



Top travel tips

ILANA Den
 the director responsible for sales and marketing



at CC Conferences and Corporate Events and Celebration Journeys, suggests on CC Conference's LinkedIn page to take photos of all your receipts, in case you lose them and need them for expense reports.

Denna Varga at the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW posted her agreement.

"I did this with the famils at the Sydney Royal Easter Show this year.

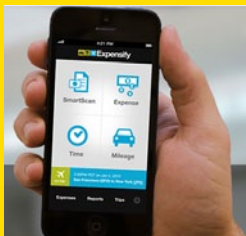
"It was particularly valuable given I wasn't carrying a handbag or wallet (just my phone and pockets) - so receipts easily got lost."

GJ's Computer Services weighed in on this topic and suggests "Why not use EXPENSIFY together with your SmartPhone camera?"

Install the mobile app, and add those receipts, including flight confirmations, hotel receipts (in a variety of formats) to your account.

Great advice and EXPENSIFY also struck a chord with me so I have downloaded the app - *Jill*.

See - <http://bit.ly/14m2Wfm>.



Concern over tax changes

EXPECTED measures in the upcoming Federal Budget to slash work-related expenses could impact the meetings and conference sectors.

Last weekend treasurer Wayne Swan announced that the government would "better target work related self education expense deductions," to help fund the new National Plan for Self Improvement.

Swan said that expenses targeted include "conferences, seminars and self-organised study tours" as well as formal qualifications and associated tuition fees, textbooks, stationery and travel expenses.

"Without a cap on the amount that can be claimed under this deduction, it's possible to make

large claims for expenses such as first class afares, five star accommodation and expensive courses," Swan explained.

Under the proposal, from 1 July 2014 these expenses will be capped annually at \$2000 per person - but the fringe benefits tax exemption for employers who provide education and training to their staff will be retained.

The changes are seen as potentially hitting conferences held by professional bodies where members personally pay to attend for continuing professional development purposes.

Hotels are also likely to be hurt during the off season when conferences typically help yields.

Accor appoints GM DUNCAN

Mars who has been part of the Accor Group for nearly ten years and previously



at Tasmania's historic Mercure Hadley's Hobart Hotel, has been appointed general manager of the new build Mercure Portsea Resort & Golf Course on Victoria's Mornington Peninsular.

Set to open on 1 June and currently being built alongside Portsea Golf Club as part of a fully integrated resort complex; Mars will be responsible for launching the Mercure hotel into the Victorian market.

AIPC 2013 keynote speakers

WHAT is being described as an exemplary line-up of speakers on the front line of transition and growth in South Africa, has been confirmed for the 2013 AIPC Annual Conference in Cape Town, this coming 1-3 July.

They will provide delegates with a comprehensive insight into how the country is emerging as a major factor in both the global economy and meetings industry.

"We have valuable lessons to learn from emerging economies as we all face the need to rethink the ways we do business, and South Africa offers important experiences in this regard" says AIPC president Edgar Hirt.

"The lessons from key leaders in this country will provide a context for sessions that will probe specifically into the role of meetings and centres today, and supply new ideas and insights for

all our delegates."

Amongst the key speakers are Wendy Luhabe, one of South Africa's most accomplished business icons and social entrepreneurs.

She will be speaking on the role of economic development in community advancement.

Daniel Silke, an independent political analyst specialising in South African and International politics, will speak on emerging economies in a global context, whilst Thebe Ikalafeng, widely recognised as Africa's leading authority, thought leader, advisor, commentator and author on branding and reputation leadership, will speak on how product branding, particularly in the case of an emerging product, can and does impact long-term marketing success and competitiveness.

TSANZ returns to DRW

THE final week of March saw Darwin welcomed the return visit of a major conference when the highly influential Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) returned for their Annual Scientific Meeting, just four years after their first visit in 2009.

The peak professional body of thoracic physicians, scientists and other health care professionals involved in respiratory health said that this year TSANZ's focus for the meeting was on the advances in research and treatment of lung disorders that affect one in four Australian families.

TSANZ ceo, Rita Perkins, said "The meeting attracted 773 TSANZ delegates, which was a very pleasing response given the distance of Darwin from other major capital cities in Australia".

