can focus on booking their conference in the superb city of Geelong without the hassle of trawling through numerous and cumbersome contracts for multiple hotels, especially when their conference is too large for a single property to host.

"We are confident that this new agreement for Geelong's accommodation providers in collaboration with the award-winning team at Business Events Geelong, will foster new relationships and continue to drive more residential conferences to Geelong, further cementing its place on the map as Victoria's preferred conference destination."

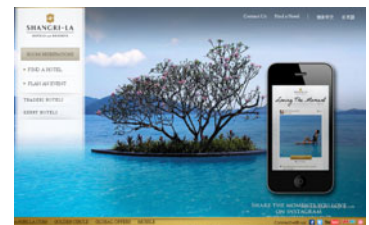
The next phase of the Standard Accommodation Contract will be to encourage other Geelong accommodation operators with a business events focus to partner in the program.

## Shangri-La's new offer

**SHANGRI-LA** Hotels & Resorts have announced the launch of the redesigned Shangri-La.com, a website that delivers a more user-friendly experience with increased interactivity.

In celebration of the event, simply book online from now until the 31 May for stays until 30 June and you can earn double Golden Circle Award Points.

Enrolment as a Golden Circle member is free.



## Stay by the Sea with Mercure Gerringong



This week, **Business Events News** is giving readers the chance to win one night accommodation for two in a Superior King Balcony Room, including buffet breakfast courtesy of the Mercure Resort Gerringong by the Sea.

With 52 contemporary king rooms, award winning restaurant, indulgent day spa, and meeting facilities to hold up to 180 people, and only 2 hours from Sydney the Mercure Resort Gerringong by the Sea is an ideal venue for a conference or retreat. To win the one night stay be the first to answer the question to:

comp@businessesnews.com.au

**How many rooms does Mercure Resort Gerringong by the Sea have?**

Hint:mercuregerringong.com.au. Click here for terms & conditions





### BETTER make the most of it...

A new Reuters poll reveals almost 15% of people globally believe the world will end during their lifetime, and 10% think it will be at the end of the Mayan calendar on 21 December 2012.

People with lower education or income levels and those under 35, were more likely to believe in an apocalypse during their lifetime, or have anxiety over it.

Russians and Polish were the most concerned, with UK citizens the least.

### A MAJOR wipeout!

**BEN** spotted this sign to win a year's supply of toilet paper on the Queen's Road in Fiji last weekend.



## Sydney gets new racecourse hotel

A RENEWED interest in Sydney hotel investment since the opening of the 171 room, The Darling at The Star last year and the planned opening of the 196 room QT hotel above the



State Theatre in late 2012 and the opening of the new \$10 million boutique hotel in the Rocks by Baillie Lodges in 2013, yesterday saw the announcement of a planned 170 room, \$80 million hotel overlooking Randwick racecourse.

The deal struck with the Australian Turf Club and welcomed by the tourist industry,

will see the creation of the new Adina Royal Randwick Racecourse Hotel, managed by the Australian-owned Toga Hotels.

Tourism Accommodation Australia (NSW) director Carol Giuseppe said it was exactly the kind of targeted accommodation facility the city needs.

"I expect the new Adina Royal will also prove popular with visitors to the nearby University of NSW and other nearby sporting and entertainment facilities," she said.

Giuseppe went on to say that the tourism accommodation sector had been heavily investing in refurbishments in the past two years.

"We have seen the \$60 million opening of the Park Hyatt in February this year," she said.

"There are also major refurbishments currently underway or recently completed at hotels across Sydney including the Four Seasons, Sheraton on the Park, Novotel Rockford Darling Harbour, Hyde Park Inn, Holiday Inn Darling Harbour, The Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, The Shangri-La, Hilton Sydney, Radisson Hotel & Suites, Sydney Marriott Hotel, Swissotel and the Four Points by Sheraton.

"And in Greater Sydney: the Holiday Inn Sydney Airport, Clarion on the Park in Parramatta and Parramatta Parkroyal.

"The total value of these refurbishments alone is well over \$100 million and will ensure that Sydney hotels remain competitive on the world stage," she added.

## Industry specials

**BOOK** a group event with the InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort and Spa between now and 31 December and you will receive one of the hotel's unique Insider Collection experiences – one of three truly memorable meetings and events with authentic local flavour, a traditional Sevusevu welcome and Priority Club Awards points.

The offer is available on new bookings only and is not combinable with any other offer.

A minimum of 10 rooms is required.

Info at [meetings.fiji@ihg.com](mailto:meetings.fiji@ihg.com)

**AND** In celebration of Sydney's newest five star hotel, The Darling taking out the highest industry design accolade at the Asia-Pacific International Hotel Awards for 'Best New Hotel Construction and Design 2012', a special room rate with bonus extras is being offered for bookings over the next four months.

The hotel has reduced the price of an overnight stay in a Darling room to \$279, a package that includes two complimentary cocktails, breakfast for two from the extensive in-room dining menu, plus complimentary parking.

