



Palya

CAN it get much more exciting than this?

Not only have we spent four days at Ayers Rock Resort, in the heart of Australia's Red Centre, we joined many industry and government guests including Tourism Minister Martin Ferguson, John Morse Indigenous Tourism Advisor, Travel Corporations chief executive, John Weeks and in a rock star moment, the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, Peter Garrett at the official opening of Ayers Rock Resort's Uluru new conference facility - the Uluru Meeting Place and the newly refurbished Sails in the Desert.

Presided over by Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia md Koos Klein, it was opened by the Federal Minister for Tourism Martin Ferguson MP.

We had the pleasure of lunch with the Minister, who impressed us from the start with his command and knowledge of everything from Indigenous tourism to the importance of employing mature age workers.

"This is an opportunity the industry is missing," he stressed.

Striking isn't a descriptive enough word for the conference centre's clean, fresh Indigenous design & seating capacity of 420.

If you have conferenced at Uluru in the past few years and were less than impressed by the facilities, it's now time for a second look.

Believe me you'll be delighted at the change.

Scroll down to **page 4** of today's **BEN** for a photo page of the event - Jill.



Sharing the view with Tourism Minister, Martin Ferguson.

Luxury show founders split

SYDNEY will host two "luxury and experiential" shows in September 2013, with the co-founders and owners of this year's inaugural Luxperience event in Sydney each going their own way (**BEN** breaking news).

Luxperience is 50% owned by former Travelcorp founder Helen Logas and Rosemarie Sama, who headed up AIME for some years.

Overnight Logas announced that she was the new ceo of Luxperience, while Sama "is no longer with the company".

And Sama has launched her own event, dubbed Luxe Events + Travel Experiences (LETE) which is scheduled for 02-04 Sep at Sydney's Overseas Passenger Terminal - the same dates and venue planned for Luxperience.

It's not clear where Luxperience will be held now, but according to Logas Virgin Australia has continued its major partner agreement and "dozens of exhibitors from around Asia Pacific and Australia have reconfirmed for 2013 and will be joined by product suppliers from additional destinations such as Europe, the Americas and Africa".

Sama is pitching LETE as an evolution of Luxperience, saying "her event returns in 2013 with a new format and a new name".

She said feedback from this year showed huge demand, but that "a greater focus on experiential meetings and events was needed".

Interestingly Sama resigned as a director of Luxperience Enterprises Pty Ltd on 01 Sep this year - before the show started - but according to ASIC records remains a 50% shareholder.

Logas said Luxperience 2013 would include a Thought Leaders' Forum dedicated to top end experiential travel, while Sama's LETE will feature eight "fun and informative networking events".

Rendezvous rewards

RENDEZVOUS Studio Hotel Sydney Central is rewarding MICE bookers with a 16GB Apple iPad for confirming a meeting, event or group accommodation block worth over \$10,000.

Bookings valued between \$5000 and \$9999 receive a \$250 Myer Gift Voucher, with the property offering 'Smart Meetings' day delegate rates from \$55 per day.

Residential offers start at \$265pp including day delegate package, accom and breakfast.

Bookers will also go into the draw for a five night holiday to Singapore valued at \$5000.

More from Rendezvous on **p5**.

The challenges of remote Australia

IN conversation with **BEN** last Friday, Voyages Indigenous Tourism managing director, Koos Klein talked frankly about the challenges they have faced and of their plans to reposition the resort as an Indigenous Centre for Excellence.

"We have had our challenges in the last two to three years and even our opening was set back eight weeks, so business got off to a slower start than we had hoped."

Conference business was down to 3% of total business, he said.



"Now the phones are ringing off the hook and we had our first conference last week with 200 delegates from the National Plumbers Association, who said it was their best conference ever."

"We hope to increase our conference business to 15% in the next three years."

With a clear mandate to grow indigenous employment and training as well as cultural engagement for their guests, Klein said, "I do believe ownership has come into the right hands."

