

## Big GF issue

**WHAT** with footy fever and a public holiday in half the country on Monday, there's something of a backlog of news so its a pretty jam-packed issue of **BEN**, filled with the latest news, goss, postings and offers to tuck into.



I spent the long weekend in the Southern Highlands of NSW with its spring flowers and Tulip Festival in full throttle.

It reminded me of what a delightful destination it is for a corporate retreat or meeting with its wonderful array of Country House Hotels, accommodation, wineries and the Bradman Museum where groups can play on the hallowed turf. *Jill*

## Finals kick big hotel goal

**APART** from the fact that both Sydney and Melbourne were forced to share the victory spoils on and off the field this weekend, initial hotel occupancy figures show that Grand Final fever was responsible for the highest weekend occupancies for the year in both cities, according to Accor.

Noting that Sunday is normally the quietest night in Sydney, the hotel giant said their nine hotels in western Sydney - including four in Sydney Olympic Park - all recorded 100% occupancies.

The story was a similar one in the CBD where their hotels attracted occupancies of between 94% - 100% over the weekend.

Of the two cities, Melbourne attracted the largest number of interstate visitors, with Accor's 17 hotels in the city area boosted by an influx of Sydney Swans visitors who added about 12 percentage points to Accor's Melbourne weekend occupancy rates.

"We would like to see it compulsory for an interstate team to be in the Grand Final," said Accor Victorian regional manager, Adrian Williams.

"It has such a positive effect on Melbourne tourism. When it was clear that the Swans would play in the MCG Grand Final, the phones rang off their hooks in our reservation offices.

"Melbourne hotels normally have strong weekend business, but with it being a long weekend back in Sydney we saw the Sydneysiders use the extra day to

make it a long weekend in Melbourne, so our hotels boasted close-to-full occupancies on Friday and Sunday nights, as well as a total sell-out on Saturday.

"Even hotels as far away from the MCG as Glen Waverley enjoyed a bumper weekend."

Accor NSW regional manager for NSW, Scott Boyes, ignoring the fact that he had been Victorian regional manager until a few months ago, declared Sydney the winner in the occupancy stakes.

"I think the fact that the NRL Final is a night-time game and that it was held over a long weekend meant that we were able to turn a Sunday night from being one of the quietest nights of the year into one of the strongest," said Boyes.

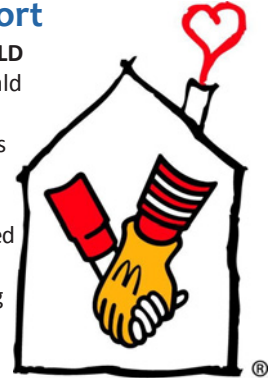
## Something to sing about

**ARIA** Catering have recently secured a limited amount of availability over November and December for one of the most exclusive and sought after event spaces in Sydney, the Sydney Opera House's Concert Hall Northern Foyer.

Suitable for events from 100 to 1000, with a menu created by Matt Moran and served by the professional team at ARIA Catering, it is ideal for breakfast and lunch events on the Lounge and Bar level, and dinner and cocktail events on the Granite level - for more information email [events@ariacatering.com.au](mailto:events@ariacatering.com.au).

## Centre thanked for its support

**RONALD** McDonald House Charities (RMHC) has honoured its long-standing partner, the Sydney Convention and



Exhibition Centre, with admission to its "Donor Hall of Fame."

Bestowed earlier this month during the Ronald McDonald House Charities Conference, the award recognises the Centre's support in staging the charity's annual NSW ball.

First held at the Centre more than 10 years ago, it is a key fundraising event for the independent, non-profit organisation providing support to families affected by childhood illness.

The president of the NSW RMHC Annual Ball Committee, Carolyn Meadows, said the Hall of Fame title was presented each year to a company or individual who had made an extraordinary contribution to the charity and its achievements.

Centre chief executive Ton van Amerongen said, "We're proud to support RMHC and are delighted to have been the home of its annual ball for so many years."

## Emirates ups MEL

**MELBOURNE** yesterday welcomed the Emirates Airbus A380 as it touched down on its inaugural flight from Dubai to the Victorian capital.

The arrival takes Emirates' A380 commitment to Australia to twice daily, with Melbourne's new superjumbo services complementing those at Sydney, offering passengers unparalleled comfort and inflight service.

The launch of A380 services increases capacity on the non-stop Dubai - Melbourne - Auckland service by 38%, and grows Emirates' Melbourne capacity by 540 seats daily.

