



## Spooky!

IT promised to be quite a ghostly evening, when the 125 year old Harbour Rocks Hotel was welcomed into Accor's MGallery brand last night after an \$8m refurbishment.



And we weren't disappointed. Dining al fresco in the warm night air, on the hotel's rooftop, eating grilled mulloway and corn fed chicken breast, listening to a quartet from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and dealing with a ghost named Eric and his paramour from the brothel next door, Scarlett, after whom the restaurant is named, made for the memorable experience that the MGallery brand is all about.

Make sure you check it out for yourself - Jill.

## iVvy hotels solution

A new Venue Management solution for hotels is to be launched at the Australasian Hotel Industry Conference & Exhibition, being held at the Swissôtel Sydney on 17 October.

It's been under development for three years by Australian software company iVvy who used scalable architecture and superior cloud technology to create the foundation of the iVvy platform.

It is being offered to hotels with conference and banqueting facilities, with or without accommodation, and includes central reservations across multiple properties providing visibility, reporting and live trading for conference and event teams globally.

The software will allow users to easily manage every aspect of their conference facilities, from sales, space availability, accommodation bookings, event orders, menu management and function diaries to marketing, supplier procurement and payments.

For more information see - [www.iVvy.com](http://www.iVvy.com).

## The MCVB lifts the bar

THE announcement that Melbourne will host the International AIDS Conference 2014, has been cited as a major contributing factor to a year of outstanding results by Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau (MCVB).

"Across the business the MCVB secured 210 international and national business events for Victoria - a 62% increase on the 2011/12 full year target," said MCVB chairman Chris Barlow, speaking at the Bureau's Annual General Meeting, held at RACV City Club Conferences and Events this week.

These events he said, will deliver an estimated economic impact valued at \$361 million.

"As the largest medical conference ever to be held in Australia, the conference is expected to bring 14,000 delegates and generate an estimated \$80 million in economic impact for the state of Victoria.

"It is encouraging to see that in a financial climate that is still uncertain MCVB continues to produce results and make a real impact on both the state economy and the local business events industry," he said.

The 2011/12 financial year saw a number of initiatives implemented including a new Strategic Business Plan that was developed in consultation with staff and stakeholders across the business and the appointment of a new ceo, Karen Bolinger.

"Ms Bolinger commenced her role as CEO in November 2011 and was quick to develop a new strategic direction for the organisation in light of the increasingly competitive nature of the business events industry both nationally and globally, as well as the enduringly unpredictable economic climate," Barlow said.

One significant change was a recent organisational restructure of the marketing and communications department,

now operating as Commercial Partnerships, headed up by Edwina San.

In addition changes were made to the business development and convention sales department, headed up by Julia Swanson.

"A core component of the strategy and one of the main motives behind the restructure of this team is to better engage with our members at all levels, acknowledging the vital contribution they make to our industry and working together to achieve our common goals," said Bolinger.

More key activities included the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Expo (AIME), the introduction of the organisation's new positioning campaign: *Melbourne IQ: The Intelligent Choice for Conferences*, while the 2011 annual Asia Roadshow visited Shanghai, Hong Kong, and for the first time, Mumbai.

It was also a year that saw Melbourne officially acknowledged as the conference capital of Australia by the International Congress and Convention Association, while six major industry accolades were awarded, including being named winner in the Meetings and Business Tourism category at the RACV 2011 Victorian Tourism Awards, and consequently receiving Hall of Fame status.

## First among equals



IN a first for an Australian venue, the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre have installed new seamless digital signage screens.

The 20 slimline LED screens are now in use above the entrances to the venue's Grand Hall and Bayside Auditorium.

Mounted in rows of five with only 3mm between them, the screens can be used individually or together to play full video content, creating high impact, bolder signage for events.

Organisers can also choose to configure the screens to present a mixture of video content and event information.

Centre chief executive Ton van Amerongen said the installation of the screens reflected the venue's commitment to delivering state-of-the-art support to clients' events as it heads into one of its busiest years on record.

"Staying at the forefront of technology is just one of the many ways we ensure we deliver world-class events for our clients," van Amerongen said.





## crumbs!

**NOT** wot muvver used to make! Bangers and mash have taken a leap up the British social ladder now that the two-Michelin star L'Atelier de Joel Robuchon restaurant is serving it up at \$120 a plate, in honour of Potato Week.

The deconstructed gourmet sausages from Iberico pigs fed on acorns, wild thyme, rosemary and mushrooms are braised in \$120 a bottle 16-year-old Bordeaux and served on pureed desiree potatoes, with black truffles.

