



## So ho hum!

ULURU at sunrise, the wonders of Machu Picchu and sharing a sauna with half-naked



Swedes might be considered ordinary when pitted against News.com.au's Naked Traveller's more offbeat travel list.

Such as the promotion for the TV series *Alcatraz*, when a replica of the cells on "The Rock" were built and opened as a temporary hotel in London's Kings Cross last week.

Those lucky to secure a booking spent a night in lockdown, with an ex-guard from the US prison roaming the corridors for extra authenticity (no turn down service was offered).

Then there's the sold out M25 bus tour, where tourists enjoyed the highlights of London's 117-mile orbital motorway (sometimes known as the world's biggest car park for its gridlock conditions).

Alternatively, what about the Blackout Haunted House in New York? Held during Halloween, participants have to sign a waiver before entering the blacked out house to be confronted by naked actors, waterboarding and psychological mind games.

Or there's Hong Kong's Cheng Chau Bun Festival in May for those who have the uncontrollable urge to watch a group of men scramble up a 60-foot tower of steamed buns.

I prefer quieter pursuits! *Jill*

## The getting of wisdom



WITH a revised format, new floor plan, new seminar program, new speakers, new networking functions and a much broader and intense marketing plan, the 2013 Australian Business Events Expo organiser - Exhibitions and Trade Fairs (ETF) - is encouraging event businesses to register their interest in participation.

The Expo, to be held at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre (SCEC) will have over 200 exhibitors and 5,500 decision makers from the corporate events world in attendance.

Karen Krieger, event director, has made sure that the event is equipped with a whole new game plan to help buyers and sellers engage.

"ABEE has undergone a complete overhaul during its development this year.

"The intelligent place to meet' is the Expo's new theme, and will provide domestic and international visitors the unique opportunity to conduct business and experience a taste of what this great continent has to offer," Krieger said.

Incoming ceo of ETF, Gary Daly, said, "This year, ABEE will engage

all delegates by providing them with a memorable 'experience' of Australia.

"These unique experiences and touch points will ensure exhibitors forge stronger bonds with customers, roaming delegates and provide not-to-be-forgotten encounters."

Contact Karen Krieger, event director, ETF on 02 9556 7969 or visit the website at [www.abeexpo.com.au](http://www.abeexpo.com.au) for more info.

Visitor registrations FOR ABEE 2013 will open at the end of February.

## It's all about Sofitel

SOFITEL Luxury Hotels has announced plans to open four new properties in Asia Pacific this year, which brings Sofitel's regional portfolio to 42 hotels in operation.

The newbies are the Sofitel Shenyang Lido on Qingnian Street; Sofitel So Singapore, the first Sofitel hotel in Singapore located in a heritage building; Sofitel Bali Nusa Dua, a lavish beachfront retreat in Nusa Dua; and Sofitel Shanghai Jing'an, a 590-room flagship hotel in the fast-growing Chinese city.

## Spicer's goes to bed

EXPECT slippers, bathrobes and a comfy bed at this year's AIME when Spicers Retreats, Hotels & Lodges bed down for the event.

It's all because the team have opted to conduct meetings in bed under the canopy of a luxurious tent - evoking the great range of Spicers destination options.

Located at stand number 1706, visitors can rest tired feet with Kylie, Lisa and Alison, clad in their stylish robes and walk away in a pair of Spicers slippers!

## Carolyn is off to the One&Only, Palmilla

CONGRATULATIONS to Carolyn O'Neill from Incentive Events, who is the winner of *BEN's* DMS and Unique Venues competition to One&Only Palmilla, Mexico two weeks ago.

O'Neill has won three nights accommodation in a luxurious Beach Front Terrace Junior Suite including dinner for two at Aqua Restaurant.

This lavish Mexican resort is located on the Baja Peninsula and offers the gracious style of old Mexico with red tiled roofs, whitewashed walls and an idyllic setting.

Groups can take advantage of the properties outdoor reception areas and contemporary conference facilities including an executive boardroom.

Details on the resort online at - [destinationmarketing.com.au](http://destinationmarketing.com.au).

## 2013 DMS Annual Workshops

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## Meetings & Events Sales Lead - American Express

American Express is looking for a Sales Manager who will utilize strong collaborative and relationship building skills to leverage the channel resources of multiple American Express internal resources such as Client Management and Business Travel sales to grow pipeline and increase selling opportunities.

A prior background in Meetings and Events would be highly regarded.

For further information and to apply for this exciting new role, please click on the following link:

<http://jobs.americanexpress.com/job/Melbourne-Meetings-&-Events-Sales-Lead-AUS-Job/2304261/>





# business events news

6th February 2013

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AIME on stand 1322 for  
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## Get appy at AIME

**THE** organisers of this year's Asia-Pacific Incentives & Meetings Expo have today launched a new mobile App which will ensure attendees can access the latest information during the show.