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Talking the walk in Khao Lak

BUSINESS tourism planners are being offered a Boardroom Talks and Jungle Walks package by Ramada Khao Lak Resort, in Thailand as part of unrivalled experiences trekking through Khao Sok National Park and diving the waters around the Similan Islands.



Groups will enjoy a full day's use of the resort's fully serviced meeting rooms including a traditional Thai private lunch and gala dinner on Ramada's extensive lawn area by the beachfront, two nights' accommodation in the resort's opulent deluxe oasis rooms and a choice of a safari into Thailand's oldest and most wild national

park or a day spent basking on the Similan Islands' best-kept secret, Koh Tachai.

"Whether as a reward for outstanding performance, a bonding exercise to promote teambuilding, or just a great day out, our unique day trips around Khao Lak offer individuals and businesses a great way to mix business and pleasure," said Ramada Khao Lak Resort general manager, Michael Vorderleitner.

The package is available from 1 May to 30 September and is priced at THB4,400pp.

Toga's historic acquisition



THE historic Hotel Kurrajong, Canberra built in 1925 & designed by the chief Commonwealth architect J.S Murdoch, also responsible for the design of Old Parliament House, has been acquired by Toga, in conjunction with NRMA, a long standing partner of Toga Hotels.

The hotel, which will become known as the Travelodge Kurrajong, will continue to operate as Hotel Kurrajong until a significant internal refurbishment, within heritage guidelines, is completed.

Located in the suburb of Barton, it is close to Parliament House and a significant commercial and government office precinct.

The refurbishment works will include an expansion of the number of guest rooms and once complete, will continue to offer extensive conferencing facilities, including several function and meeting rooms.

Allan Vidor, md said, "Expansion in Canberra has always been high on Toga Hotels' agenda and this acquisition complements Toga Hotels' current growth strategy, along with our existing properties in the region."



PARIS' Le Bristol hotel, may have been no more than a bit player in Woody Allen's 2011 box-office hit, *Midnight in Paris*, but this had not stopped its lobby from "crawling with rich Americans," according to one couple who booked in for a sentimental return visit.

At first glance, he said he wouldn't have picked most of the guests as Allen fans, but a pugnacious gentleman arguing over his bill at reception was certainly a New Yorker.

"You mean," he asked, with appropriate incredulity and exasperation, "I pay over a thousand bucks for my room and then I have to pay extra for breakfast?" He hit the word *extra* as though he was delivering a Woody one-liner.

As it turns out, you do indeed have to pay more for breakfast - and the internet - but it comes with gold leaf.

The hotel isn't hiding from the film's fame - the movie plays continuously on its in-house movie channel and you can rent the suite that featured in the film for upwards of \$10,000 a night.



Carpet art, a walk over



PEOPLE have been walking all over what has been described as Australia's largest artwork, by respected Indigenous artist, Dorothy Napangardi.

The 2,000 square metres of artwork reproduced onto the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre's Plaza Ballroom carpet, was officially launched last week.

Taken from the painting, 'Sandhills' it was purchased by the Convention Centre from the artist for the specific purpose of recreating the artwork on carpet.

The Centre's director of operations, Geoff Hanrahan worked with local designer Carly Perkins to create this spectacular example of carpet art.

'Sandhills,' portrays the journey of ancestral women to the sacred salt lakes and sand hills of Mina Mina on the remote Northern Territory/Western Australia border.

Extraordinary meetings

RELAIS & Châteaux, which re-launched its Corporate Retreats program, e-brochure in 2012, has now expanded it to include 16 more hotels and restaurants.

These 84 exquisite and unique, high-end venues for meetings and conferences across Europe provide ideal environments for corporate clients and business leaders to conduct team-building events and creative exchanges in memorable alternative venues to standard hotel chains or function centres.

For instance, hold a business event in the neo-Gothic open-air amphitheatre of Borgo dei Conti Resort in the heart of Umbria, Italy, or in the medieval UNESCO-listed La Reserve hotel in the home-town of Toulouse Lautrec, France.

The 84 properties include 41 in France, 11 in Italy, nine in Switzerland, eight in Spain and Portugal, seven in Germany and Austria, six in the United Kingdom and Ireland, one in Malta and one in Greece.

