



Good news week

THE good news is the Toulouse Lautrec - Paris & the Moulin Rouge



exhibition, charting the life and work of this famous French artist, is an experience well worth the queuing.

The sad news is, it closed on 2 April.

The viewing of this first major retrospective in Australia of the art of the renowned French 19th century was once afforded to **BEN** by Crowne Plaza Canberra, following the NCCC farewell to Cindy Young and welcome to Stephen Wood.

The Crowne Plaza, sparkling after a stylish refurbishment, seems almost aligned to the celebrations this year of Canberra's 100th birthday and to the construction of Canberra's new \$4.80 million airport, due for completion by the end of the year - *Jill*.



Qantas+Emirates groups

THE new global alliance between Qantas and Emirates which officially debuted last weekend is set to see some changes for PCOs coordinating group travel to Europe and the Middle East.

Now that Qantas is flying to the UK via Dubai the emirate and its extensive business events offerings are likely to be more attractive to Australian MICE operators, while the coordinated networks of the carriers also now provide unprecedented access to more than 30 European destinations.

Effective from today the airlines have released a new "joint pricing proposition" which coordinates fares and conditions for flights from Australia to the UK and Europe in economy class, as well as in all classes to the Middle East and Bangkok.

The new structure offers fares from more than 40 Australian cities to over 60 European destinations, as well as improved routing and stopover options.

A key change for MICE bookers is the introduction of a "streamlined group proposition," which standardises conditions across Qantas and Emirates.

Group travel will continue to be booked in G class for economy groups and I class for business class groups.



Some Qantas group conditions will change, but the process for quoting group travel remains unchanged.

Qantas group bookings should continue to be requested via QF Group Sales, while group bookings which don't have any Qantas content should be requested via Emirates Group Sales.

Sheraton Mirage offer

IN celebration of their newly refurbished 5 star beachfront conference and event venues, the Sheraton Mirage Resort & Spa Gold Coast is offering 5% off Master Account accommodation and a new booking signing bonus of 1,000 Starpoints per 10 room nights and choice of two options.

Complimentary internet in guest rooms; double room allocation; upgrades and double Starpoints with no limits.

To take advantage of the offer, book in a new conference before 30 June and stay between 1 April - 31 July and 1 November - 24 December.

CWT's strong growth

CONTINUING to reinforce its team to manage and support the strong growth of its business, CWT Meetings & Events has appointed Pauline Houston as director global supplier management for hotels, meetings and events.

In her role, Houston will drive greater alignment in the approach to suppliers for both business travel and meetings and events clients.

Patrick Lukan joins CWT as senior director global operations to support the global strategy and delivery of operations for meetings and events.

He will provide clients with detailed international reporting that gives a global, organisation-wide view of their meetings and events spend.

Floyd Widener, global senior vice president CWT Meetings & Events said they are seeing a lot of activity in the industry at the moment - expansion but also consolidation within the market as companies look for a one-stop-shop solution that incorporates everything from event strategy to sourcing and logistical support.

The beginning of the year has been very healthy for our business and we expect to see strong market growth for the first quarter 2013 on a global level. We have further strengthened our team to drive even greater value for our clients."

Haycom and t7 form a partnership

A new partnership within the Australian events industry has been formed between Haycom and t7 event solutions.

Haycom, established in 1975, provide expertise in vision, sound, lighting and staging services, while t7 event solutions are a Sydney based audiovisual and event design company who have been providing creative technical solutions within Australia and globally for the last 10 years.

Haycom managing director Stuart Gregg said "This significant business decision has eventuated after both companies have for a number of years delivered similar and exceptional services in the events industry".

The merge will enable the new Haycom to provide a greater national service; combining new and existing resources, operating in more locations and creating more specialised roles for its teams.

t7 event solutions managing director Mario Valenti said, "I am delighted to be able to merge t7 with Haycom.

"The events industry is a changing landscape and if you don't move with the times you risk being left behind."

Haycom can now offer exclusive products including Musion 3D holographic projection, interactive iPads and projection mapping.

Further details online at - www.haycom.com.

O'Reilly's winner

SAMANTHA Homer, Corporate Traveller Group is the lucky winner of the O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat, Villas, Lost World Spa and Conference Centre competition featured in **BEN** two weeks ago.

Her winning entry has won her two night's accommodation in a luxurious self contained villa for up to four people at O'Reilly's, a wine tasting at Canungra Valley Vineyards and an early morning bird walk.