The offer is valid from 01 May until 30 Aug - [thedarling.com.au](http://thedarling.com.au).

## Get high in Bangkok

**THE** Westin Grande Sukhumvit, Bangkok has launched a new indoor/outdoor event spot on the roof of the hotel overlooking the city.

*Altitude*, which came online in January, can take group sizes of between 50 to 250 delegates and offers five types of function areas within the same space.

The Lounge is an indoor space offering 255sqm and is ideal for meetings, events, conferences and cocktail receptions for 80 to 250 people.

Other spaces include the Library (49sqm), The Terrace (113sqm), Lobby and Open Kitchen (52sqm) and Lift Lobby and Corridor (33sqm).

## WIN A TRIP FOR TWO TO HAWAII



During April and May, **Business Events News** is giving one lucky reader the chance to 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.



*In 25 words or less explain why you would recommend Hawaii for your next meeting or incentive program?*

Email your answers to: [hawaii@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:hawaii@businesseventsnews.com.au)

[Click here for terms & conditions](#)







## 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

### Business Events News

is part of the Travel Daily

group of publications

which also include:

Travel Daily, Cruise

Weekly &

Pharmacy Daily.

## Soneva appoints

**MARISA** Aranha has been appointed by the Soneva Group as managing director sales & marketing, based in Bangkok.

With a portfolio comprising of Soneva Fushi and Soneva Gili in the Maldives and Soneva Kiri in Thailand, Aranha brings more than 20 years experience to the role.

Previously holding similar roles with both Starwood Hotels and Resorts and Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, Aranha's most recent role was vice president of sales for the Minor Hotel Group Thailand with responsibility for the global sales strategy for Anantara Hotels.

Commenting on her new role she said, "I am thrilled & excited to begin working with The Soneva Group. It is a most important time for Soneva, as it separates from the Six Senses brand and I am truly delighted to be part of it."

# Exotissimo website launch

A **DEDICATED** MICE website that showcases the variety of one-of-a-kind activities available to companies interested in Asia as a MICE destination has been launched by Exotissimo, a premier destination management company.

The new MICE website details a range of inspirational incentive activities -not an exhaustive list, as Exotissimo are also able to create unique itineraries to suit any desire.

Details on each of their seven destinations - Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Indonesia and Japan are broken down further into popular locations with information on each, including particulars on multi-country options.

Meetings, incentives,

conferences and events are divided into country specific pages while overviews are given on transport, dining and hotel options.

Olivier Colomé, ceo & co founder of Exotissimo Travel Group commented, "We highly anticipate our new MICE focused website to deliver inspirational knowledge to our valued partners.

As travel enthusiasts with nearly 20 years experience in the industry, we are well equipped to deal with groups of any size who seek unique, one-of-a-kind MICE activities.

"The website gives a clear idea of the MICE activity we have been involved in and can provide for future clients."

For details see [traveltrade.exotissimo.com/mice](http://traveltrade.exotissimo.com/mice).

YOUR MICE PARTNER

# EXOTISSIMO

TRAVEL

Vietnam • Cambodia • Laos • Myanmar • Thailand

## GETTING TO KNOW: Grand Canyon, USA

The spectacular Grand Canyon in Arizona, USA is well known as one of the natural wonders of the world - but it also provides an unique setting for inspirational team building meetings and small conferences.

The South Rim of the Canyon boasts a number of accommodation options for groups wanting to get away from it all. It's fairly rustic, but really makes for an amazing setting which delegates will remember for a long time afterwards.

Several properties inside Grand Canyon National Park are operated by US firm Xanterra, and **BEN** recently experienced Maswik Lodge which is about 400m from the edge of the canyon. It offers a range of accommodation options including rooms and cabins plus meeting and banqueting facilities for groups of up to 100 - and bigger conferences can be spread across other South Rim properties which include Kachina Lodge, Thunderbird Lodge and Bright Angel Lodge.

Maswik Lodge is an egalitarian experience for groups, with a well-stocked cafeteria encouraging delegates at all levels to mingle together in a relaxed atmosphere during mealtimes.

But it's the stunning setting that really levels and inspires, with the South Rim lodges providing an ideal base for activities ranging from simply watching the sunrise over the canyon, through to the must-do of a helicopter sightseeing tour.

Groups can enjoy sipping champagne and nibbling on canapes as they gather on one of the many lookouts for a sundown experience, while more adventurous delegates can hike into the canyon, take a mule ride or even go whitewater rafting, and Xanterra also operates the Grand Canyon Railway - a historic train which brings guests from Williams, Arizona.

The Grand Canyon National Park welcomes more than four million visitors a year, so meeting organisers will need to plan ahead - but the experience of staying inside the park is well worth making the effort.

And despite the remote setting, Grand Canyon conferences can still keep delegates connected, with the lodges all offering free wireless internet access.

The Grand Canyon South Rim is accessible by road from Las Vegas - about five hours on Route 66, and there's also a small airport for delegates wanting to fly in.