**MEANWHILE**, in an outrageous statement, the Fashion House Zadig & Voltaire due to open a Paris Hotel in 2014, say the 40-room property will be off limits to tourists visiting from China.

Company founder Thierry Gillier said, "We are going to select our guests."

## BESydney appoints Siow

### BUSINESS

Events Sydney (BESydney) has appointed industry expert Cheryl Siow to the role of Director – China.



The appointment is part of ongoing efforts to grow Sydney's business event success in the valuable Chinese market.

Siow brings to the role more than 12 years' experience in the business event industry most recently she was instrumental in setting up two internationally renowned business event agencies in Shanghai – the Pacific World Singapore Shanghai Representative Office and the MCI offices in Shanghai and Beijing.

BESydney ceo, Lyn Lewis-Smith said, "Cheryl has a vast understanding and strong relationships with markets that BESydney is actively pursuing in China – the corporate meeting and incentive market and the emerging association event market."

## Hilton takes measures to get credits

**HILTON** Worldwide is to measure carbon generated by events held at 11 of its properties in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, and will purchase carbon credits to offset their environmental impact.

At no cost to Hilton customers, the carbon credits will be used to fund renewable energy projects in Borneo and Cambodia – the Borneo Rainforest Rehabilitation Project and Cambodia Cookstove Project.

"Sustainability is a priority to Hilton Worldwide and a central part of how we do business.

"For us, it is not just about saying we are committed to sustainability, it is about taking action," said William Costley, vice president, operations - Southeast Asia, Hilton Worldwide.

"This program gives organisations and individuals a sustainable choice for their conferences, meetings or social events.

"By offsetting carbon emissions at no additional cost to our customers, together we are able to give back to the environment and benefit important renewable energy projects in the region."

The first and only major multi-brand hospitality company to make sustainability measurement and corrective action, a brand standard at each of its more than 3,900 hotels globally.

The program applies to events held from 1 October and covers all events, meeting and functions held in the participating hotels' function rooms.

LightStay Hilton Worldwide's proprietary system will track and measure carbon emissions from each aspect of events held for analysing, reporting and improving sustainability performance at each of its properties around the world.

It offers tools and resources for hotels to improve performance and share best practices.

Reporting through LightStay, Hilton Worldwide has achieved its five-year goal to reduce total waste output by 20 percent and is

on track to reduce energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 20 percent, and water consumption by 10 percent, by 2013, Costley said.

## Fuji's Daydream

A **FUJI** Xerox Australia incentive held on Daydream Island Resort & Spa and themed 'Fuji Xerox Survivor Island' was declared by Daydream ceo Phil Casey an immense success.

"We were delighted to host Fuji Xerox Australia and help them organise such an exciting, fun and worthwhile island experience for their high achievers," he said.

The event which featured a series of corporate team building challenges, a welcome cocktail function and an awards dinner, included memorable performances by iconic New Zealand-Australian rock band Dragon and nationally-acclaimed comedian Peter Helliar.

Casey said the Fuji Xerox group also enjoyed the abundance of leisure activities that Daydream Island Resort and Spa offers, with guests jet skiing, canoeing, sailing and diving in their spare time.

"All of our guests take pleasure in the pristine waters, coral beaches and beautiful weather of Daydream Island, and it was no different for the Fuji Xerox Australia winners."

"We can tailor any experience needed for a successful event, and in particular team building activities, which are a specialty for us.

"We are also capable of constructing any special requirements, such as staging and lighting, which was highlighted by the spectacular fireworks and performance by Dragon at Lovers Cove," he said.



## Sunbird returns


**SUNLOVER** Reef Cruises is celebrating the return of its 400 seat vessel *Tropic Sunbird* after a \$500,000 refurbishment.

The Barrier Reef vessel now joins *Tropic Sunseeker*, both available for charter and refurbed earlier this year, in January.

*Sunbird's* extensive upgrade includes freshly painted exterior, new windows, new carpet on three levels and seat coverings.

Group general manager of Ocean Hotels and Tourism, Nicola Constantinidis said she is delighted with the new look vessel that now boosts their fleet capacity by a further 400 seats.

"With the vessel back in the water and joining her sister vessel, (affectionately called the twins) we are now set to vie for new business that includes the lucrative private charter and meetings and incentive markets."