Anaheim expands MICE space

ANAHEIM/ORANGE County Visitor & Convention Bureau (AOCVCB) has announced a number of new projects in the OC area for 2013.

These include the development of a Great Wolf Lodge water park resort in Garden Grove by Great Wolf Resorts.

The project, expected to break ground this year, is located about one mile south of the Disneyland Resort.

The 10 storey tall structure with 600 rooms will have 30,000 square feet of meeting space and its own attached water park.

The luxury Island Hotel Newport Beach has added 6,000sqf of additional meeting and event spaces, effectively enlarging its ballroom to 8,710sqf.

With a capacity for 600, the ballroom's foyer now has 3,936sqf of space.

Additional to these developments, the Anaheim/Orange County Visitor & Convention Bureau recently debuted GrandPlazaVille, a new online application that allows meeting planners to seamlessly visualise their event in the Anaheim Convention Center Grand Plaza.

Outrigger Laguna Phuket opens

THE Outrigger Laguna Phuket Resort in Thailand officially opened yesterday with a grand beachside party.

The new 255 room absolute beachfront property with meeting facilities for up to 100 delegates also has a generously proportioned, four bedroom pool villa for small group meetings.

The resort is currently offering two special meetings and events promotion packages - a Day Delegate deal priced from THB1200pp++ and Half-day from THB1000pp++.

Based on 10 people minimum, the offer includes venue hire, set-up, lunch and more.

The app showcases the Grand Plaza's flexibility as a meeting and event site and enables users to simply "drag and drop" an array of event elements.

Check out the updated content on the Grand Plaza microsite, which also includes a time-lapse video on the evolution of the Grand Plaza project from beginning to end.

For further information visit the website at - www.anaheimoc.org.

BCEC's care programs

FOLLOWING a number of years executing its own wide ranging Social Responsibility Program, the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (managed by leading international venue management specialists AEG Ogden) has partnered with the AEG 1EARTH global sustainability program across the group's worldwide stable of venues, thus broadening their ongoing work with the community.

The first joint activity of the international partnership, the month long program kicked off with Earth Hour on Saturday 23 March and will continue through to Earth Day on 22 April.

During 1EARTH month staff will be encouraged to recycle everything from batteries, mobile phones, reading glasses and used light bulbs.

They will also be involved in volunteering activities including a Backyard Blitz at the Red Cross Homeless Shelter, donating blood or cooking hundreds of litres of soup for Foodbank to help feed Brisbane's homeless.

BCEC general manager, Bob O'Keeffe said the Centre's 1EARTH Social Responsibility Program will refocus the efforts of staff and management in putting values into action.

"Building a sustainable business - one that balances economic performance with environmental health and community wellbeing is good for everyone," he said.

Bagging a comfy meeting



MOVING away from the conventional approach to meetings the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (the Centre) now offers the TenOnCall Beanie Experience.

This innovative and out-of-the-norm meeting experience is ideal for groups looking for an unusual and bold approach to conduct a training session, networking forum or a meeting.

The TenOnCall Beanie Experience can be set up in various set-up configurations (i.e. circle, half-moon or straight rows) of their choice.

It's particularly ideal for training, brainstorming, teambuilding and creative networking, to get the creative juices flowing," enthused Angeline Lue, the Centre's director of sales & marketing.

"The bean bag adapts to one's body shape, so participants can sit comfortably during meetings.

And with the bean bags' funky colours, the meeting atmosphere will definitely lighten," added Lue.

The Beanie experience is further enhanced with takeaway lattes, cappuccino, coffee or tea, and complimentary Bean-ovation value-adds such as titbits, energy booster drinks and energy bars, comfy slippers and a stress ball.

It's a cliffhanger!

THE Scenic railway at Scenic World, Katoomba has gone hi-tech with the launch of four hand-built Swiss designed carriages that allow passengers to choose their own adventure with a 20 degree differentiation, from a thrilling 'cliff hanger' to a softer laid back journey.



EVERYTHING, well nearly everything you didn't know about airports is revealed in these facts.

In the UK in the 1920s you didn't need a license to fly people or goods around, you didn't even need to pass a test.

What's more, there were no air traffic controls so pilots needed to keep their eyes peeled for other planes.

Qantas is the oldest continuously operating native airline in the world.

KLM actually started operations a year earlier, but is now merged with Air France.

Sydney Airport claims to be the world's oldest continuously operating commercial airport, commencing operations in January 1920.

One-third of the world's airports are located in the US.