The new mobile app, which is available for download by searching 'IBTM Events' in the various smartphone application stores, will include details of the full list of exhibitors and a full program of events running through the show.

Delegates will also be able to view appointment diaries and navigate the show floor, while the app links to social media conversations across Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to offer more online networking opportunities.

## Fancy a good knight?

**AFTER** being acquired by Castle Tourism and Entertainment a year ago, Ballarat's Kryal Castle has undergone a major redevelopment and is set to reopen on 2 March.

Peopled by medieval knights, dragons, wizards, kings, queens, princesses and fairies, Kryal Castle Adventure Park and Resort will recreate a legendary and mythical land of magical and medieval adventure.

On offer are a range of function spaces, from the Knights of the Round Table room for gatherings of less than 40 people, to the



Tyrants Tavern for 130 or up to 250 for cocktails.

Groups of 300 or so can be accommodated in the beautifully themed Marquee on the Arena.

Located within Kryal Castle are 17 fully refurbished, four star suites, decorated in period style with a contemporary twist, including beautiful French and Belgian tapestries.

See [kryalcastle.com.au](http://kryalcastle.com.au).



## crumbs!



**CAN** you dig it!

Fiji's Plantation Island Resort have an innovative al fresco fine dining option that puts diners in a freshly dug hole in the sand, complete with sand dining table and comfy cushions.

Costing just FJD200 to set up, this unique dining proposition is in big demand from convention and incentive organisers looking for that something a little different.

Resort staff prepared 20 sand tables for one recent group.

Subject to tide and weather conditions, you can find out more on [www.plantationisland.com](http://www.plantationisland.com).



## Easy riders feeling free in Nepal and India

**THE** chance for one rider to travel free is being offered by motorcycle expedition company Extreme Bike Tours, when 10 business or leisure group thrillseekers book on one of their adrenalin rides in the Himalayas or in Rajasthan.

The tours take licensed motorcyclists as well as pillion passengers on renowned Royal Enfield 500cc Bullet motorbikes, along rugged and twisting roads to remote, high altitude destinations and over some of the world's highest mountain passes.

Riders visit nomadic tribes, gushing waterfalls and ancient monasteries and camp in lunar-like, high altitude deserts surrounded by soaring, snow-capped peaks.

The special offer allows a saving of up to \$3,930 with up to 80% of riders who hit the road with the India-based Extreme Bike Tours Australian and almost two thirds of riders return for another trip



with the company which is owned by Englishman, Zander Combe.

"Our tours are a great way for groups to bond as they cope with the extreme altitude and environment in which we operate," Combe said.

## Events in paradise

**ACCOR** is tempting event organisers with a range of Tropical North Queensland 'Conference in Paradise' offers that includes one delegate package free for every 10 paid, complimentary delegate spa treatments, tea breaks, AV, resort credits and internet access.

The deal is available at a number of properties including Pullman Cairns International, Pullman Reef Hotel Casino and Pullman Palm Cove Sea Temple Resort & Spa.

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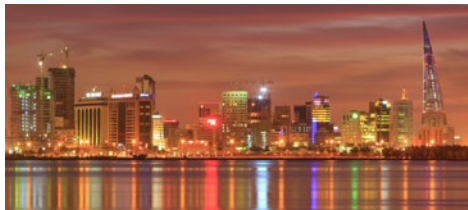






## Bahrain to exhibit at ATM

**THE** Kingdom of Bahrain is to have a strong presence at ATM (Arabian Travel Mart) this year as the government signs off on multi-billion dollar transportation



infrastructure plans and Manama launches its 2013 Arab Capital of Tourism calendar of events.

Major exhibitors include the Ministry of Culture, Gulf Hotel Bahrain and participating for the first time at ATM, Ramee Grand Hotel and Spa.

“Bahrain’s tourism mix covers multiple sectors from business travellers to leisure visitors entering via the King Fahd Causeway, which links Bahrain to Saudi Arabia, and international sports fans attending the annual F1 Grand Prix; and it’s exactly

this diverse market segmentation that is driving new demand and opportunities, supported by initiatives such as the recently launched 24-hour tourism information hotline,” said Mark Walsh, portfolio Director, Reed Travel Exhibitions.

Bahrain’s expansion program includes the international airport which is due to begin work this year and will boost passenger capacity to 13.5 million visitors according to HVS Dubai’s Q2 2012 Middle East Hotel Survey, and is due for completion in 2015.

