



We love the Brits

IT may be enunciated that, "In Hertford, Hereford, and Hampshire, hurricanes hardly ever happen," however, in Hampshire there is a B&B, the Cottage Lodge with some quite lovely rooms and one in particular known as the Standing Hat, which is also the name of the village.

It's for guests who want to reduce their impact on the environment and get fit at the same time.

Constructed from a tree that fell down in the village, it has a wood burning stove, bamboo flooring, water heated by solar panels, electricity produced in the daytime by photovoltaic cells and a bike that the guest cycles in order to work the television - Jill.



Business events on the up and up

ACCORDING to new figures released on Friday by Tourism Research Australia (TRA), the Business Events Visitors 2011 snapshot reveals that business travel has recovered from the Global Financial Crisis and a \$1.8b drop in visitor expenditure in 2009.

Further, the report estimates that \$10 billion was spent by business event visitors last year.

With Australia fast becoming a destination for work, as well as play, the Minister for Tourism, Martin Ferguson, said Australia is increasingly seen as an attractive option for international business event visitors.

"Compared to 2010, international business event visitor expenditure rose by 14 per



cent and international business event visitor numbers rose by eight per cent to 881,000.

"International business event visitors have also spent more time in the country, an increase of 12 per cent to 14 million nights in 2011," Ferguson said.

"This is important for the industry as the business travel market is a high-yield market, with business event travellers generally spending \$100 per night more than other types of travellers."

Ferguson went on to say that while the results were encouraging, he believed the business events sector has even greater potential and that the Government is working with industry to achieve \$16 billion in delegate expenditure by 2020.

"As well as increased research into the best way to serve the sector, the Government, through Tourism Australia, has launched a new campaign aimed at corporate meeting and event planners and appointed a business events manager to its Shanghai office.

"We have also just released a joint Tourism Australia and Austrade investment guide.

"The industry must also develop suitable accommodation and facilities to attract additional investment and grow business travel to Australia," he concluded.

The full snapshot is available online at ret.gov.au/tra.

Melb scores \$23.5m Transport Congress

AS Melbourne continues to attract some of the world's biggest business congresses and conferences - a record the Victorian Coalition Government is keen to enhance - comes the news that they have won the right to host the prestigious Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) World Congress in October 2016.

Announced on Friday by the Minister for Tourism and Major Events Louise Asher and Minister for Public Transport and Roads Terry Mulder, the event is expected to attract more than 5000 delegates to the city and generate more than \$23.5m for Victoria.

To be held over five days at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Asher said it was a big win for Victoria and once again proves the state's credentials in hosting congresses and conferences.

"Hosting the Congress here in Melbourne would provide an opportunity to showcase the latest technical developments to a global audience, with delegates including private corporations, public agencies and academic institutions involved in the research, design and implementation of new technologies across all modes of transport."

Intelligent Transport System (ITS) technologies include communication, data processing and electronic technologies for in-vehicle, vehicle-to-vehicle, vehicle-to-infrastructure and mode-to-mode systems that increase transport safety and mobility, improve the sustainability of travel, reduce congestion, and improve the performance & competitiveness of all modes of transport.

Securing the ITS World Congress adds to Victoria's depth and reputation as a globally-focused and competitive ICT hub, the ministers said.

ICT in Victoria generates around \$29 billion in revenue and \$2.45 billion in exports annually.

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.

Grand Hotel and Casino recently opened their new Spa, what is the name?

Hint: grandvanuatu.com

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

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Paradise Palms enters the digital age

PARADISE Palms Resort and Country Club, a 96 room, 4.5 star resort, 25 minutes north of Cairns, has invested more than \$30,000 in the latest, state-of-the-art audio visual equipment.

According to Paradise Palms Resort and Country Club's sales and marketing manager Alex Blake, the installation of new audio visual equipment brings the Clubhouse's purpose-built conference centre into the digital age with a system that can cater to all computer formats.

"This is a significant investment by Paradise Palms, and delivers our conferences, meetings and wedding guests a quality audio visual service they can rely on.

"With the increasing complexity of modern presentations, we wanted to ensure we remain ahead of the pack," he said.

The Paradise Palms' conference centre which comprises the Mangano and Austin rooms is housed on the first floor of the impressive Queenslander style Clubhouse with its sweeping verandahs and panoramic views of the fairways and Coral Sea.

Upgrades to facilities include a 3 metre motorised projection screen, NEC ceiling mounted projector, amplifiers, ceiling mount speakers, portable speakers, DVD and CD players with USB ports as well as lapel and hand held microphones.



MEANWHILE The Paradise Palms Resort and Country Club is offering **BEN** readers the chance to win one night accommodation in a Resort Room each day of publication this week - see **page 3**.

ALSO a new monthly comp. has been launched today, with **BEN** readers in with the chance to win a holiday for two to Vanuatu courtesy of Air Vanuatu and the Grand Hotel and Casino - see **p1**.