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business events news

17th April 2013

MEA offers delegates a beer change

OKAY, we get that it can be hot in Darwin, but trucking in their own beer and cider brand, for the benefit of the MEA National Conference delegates, does seem a tad excessive.

It's all part of livening up the event by national audiovisual company Scene Change who will launch Scenechang, described as a refreshing premium lager ideally suited to consumption with finger food in the tropics.

The limited-edition beer, made purely for MEA conference delegates, will also include a matching premium cider.

While creating a new beer is unusual behaviour for an AV company, the owners of Scene Change are doing it "just because we want to."

"Our t-shirts have been a sought-after collectors item at the last five MEA conferences, and we felt the need to go a bit further," said Scene Change Australia co-founder Ian Whitworth.

"Darwin is all about the Asian influence, and about beer."

"The time is right for Scenechang," he insisted.



Scenechang t-shirts will be available for free as usual at the Scene Change exhibition stand.

Scene Change's Tasmanian office is hoping to take out their second national award in their category, having taken out the state AV award for the fifth consecutive year.

They will also be shooting an epic Scenechang ad during the conference using meeting industry talent who will be recruited at the conference.

More information available by emailing - iwhitworth@scenechange.com.au.

Air Pacific lands in Brisbane

ON Monday 22 April, Air Pacific's brand new Airbus A330 will land at Brisbane International Airport for the first time.

In celebration of this inaugural Australian flight, Air Pacific have released a range of sale fares with up to 30% off both economy and business class flights from Brisbane to Nadi.

Fares are available for travel from Monday 22 April to Saturday 15 June and include taxes, in-flight snacks, drinks, checked baggage and entertainment.



The Unique go to people

JORDI Camps co-founder and general manager of China a la Carta (**BEN 13** April), has appointed The Unique Tourism Collection as the first Australian representative of the privately owned, high-end inbound tour operator.

China a la Carta specialises in tailor-made itineraries for FIT, leisure and small group and incentive travel to China, Macau, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

See - www.uniquetourism.com.



Grays' Say

Peter Gray, managing partner of Motivating People, presents a regular *Business Events News* feature on current issues in the MICE industry.



SURPRISE, SURPRISE!

I was surprised to read in an article in the on-line newsletter, TravelMole, that "sales staff at many hotels in the Asia Pacific region are 'startlingly deficient' when it comes to the most basic elements of dealing with enquiries" for meetings and incentive travel rewards.

The article goes on to say that "sales staff failed to follow-up on 88% of proposals submitted".

I must say that these are not the experiences my company has had but perhaps this is because of the hotel groups in the region we recommend to our clients.

However, without making excuses for the 11% of hotels that failed to respond entirely, the 35 (out of 45) who didn't bother to contact the enquirer to find out whether there was any additional information or the 6 out of 10 that responded with a generic proposal, to some degree you get what you deserve.

If the original request for proposal (RFP) was not up to the job (and the article didn't provide information about that) then perhaps the hotel sales staff may have not taken the enquiry seriously.

But that is no excuse for not contacting the originator for more and better particulars.

The other reason that the results may have been so disappointing is the emergence of 'cloud-based' event management software.

In their efforts to make a

PCO's job easier, the developers of this type of software often provide databases of destinations, hotels, venues, etc. and enable an RFP to be sent to as many as the PCO chooses at the touch of a button.

This results in a large number of venues receiving the same RFP, often from a number of different PCOs.

In the 'good old days' a PCO would research which destinations and hotels matched the client's requirements - often from their own knowledge - and then create a detailed RFP which gave the sales staff at the selected venue a full picture of the group or project for which they were quoting.

An RFP should always provide information about the group as well as merely asking for guest-rooms, meeting rooms and F&B information.

What's the average age of the participants? What's the gender mix? How 'active' is the group

- would it be best to keep some participants where noise would not affect other guests?

The better detailed an RFP the more likely you are to get a response and always state a 'delivery' date.

Peter Gray can be contacted via email at - peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net.



CONTACT US:

Publisher Bruce Piper	Editor Jill Varley	Contributor/Coordinator Chantel Housler
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For advertising enquiries email Christie-Lee or Chantel email: advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au

P: 1300 799 220 F: 1300 799 221

PO Box 1010 Epping, NSW, 1710

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