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# business events news

3rd October 2012

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**SO** what do you do when a theme park in Ecuador, called the Middle of the World, turns out to be off centre?

More than half a million tourists visit the popular site each year to have their photo taken standing with a foot each side of a special line which marks the equator.

However the recent use of GPS technology has led to the discovery that the latitude of the line is not zero degrees, zero minutes, zero seconds, as expected - instead, the key marker is actually situated about 240 metres north of the Equator

The government-owned park was built in 1936, and officials explained that the iconic "equator" line was initially positioned using methods of measuring that are not as accurate as they would be today.

## Orange street dinner

**IF ORANGE** in NSW is on your agenda, then Orange Wine Week (19-28 October) provides a ready made event with Millthorpe's inaugural Winemakers Table.

It comprises an intimate dinner at a long communal table in Millthorpe's main street, with dinner by Tony Worland from Tonic Restaurant and by Stacey Ewin & Darren Tracey from The Old Mill - [tasteorange.com.au/wineweek.htm](http://tasteorange.com.au/wineweek.htm)

## Luxury at Hengshan

**TWELVE** at Hengshan, a 171-room hotel, is to be unveiled on Shanghai's tree-lined Hengshan Road in November.

The Starwood Luxury Collection property will offer 1303 sqm of meeting space, a 425sqm Grand Ballroom and six meeting rooms.

## Share your EEAA story to star

**IF YOU** want to share your story and showcase your successes in the exhibition and event industry, be aware that nominations for The Exhibition and Events Association of Australia (EEAA) 2012 Awards for Excellence close at 5pm AEST this Friday 5 October.

The EEAA Awards for Excellence recognise outstanding merit and leadership within the industry and provide an opportunity for venues, suppliers and organisers to showcase their innovation, performance and success.

Becoming a finalist or winner of the EEAA Awards is a great accolade.

The Awards provide businesses in the industry an excellent opportunity to get some prime time exposure and recognition.

"The EEAA Awards not only

celebrates the success of our Members, it also tells the greater story of the power of exhibitions to get business results," said Joyce DiMascio, EEAA gm.

"We invite all businesses in the exhibition sector to tell us their story by entering the awards."

Finalists will be announced week beginning 5 November and the winners announced at the awards dinner in Melbourne on 4 Dec at the NGV International.

The EEAA Awards Entry Kit is available at [www.bit.ly/eeaaawards](http://www.bit.ly/eeaaawards).

For more details on nominating, see [www.eeaa.com.au](http://www.eeaa.com.au) or contact the EEAA on 02 9413 9520.

## Hot offer on Med cruise

**PAY** for a category 12 balcony suite on a seven-night Western Mediterranean cruise aboard *MSC Splendida*, and be upgraded to a deluxe MSC Yacht Club suite.

Offer applies to bookings before September 30, for cruises until November this year; for details see [www.msccruises.com.au](http://www.msccruises.com.au)

## Westin Bali upgrades

**THE** Westin Resort Nusa Dua, Bali has commenced the next phase of a multi-million dollar revitalisation program, adding a new wing to the existing facilities.

The 96 guest room wing will have its own swimming pool, a signature Westin themed concept restaurant, Prego and Westin's signature Spa.

The project is expected to be finalised by mid-2013 in the lead-up to the APEC convention.

## Canada's Shangri-Las

**JOINING** the Shangri-La Hotel, Vancouver, which opened in January 2009, comes the opening this month of the Shangri-La Hotel, Toronto.

In the heart of Canada's largest city, the new 202-room, 49 suite hotel resides within the first 17 floors of a new 66-storey tower.

It is within a five-block radius of the performance centre, the headquarters for the country's five major banks, consulates, leading research hospitals, sports venues, the city's live theatre district and the TIFF headquarters.

For meetings and social events, the third floor has nine meeting rooms, with 1,359 square metres in four distinct areas.

The largest space with 39 crystal chandeliers, Queen's Park, offers 341 square metres of open space, divisible by an air-wall that descends from the ceiling.

An outdoor garden terrace overlooking University Avenue, enhances and extends the ballroom's capabilities.

## Win a pair of Maui Jims

**THEY'RE** the industry's most sought after corporate gift and Maui Jims have been fitting and rewarding conference and incentive attendees with their spectacular specs for 10 years.

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## Face to Face with...