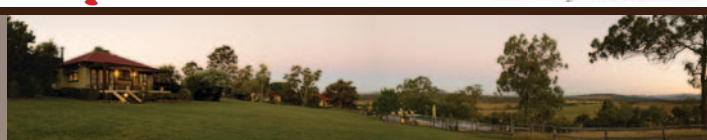
"A commercial operation couldn't make it work, but with Government support we can."

Profit he insists is not their end game but that indigenous jobs and training is.

"We want our guests to feel they have had an interaction with indigenous culture."

With the Australian Red Centre high on everyone's bucket list, Klein remarked with a laugh, "You don't need to be at death's door to go to Ayers Rock."

WIN a two night stay at Spicers Hidden Vale



This week **Business Events News** and the Spicers Group is offering one reader the chance to win a two night stay at **Spicers Hidden Vale** plus breakfast for two people.



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The Langham's doggone too!

OUR delegates with dogs story (**BEN** 16 Nov) drew a response from The Langham, Sydney, director of sales & marketing, Craig Adamson who reminded us, "The Langham, Sydney has long been welcoming pets to the hotel and is currently looking at ways to further enhance our offering to deliver enchanting hospitality to our four legged friends."

The luxury property, (formerly the Observatory) which launched as the Langham Sydney in August, has a dedicated 'Pet Room Service Menu' featuring dishes made from fresh daily produce, free from onion, garlic and acids.

'Lassie's Favourite', beef steak with chunky vegetables, is a popular dish amongst canine guests with cats favouring 'Meow Meow', grilled salmon with green beans, quail egg, tuna, potatoes and olives.

They also offer a pet-sitter and turn-down service for doggy beds.

"There is a growing demand, particularly in our luxury travel market, for pet-friendly accommodation that The Langham, Sydney is delighted to meet," said gm Sonia Lefevre.

A charge of \$70 per pet, per night applies and for the consideration of other guests, dogs must be under 20kgs in weight.

ARIA's 50% off

FOR all events confirmed prior to 31 December, ARIA Catering at Sydney Opera House is celebrating the new year early by offering clients a great venue hire incentive for all new bookings in January and February.

To take advantage of the offer and to enjoy the beauty of Sydney Harbour from this iconic location with menus created by Matt Moran, a minimum food and beverage spend of \$20,000, will mean you get complimentary venue hire; and for all other bookings, clients will receive 50% off the venue hire fee.

The DCC does it again

FOR the third consecutive year the Darwin Convention Centre capped off another remarkable year taking out the 2012 Brolga Award for excellence in Meetings and Business Tourism.

Announced on Saturday at a gala dinner, at the Convention Centre, the 26th Brolga Awards ceremony was attended by Northern Territory's tourism industry luminaries.

Malu Barrios, gm of the Darwin Convention Centre said "It is great to see the continuing hard work, commitment and excellent results we have achieved recognised in this manner – we're delighted to receive this prestigious award."

The Brolga Awards acknowledge excellence in tourism in the Northern Territory with outstanding businesses and individuals competing in 29 categories.

As the 2012 award winner, Darwin Convention Centre will represent the Territory in the Meetings and Business Tourism category at the National Tourism Awards to be held in Hobart come March next year.

During the 2011/12 financial



year, Darwin's "Powerhouse of Ideas" welcomed more than 17,000 people through its doors, contributing close to \$60 million to the local economy and generated more than \$172m in diversified economic impacts since it opened in 2008.

Pictured above is Malu Barrios accepting the Brolga Award on behalf of the team.

Daintree restructures

DAINTREE Eco Lodge & Spa has announced the restructuring, development and strengthening of the multi award winning property with the appointment of Michael and Kim Veal in the role of business development and general managers.

Founders and owners of Daintree Lodge, Terry and Cathy Maloney say the Veals collectively bring with them more than 40 years of combined experience in the hospitality and tourism industry, with the past 13 years dedicated to business development and general management of some of the leading properties in Australia, New Zealand and America.