ATEC shines on the Coast



IN a first for the Sunshine Coast more than 350 inbound tourism operators and tourism professionals from around the country attended the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) Symposium, last week.

The Symposium held at Coolum Golf and Spa included a comprehensive conference program, a Sunshine Coast Dine Around program, Destination Showcase, a VIP experience for four lucky golden buyers and pre and post familiarisation programs.

Business Events Sunshine Coast manager, Pippa McCreery said, "This is the first time the Sunshine Coast has hosted the ATEC Symposium and in true Sunshine Coast style, delegates left naturally refreshed.

"This type of event proves we have what it takes as a destination to host more than just a conference but offer an experience for business event delegations," she said.

The Destination Showcase, an exciting new addition to the program format included a breakfast event featuring a colourful explosion of entertainment, attractions, diversity of local cuisine, artisans and demonstrations overlooking Noosa main beach.

70 operators participated in a series of pre and post, Sunshine Coast Destination tours of the entire region, a program that included a trip to Fraser Island.

Four lucky golden buyers were treated to a luxury VIP experience including private transfers, spa treatments and an exclusive private tour of Richard Branson's Makepeace Island.

The 'Dining Around the Sunshine Coast' program, custom made for the ATEC conference, allowed delegates to get a taste of the region's dining ambience, service and unique quality of cuisine.

Restaurants involved were Fish on Parkyn, The Loose Goose, Embassy XO, Pitchfork, Wasabi, Berardo's, Ricky's and the Spirit House and included menus and specials specifically prepared for the tourism industry.

"This type of event is timely as we cement our position as a viable and competitive business events destination," added McCreery.

Some of the ATEC delegates are **pictured** above during the event.

Let your fingers do the walking

A NEWLY launched Brisbane travel trade website <http://www.trade.visitbrisbane.com.au/>, with more than 1200 Brisbane tourism products is now as close as your fingertips.

The site allows users to find up-to-date and practical information on Brisbane and its regions, allowing clients to get the most out of their time in the Qld capital.

Brisbane Marketing leisure tourism director Cathie McBean said as Australia's New World City, Brisbane is home to many surprising and new tourism products and experiences.

"It is a one-stop-shop, which will answer all of your questions about Brisbane and provide you with information you might not already know."

Locations include the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary and the naturally beautiful Moreton Bay.



BREATHE easy.

It looks as though talk that the world will end this year, according to the Mayan calendar, is wrong!

Apparently, archeologists have found a 1200-year old Mayan calendar and astronomy chart and there is no hint of a 2012 doomsday.

The discovery made in a small room among ruins in a rainforest in north-eastern Guatemala, predates the previous oldest tables from the Maya by 600 years.

TRAVEL lost its zing?

How about being among the first tourists to go inside the magma chamber of a volcano?

You can do just that in Iceland on a tour of Thrihnukagigura, a volcano that has been dormant for around 4,000 years.

The volcano, which will be opened to ordinary travellers for six weeks this summer, from 15 June to 31 July, is a 30-minute drive from Reykjavik.

The tour costs ISK 37,000pp (A\$288), a portion of which will go towards further research into the country's volcanoes.

Visitors embark on a 40-minute hike across a lava field to reach the volcano, before descending 120 metres to the bottom of the crater in an open cable lift.

They will be able to spend around an hour inside the volcano in the company of a team of expert guides.

Daintree, felled by tree

FORGET all the usual reasons why a hotel or a resort closes for a refurbishment.

The Daintree Eco Lodge & Spa, disappeared off the radar in February, due to a freak isolated storm that swept through the Lodge valley, bringing down a massive tree and providing the catalyst for the entire resort to be overhauled and spruced up.

Now, after being closed for seven weeks and undergoing a \$600,000 rebuild and a total refurbishment to the restaurant, plus the bonus of good weather, the rainforest awaits once more.



Sheraton Macau's event spot



STARWOOD is due to open its biggest property in the World on 15 Sep with the launch of the 3,863 room Sheraton Macau Hotel Corai Central.

The hotel is said to boast 20,000sqm of function space including the grand ballroom that can hold up to 4000 delegates in a sit down format.

There are also six junior ballrooms each featuring 1515sqm of space that can hold a maximum of 1200 people each.

Another event space alternative is the pool that offers 15,000sqm of space for delegates to be entertained in an idyllic setting.

The first of the two towers - Sky Tower - is scheduled to open in late September, while the Earth Tower will be launched sometime in March 2013.

MEANWHILE the Sheraton Macau Hotel Cotai Central is offering the organiser of the largest meeting booked at the new hotel between 01 Nov 2012 and 31 Dec 2013 a trip of a lifetime.

To qualify book the most number of room nights at the hotel over the next year and have the chance to win a seven day getaway to your choice of over 100 countries, flying business class with a partner.

AND 'Big rewards for big meetings' are being offered: with 300 to 599 rooms booked during peak season offered a 2% discount on the master bill plus double Starpoints & a personalised Sheraton signature gift.