### Karen Bolinger, ceo, Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau



**Business Events News** recently caught up with Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau's ceo, Karen Bolinger. Prior to commencing her role in Melbourne last year Karen was the general manager strategy and marketing for the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW, a role she retained for three years. Throughout her 20 year industry experience, Bolinger also worked at the Sydney Convention and

Visitors Bureau, for seven years, as general manager.

#### What does your role entail?

I'm responsible for managing a global team that identifies and bids for large international conferences, meetings and incentives along with short term corporate events. Our charter is to return significant economic benefit back to our stakeholders and members. This year alone we won over \$361 million of economic impact for the state of Victoria.

#### What's the first thing you do when you get in the office?

Call out good morning to whoever is in, then the inevitable, check emails and calendar to see what the day will bring me. Catch up on the news and make some phone calls to those early birds I know will be at their desk.

#### What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

I get excited about the things we could do however working with a small budget means I have to curtail some of those dreams and there is never enough time in the day to complete everything.

#### How do you inspire your team?

Tough question for me to answer on their behalf. I like to lead by example and be clear about expectations, while being fair. I'm approachable and am always looking for new ways to do things.

#### Dealing with new technology - bonus or headache?

Love it when I get my head around it.

#### What makes a great conference?

Great content and a destination that makes you want to go there.

#### What would you be doing if you weren't the ceo of Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau?

This won't be a surprise to anyone who knows me. A rock star, Lady Gaga....seriously I couldn't think of anything better, this is my dream job.

#### Who has inspired you?

I've been lucky in my career and worked with some amazing people along the way who have all had some advice to give me. Jon Hutchison, Nick Baker, Leila Fiedler, Louise Byrom and Peter King to name a few. I like to read biographies and take something away from them as well.

#### How do you relax?

I'm a bit of a home body so cheering on my son at sport and spending time with my family are always at the top of my list. I like cooking, personal training, books and movies.

#### What is the most inspiring conference you have been involved in?

My first big international conference with ITT Sheraton - which is now Starwood - in New York where we had a few thousand employees.

It was professional, slick and relevant, it was also held in Madison Square Gardens, Celine Dion did a private performance for us and we got great seats to see the New York Knicks.

#### How many conferences have you attended in the last 12 months?

About six conferences, as well as three trade shows.

## MGallery Rocks on in

**THE** 150-year old Harbour Rocks Hotel, a former Mirvac property, has been newly refurbished and inducted into Accor's boutique MGallery Collection of hotels.

The 4.5 star, 59-room boutique hotel was officially rebranded on 26 September and joins four MGallery hotels in Australia – the Grand Hotel Melbourne, the Fairmont Resort MGallery in the Blue Mountains and The Como.

More hotels are expected to be added to the collection as the integration of the Mirvac portfolio is completed.

By the end of the year there will be some 60 MGallery hotels globally.

## Lee joins Hilton NZ team

**KATIE** Lee has joined Hilton Worldwide New Zealand sales team as corporate sales executive.

Bringing more than ten years of industry experience to her role, Lee will be responsible for Hilton Hotels and Resorts new business strategies.

Gaye Wood, director of sales Hilton Worldwide said, "Katie's energetic personality and extensive background make her a valuable asset to Hilton Worldwide"

## Athens MICE video

**THE** Athens Convention Bureau has developed a new video with the aim of promoting the Greek capital in the international MICE industry.

Titled *Share your ideas in Athens*, the destinational MICE tool highlights the intriguing conference and incentive offerings of the ancient city.

To view it online see [www.athensconventionbureau.gr](http://www.athensconventionbureau.gr)

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BUSINESS EVENTS  
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## Bid Manager - Corporate

Sydney is one of the world's top business event destinations. Business Events Sydney (BESydney) intends to stay on top and is seeking a passionate professional to join its Bidding and Strategic Partnerships team.

As a Corporate Bid Manager you will secure corporate events and incentives for Sydney and NSW with strategic, creative and innovative bid proposals that profile Sydney and NSW, BESydney and our strategic partners. You will be commercially astute with strong writing and negotiating skills, and the ability to manage projects independently.

#### Qualifications

- Degree from academic institution or substantial industry experience
- Advantageous if bilingual in English and Chinese (or other Asian) languages

#### Experience

- 5+ years experience in project management, account management and/or marketing role
- Marketing background an advantage
- Relationship management skills

Applicants must have the right to work in Australia. No recruiters please.

Previous applicants need not apply.

Applications close Friday 12 October 2012 by Close of Business.

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