Dubai Airport has the world's largest airport duty-free section with 161,000 square feet of shopping space and Singapore's Changi airport has a swimming pool on the roof.

Rogers joins VictorsFood



VICTORSFOOD, the interactive catering and event specialist, has appointed Laura Rogers as its business development manager.

With more than 10 years sales and marketing experience both in the corporate sector and events industry, Roger's most recent role was business development manager at Workshop Events.



Tiger in the rainforest

YESTERDAY, Tiger Airways celebrated the start of new services between Sydney & Cairns. The current 4 weekly return services will increase to 7 by June, delivering up to 2520 extra seats through Cairns Airport weekly.



MICE buyers will see big potential in Mauritius as it has the infrastructure to cater for MICE groups, not only during low season but all year round.

As a MICE-friendly destination, Mauritius possesses all the key ingredients that are required for successful meetings, conferences and events.

The quality and variety of accommodation, the attention to detail in service delivery, state-of-the-art conferencing venues, and the vast number of additional activities on offer all guarantee genuine value for money.

Whether they are interested in buying for large, medium or small groups and are looking at Mauritius as either a long-haul or short-haul destination, they can deliver world-class, luxury MICE venues and an incredibly business-friendly environment in which to hold them.

The island offers a large choice of accommodation, with a strong emphasis on luxury properties and a wide range of luxury hotel brands and boutique offerings.

Mauritius has an advantage over other MICE destinations in the Indian Ocean in that it houses the region's largest and most modern convention centre: the Swami Vivekananda Conference Centre in Pailles.

This centre provides all the facilities needed for large, international conferences – accommodating up to 5,000 people at any one time.

Other venues include the International Conference Centre in Grand Bay (up to 600 people) and the Freeport Exhibition in Mer Rouge (up to 1,000 delegates).

Many Mauritian hotels also offer conferencing facilities and can cater for up to 800 people at a time.

The island boasts a wide variety of activities that can be specifically geared around MICE groups – ranging from golf to adventure sports such as quad-biking, trekking, mountain biking, zip-lining, kite-surfing and sky-diving.

The NCCC's eventful future

Cindy Young bid farewell to the National Convention Centre Canberra (NCCC) last Thursday evening at a gala Pass the Baton occasion held at the NCCC and attended by government, business and industry friends and colleagues.

The event also welcomed Stephen Wood into the role of manager and heralded the homecoming of this former Canberra native.

In conversation with both Young and Wood, Young revealed that since the Convention Centre was refurbished in 2007, they had grown from strength to strength.

"Every year has seen an increase in revenue, culminating in 2012 when the revenue was a full 50% higher than what it was pre refurbishment.

"It has been very satisfying to help people make a place for themselves within this industry, to foster passion and work with bright young sparks who are creating a career for themselves.

"I am proud of the way we have engaged with the community and the difference we have been able to make.

"Something as simple as giving local artists the opportunity to display their works in a public place like the Convention Centre and the work we do with the Yellow Van food rescue people," she said.

Beyond her retirement, Young went on to reveal that there might be opportunities for her to be involved in other projects and initiatives.

"Right now, I am on a disability advisory board and the council for the Canberra Institute of technology, she said.

Hitting the road running, Stephen Wood with just a week in the job said he was already feeling at home.

"Having that affinity with Canberra makes it easier for me and my family," he said.

"I think the



Pictured above from left with Cindy Young is Stephen Wood and Minister Barr

important part of being successful in Canberra is understanding its advantages, understanding what you can leverage here and how you can access things.

"People in Canberra are very passionate about the ACT about living here, the standard of living and the ease of access and the ease of doing business, especially with the Government," he said.

Wood, who worked for 13 years in a cross section of positions at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre in roles that included operational, client services, management and planning, sales and more recently director of operations, said he hoped to bring a perspective of somebody that has developed

a lot of industry experience.

An industry where Wood recently held the role of chair of the NSW branch of MEA, in addition to being involved with the EEAA and other industry organisations.

"I have the opportunity to witness a growing understanding of what the events industry contributes and what

an important role it plays

and I use the word events quite deliberately, its what excited me and drew me to here.

"It's not just business events but also community events - those events that play an important part in the social fabric of a city," he enthused.

With degrees in economics and law from the ANU and 13 years at the SCEC, Cindy Young said as she passed the baton, "I think we can say the future of the Centre is in very safe hands."



Pictured are: Lauren Sayers, Novotel Canberra; Ana Stuparu, Crowne Plaza Canberra & Liesl Bouwer, Crowne Plaza Canberra

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