The Veal's last project was at the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Retreat in South Australia, with other appointments at the Waterfront Suites, Eagles Nest, Okiato Lodge in NZ and Los Willows Inn and Spa in California.

EY's Milan service

A signature luxury chauffeur service is now available for Etihad Airways flights operating at Italy's Milan Malpensa International airport.

Complimentary limousine transfers are available exclusively to Diamond First and Pearl Business class customers, mirroring Etihad's chauffeur drive offering at other locations incl Australia and Abu Dhabi.

Personalised pick-up and drop-off services will operate to and from anywhere within a 60-kilometre radius of Milan Malpensa International Airport.

The Etihad Chauffeur, launched in 2006, is now available in 28 international destinations across 16 countries.

Free wi-fi at Metro Hotels

WITH 13 Metro Hotels properties Australia-wide, free wi-fi is now being offered at three



of its properties, the Metro Apartments Darling Harbour, Metro Hotel Miranda and Metro Apartments Bank Place in Melbourne, with all its other properties offering free internet with select accommodation packages.

According to George Bedwani, ceo of Metro Hospitality Group, the internet has become an important part of our daily lives regardless of whether we are travelling for business or pleasure.

"A high proportion of our guests are business travellers.

"Free wireless or high-speed internet in rooms is becoming a service guests expect, and we are delighted to offer a service to our guests that's going to save them money by choosing to stay with us," Bedwani said.

EIBTM goes hybrid

FOR the first time, the European Incentive, Business Travel and Meetings Exhibition (EIBTM) to be held 27-29 Nov in Barcelona, Spain, will be a hybrid event, with participation in online seminars available for free.

Five education sessions will be streamed live on 28 November and "virtual attendees" will also be able to access a virtual exhibition hall, a resource center and a networking lounge.

An emcee will facilitate live Q&A with online participants during the sessions and those attending will have 12 months following the event to download white papers produced from EIBTM research.

For more info on the hybrid format see <http://bit.ly/W5c0vp>.



business events news

19th November 2012

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

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iVvy's online surveys

IVVY, the Online Events Management solutions company, has launched Surveys, a new feature which is being offered free for a short time to all existing clients using iVvy Events and Venue Management products.

"Surveys is another step for iVvy towards building the ideal event solution for business," says ceo Lauren Hall.

"It is a great tool to gain access to valuable information and feedback before, during or after you've held your event."

As well, Surveys can also be used to send polls and questionnaires to your current or potential customers.

Another important recent software release by iVvy includes a Venues Management solution for the Sales & Catering market, iVvy Venue Management software.

PR Forum tackles lap dancing

WITH communications rapidly transforming global society, a world-class business forum is being held in Melbourne this week, allowing an opportunity

to break down barriers, facilitate intercultural understanding, and consider how to enhance the PR profession's contributions to organisations – and society.

The World PR Forum being held over three days at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre will cover a plethora of topics from coffee to world poverty to lap dancing crises.

Hosted by the Public Relations Institute of Australia and attended by more than 800 leading communicators from 30 countries, Nicolas Turner, president of the Public Relations Institute of Australia said the forum, which began on Sunday 18 November, will bring together world leaders in communication including Richard Edelman,

president and ceo of Edelman; Charlie Miller from Boeing; Anna Adriani from international coffee brand Illycafé; and Wadah Khanfar the former director general of the Al-Jazeera Network.

"We have the best minds in communications in Melbourne and like many of our delegates I'm looking forward to three days of engaging and rigorous discussion," Turner said.

New methods, research and ideas in the field of professional communication will be presented and workshopped culminating in the development of the 'Melbourne Mandate', and Australia will showcase its excellence in public relations and communication practice.



Where WPRF delegates are coming from...



Getting to Know: Oahu, Hawaii

by: *Guy Dundas*

HAWAII'S capital and primary international gateway is the cosmopolitan city of Honolulu. Located on the south coast of the island of Oahu, it's near 10hrs flying time from Sydney. Most visitors to Oahu will head straight to the city centre, Waikiki, which is home to the largest number of hotel rooms and meeting facilities of Hawaii's six main islands - being Oahu, Kauai, Maui, Lanai, Molokai and the Big Island (Hawaii).