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## Starwood rewards

**BOOK** a meeting at Starwood Hotels & Resorts around the world, including their properties in Australia, Fiji and Noumea, by 31 December and receive up to 100,000 Starpoints signing bonus plus 1,000 Starpoints for every 10 room nights, a rebate on master-billed rooms and an added benefit of your choosing.

## iPad awareness

**BURJ** Al Arab, the "World's Most Luxurious Hotel," launched the *Pinking Burj Al Arab* campaign on 4 October, in support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The highlight is the exclusive one-of-a-kind 24-carat rose gold iPad created especially for the cause, with an engraved pink ribbon and the hotel's logo, available only at Burj Al Arab.

# Easy riding in Mildura

**THE** effects of 4,000 Ulysses motorbike enthusiasts riding into Mildura for their AGM earlier this year is still being felt months later. The hosting, social, environmental, cultural and economic benefits for Mildura is still being seen, said Julie Jewell, business event facilitator & special projects, Mildura Rural City Council.

"At the conclusion of the event surveys were collated and we recognise that over \$5.4m was left in the local community, a further \$500,000 was left in Victoria and \$1m for those who took their time travelling to and from Mildura for the AGM.

"The survey results reflected over 32% of attendees," she said.

The Ulysses event, whose members are over 40 years of age, was embraced by the community, and involved such activities as a Vintage Speedway, a 'Chrome and Ink' dining precinct, daily rides to attractions and farmers markets on site.

All of which was a contributing factor in Mildura winning the prestigious Australian Events Award for "Best Regional Event,

2012".

"There is so much pride in our community as a result of this win which makes support for future event very attainable."

"It also highlighted that community groups working closely with Council bring about achievable results for all," Jewell said, adding, "when you engage your community the rewards and support for further events are forthcoming".

## IHG gets charged

**MAKING** a positive contribution to environmental sustainability, InterContinental Hotel Groups have built an electric car charge network, connecting eight properties across the group, with this cutting-edge technology.

The first hotel company in Australia to have electric car charge spots in their property car parks or forecourts, the five New South Wales properties include - Crowne Plaza Coogee Beach, Crowne Plaza Terrigal, Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley, Holiday Inn Sydney Airport and Holiday Inn Old Sydney.

## GETTING TO KNOW: New York City, USA

**WHAT** a way to spend a day...strolling down 42nd Street, browsing the windows of 5th & Madison Avenues and sightseeing New York City from the top of the Empire State Building.

New York City attracts 50 million people annually to its five boroughs - The Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island - and is the most populated metropolitan area in the world with over eight million people on a land mass of 790km<sup>2</sup>.

Iconic sites and attractions include the Broadway theatre district, Wall Street in Lower Manhattan which comprises the financial capital of the world and is home to the New York Stock Exchange; the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Centre, Ellis Island and the newly opened 9/11 memorial site that consists of two pools set in the footprints of the original Twin Towers.

Local New Yorkers live in large residential districts called brownstone rowhouses, townhouses and tenements, free standing houses are found in less densely populated areas.

NYC & Company, New York City's official marketing, tourism and partnership organisation, is the main resource for visitors and residents to find everything they need to do and see in the city with the help of the website [nycgo.com](http://nycgo.com) and the Official NYC Information Centre which is located at 810 Seventh Ave between 52nd and 53rd streets.

The Destination services team can assist with selecting the perfect venue for a range of options and budgets. NYC & Co showcases over 2000 member businesses which are available for VIP receptions, special events, spouse programs and group tours.

The New York City Pass and Explorer Pass can be purchased on the website or at the information centre where great savings and a choice of 53 places to visit are available.

The Explorer Pass is available to buy with entry into a choice of either three, five, seven or 10 attractions (based on the pass purchased) attractions include The Empire State Building Observatory, American Museum of Natural History, Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island or a Circle Line Cruises itinerary, as well as the chance to take a Gossip Girl or Sex in the City tour.

The New York City Seminar and Conference Centre, located in Manhattan, offers "big spaces at value prices for high-tech events and seminars" featuring over 18,000 square metres of space which can be easily configured to suit any event.

For more intimate group sizes of 10 to 150 delegates the Hotel Beacon is located on Broadway and 75th Street. The hotel offers an Executive Board Room, Broadway and Amsterdam rooms and features complimentary extras such as an easel, podium, pads and pens, water pitchers and glasses, whiteboard and a flat screen monitor.

There are many meeting spaces in NYC and these are displayed in the NYC Official Meeting and Event Planner. To obtain a copy email [conventionsales@nycgo.com](mailto:conventionsales@nycgo.com).