Bookers of 600 or more rooms during the peak period will get 4% off the master bill, triple Starpoints, a personalised Sheraton signature gift and 2% of total peak night rooms upgraded to suites for the entire meeting.

The Rewards deals are available for events contracted by 15 Sep and for stays between 01 Nov 2012 to 31 Dec 2013.

Accommodation is priced from HKD1,438++ per night and full day packages from HKD650+.

Stay in paradise at Paradise Palms



This week, *Business Events News* is giving readers the chance to win one night accommodation for two in a Resort Room courtesy of Paradise Palms Resort and Country Club.

Paradise Palms Resort & Country Club is paradise for discerning visitors and golfers looking for the perfect game, event planners searching for the ultimate venue and wedding parties wishing for a day to remember.

Recently securing its position as a world-class venue for conferences and events, Paradise Palms Resort and Country Club has invested over \$30,000 in the latest, state-of-the-art audio visual equipment.

Be the first to send the answer: comp@businesseventsnews.com.au

What three room types are there at Paradise Palms Resort?

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



Sarawak honours

SARAWAK Convention Bureau (SCB) added another sizeable feather to its cap when they were presented with The Brand Laureate Country Branding Award 2011/12, on 8 May at Sunway Resort Hotel & Spa, Selangor.

Dubbed the Grammy Awards for Branding, it is awarded for playing a pivotal role in promoting Sarawak & Malaysia as a leading destination in the area of business events, tourism and business investments.

"Through its various initiatives, SCB has promoted the attributes of Sarawak to the world as a modern and progressive State and at the same time maintaining its heritage and culture," commented Dr KK Johan, president of the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation (APBF).

Last year, Kuching earned its place, for the first time ever, in the 2010 Int'l Convention & Congress Association (ICCA) Asia Pacific & Middle East city ranking, sharing the 42nd spot with Nara and Guangzhou, bettering the performance of many established second tier cities such as Adelaide and Canberra in Australia and Bangalore in India.

An Aspire deal

ASPIRE Hotel Sydney, a 3.5 star hotel in Ultimo, close to the Sydney Exhibition & Convention Centre is offering trade show exhibitors & delegates an 'Expo' Package, specifically designed for those attending an event at the Centre.

The package at just \$169/night includes accom in a Superior room, brekkie, free wireless internet & parking plus an Exhibitor Pack.

According to property manager, Ricky Risal, the hotel offered a similar package in 2010, which forms the basis for this new deal.

"The first time we offered the package we received a lot of bookings from exhibitors who wanted accom close to Darling Harbour and the Convention Centre but were on a budget."

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Business Events News is part of the Travel Daily group of publications which also include: Travel Daily, Cruise Weekly & Pharmacy Daily.



Port Macquarie delivers quality events of every style, budget and size for up to 1000 delegates.

With multi-million dollar investments in unique facilities and experiences, there's a major buzz around Port Macquarie, one of New South Wales' fastest growing coastal events destination.

Port Macquarie is a town with a real heart. Its unique CBD peninsula embraces the water on three sides, inspiring delegates with a sense of freedom in a range of venues seamlessly connected to outstanding natural beauty.

Port Macquarie delivers quality events of every style, budget and size up to 1000 delegates and boasts innovative networking and team building options tailored for the business events market.

The tight CBD boasts a range of venue choices unrivalled in regional New South Wales, including the \$50m Glasshouse and sixteen four-star plus accommodation options.

Located four hours drive north of Sydney, delegates enjoy superb access with regular one-hour daily flights from Sydney and Brisbane.

Activities available include water skiing, whale watching, fishing, camel safaris and kayak tours as well as heritage tours and much more - such as unique jet fighter flights and the extreme velocity windtunnel.

Port Macquarie are launching new conference packages that are tailored to your needs, offer great value, unique experiences and take the headache out of organising your event. Call Port Macquarie Tourism & Economic Development on 02 6581 8060 or visit portmacquarieinfo.com.au.

The heart, soul and wonder of Fiji

FOR three days and four nights, Tourism Fiji in conjunction with Air Pacific and four of Fiji's top DMCs - Rosies, Pacific Destinationz, Tour Managers and ATS Pacific introduced ten Australian event planners to the heart, soul and wonder of Fiji.

We took with us money and boxes of donated goods for flood affected schools, personally delivering school backpacks and stationery to the Ratu Ilaisa Memoral School whose children live in Semo.



LEFT: The main group from Australia are pictured from left: Tricia Durrant, InHouse Event Solutions; Yolanda Cardile, Tret; Rosie Buckley, Conference Solutions; Tara Cross, Optus; Warren Bingham, Given Imaging; Terry Bleyer, mci-group; Vivienne Valentine, Tourism Fiji; Olivia Wilson, This Space; Jill; Kerry Miles, Worsley Parsons with 'Brad Pitt' and Anthony, Pacific Destinationz.



LEFT: Two lovely ladies in their fabulous Fijian sarongs: Rosie Buckley, Conference Solutions with Vivienne Valentine, Tourism Fiji.



Photography courtesy Warren Bingham.