Key attractions of Honolulu include the world-famous Waikiki Beach, Diamond Head and Iolani Palace. Further afield is the historic Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbour to the west, or Hanauma Bay for snorkelling to the east. Heading up the island is the North Shore with its fabled beaches, like Pipeline, and there's the Polynesian Culture Centre, about 1.15hrs away from Honolulu.

So what's the lure for the MICE market? Well there's an abundance of luxury, first class, chic and boutique hotels on offer in Waikiki for event planners to pamper VIPs. The centrally located Hawaii Convention Centre has 47 meeting rooms, a 35,000sqf ballroom & can accommodate an event for 13,000 seated delegates theatre-style. Delegates have an endless array of pre & post conferencing options, including visits to any of the five neighbouring islands for adventure & cultural activities, watersports, breath-taking scenery or utter resort comfort and relaxation.

An hour or so away on Oahu's west coast is the Ko Olina resort area. Here you'll find the relatively new Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa. Not only does the resort have a fabulous waterpark, there's the Aulani Conference Center. It features 4 adjoining meeting rooms when combined offer 4,680sqf of space, six ballrooms with a combined area of 4,590sqf, plus there's stacks of outdoor lawn and beach areas to host functions.

Then there's the shopping opportunities to tempt delegates. With the Australian Dollar sitting comfortably above parity against the greenback, Hawaii really is a shopper's paradise. In town The Ala Moana Center is the largest shopping precinct in the Pacific, featuring 290 stores & restaurants. If that's not enough, 45mins out of town are the Waikale Premium Outlets, with its 50 stores offering exceptional value.

With daily Hawaiian Airlines flights out of Sydney to Honolulu, and a new thrice weekly Brisbane service launching next week, Oahu also makes a fantastic choice for a 4-day long weekend event venue for PCOs. For more info on Oahu events email groups@hawaiiitourism.com.au.



Uluru Meeting Place launched at Ayers Rock Resort

COLOUR, movement and indigenous ceremony were at the fore when the Minister for Tourism Martin Ferguson officially launched the new meeting and conference facilities, the Uluru Meeting Place, at Ayers Rock Resort on 16 November with more than 100 guests. The modern facilities form part of a greater \$30million total renovation of the premium Sails in the Desert Hotel. It was a launch that started with a traditional Inma by senior members of the local Anangu. Indigenous Olympian Nova Peris proceeded over events for the day with an address by Voyages managing director, Koos Klein and the official opening of the facility and plaque unveiling by Indigenous Land Corporation chairperson Dr Dawn Casey and Minister for Tourism Martin Ferguson. Guests enjoyed champagne and canapés and a magical sunset over Uluru before returning to the inaugural dinner in the ballroom of the Uluru Meeting Place where they enjoyed a specially prepared menu inspired by Black Olive's Mark Olive and enjoyed entertainment by Deadly Award winner Marcus Corowa. For more information visit www.ulurumeetingplace.com.au



ABOVE: Bryan Holliday, md ICMS Australia with Emma Bowyer and Samantha Sefton, Voyages.

RIGHT: Koos Klein, md, Voyages; Dr Dawn Casey, chairperson, Indigenous Land Corporation and Tourism Minister Martin Ferguson.



The Uluru Meeting Place



ABOVE: Barbara Favet, Accor; Emma Bowyer and Samantha Sefton, Voyages; Leah Scoon, Arinex; Jennifer Dwyer-Slee, Accor; and Susette van der Linden, Helms Briscoe



ABOVE: John Morse, Indigenous Tourism Advisor; Martin Ferguson; MC Nova Peris; Koos Klein and John King, ATEC.



The four trainee Indigenous graduates with Education minister Peter Garrett and Dr Dawn Casey.



Traditional elder Judy Trigger presents Minister of Tourism Martin Ferguson with a beaded necklace.



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