## Spoilt for choice



**CONSIDERING** holding a conference in Hong Kong?

The Harbour Plaza 8 degress hotel could be the answer, with dining options within easy reach of the accommodation, and one large banquet room divisible to nine meeting rooms and more than 418sqm of spaces.

They are making a bid to be known as the hotel with the largest number of local restaurants within a few minutes walk from its foyer in Kowloon’s Tokwawan district.

Director of sales Billy Wan said the latest count shows there are more than 20 quality restaurants that cater for all tastes.

“That’s on top of the Café 8 Degrees and The Pool Bar & Garden Terrace within the hotel”.

And, if you ever get through this lot Hong Kong also has the cheapest restaurant in the world to have earned a Michelin star, the Tim Ho Wan in Mong Kok.

## Luxury Kimberley lodge option



**THE** Berkeley River Lodge, a luxurious property in the Kimberley, with conference and incentive facilities and panoramic Timor Sea and Berkeley River outlooks, has been firmly placed on the map for travellers since the Kimberley was named number 19 in the *New York Times’* 46 must see places.

Jodie Mott, the Lodge’s general manager said, “The Berkeley River Lodge is truly unique in the conference and incentive market.

“Accessible only by air or sea, we can accommodate up to 40 delegates in 20 luxury villas with exclusive use of our intimate ocean view conference room.”

It offers all the amenities, including a high resolution data projector, projection screen, white board, sound system, wi-fi internet access and coffee making facilities.”

Recreationally, the Lodge offers custom designed fishing tours, private helicopter tours to find the ultimate hidden natural freshwater pool, or to shower beneath secluded Kimberley waterfalls and even test your swing on their mangrove pitching range.



## In demand - Europe and Mexico

**AN** expansion to DMS’s destination offerings for its 2013 Workshops feature three new highly aspirational programs to Mexico, the Netherlands, Croatia and Montenegro.

According to DMS managing director Leila Bishara (formerly Fiedler), the new representation is part of the company’s strategy to assist the industry to readily capitalise on increased airline access and favourable currency exchange rates.

“The industry is looking for companies that can offer extremely competitive pricing structures, strong regional coverage and new and creative products and programs – and our three new DMCs can certainly satisfy these criteria,” Bishara said.

The three new DMCs are: *Tropical Incentives – Mexico*: Covers Mexico’s most exciting destinations

including Los Cabos, Puerto Vallarta, Cancun and Riviera Maya and Mexico City. They are the only DMC in Mexico with a \$US5 million insurance certificate.

*Performance Travel – Netherlands*: A small innovative agency, known for its outstanding client service and highly original programmes across the Netherlands.

*DT Croatia – Croatia and Montenegro*: These two countries are rising incentive destinations because of their compelling historical and cultural heritage such as UNESCO World Heritage listed city of Dubrovnik and exquisite Croatian Riviera and Islands.

For further information about the Workshops email - [Marissa.Fernandez@destinationmarketing.com.au](mailto:Marissa.Fernandez@destinationmarketing.com.au). or call 02 9368 1811.

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## Looking for a new challenge with an exciting new company?

Spencer Conferences & Events are looking for a dynamic, enthusiastic and well-connected sales person to join their team.

We want someone that has experience in the MICE industry, specifically sales and someone that can open doors to the right opportunities.

Don't delay, send your resume with a cover letter attention to Kahlia Ericson, [Kahlia@SpencerCE.com.au](mailto:Kahlia@SpencerCE.com.au).





## Six big wins for Melbourne

**VICTORIAN** minister for Tourism and Major Events, Louise Asher, this morning revealed "six major conferences" won by Melbourne, with a total estimated economic contribution of almost \$13 million.

Asher said that the events will attract about 3350 delegates to the Victorian capital over the next three years, making the announcement in the lead-up to Business Events Week which will take place 25 Feb-01 Mar.

The international conferences include the World Congress on Biosensors, 2014; the Asia-Pacific Diabetic Limb Problems Meeting 2014; SME Enterprise Software Technology and IT Solutions (SESTECH) 2014; the Ninth International Symposium

on Turbulence and Shear Flow Phenomena in 2015; the Annual Conference and Exhibition of the Asia-Pacific Professional Leaders in Education (APPLE) 2015; and the Asia-Pacific Orthopaedic Association Congress in 2016.

She said the wins highlight the importance of business events to the state.

"The inaugural Business Events Week will give the wider community an insight into the positive impacts like these have on the economy, our local industries and Melbourne's international profile," she said.

Business Events Week will coincide with the hosting of AIME at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, which will also host five of the six conferences.

## Trending to success



**THE** Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC) on Grey Street has exceeded initial first year expectations by chalking up 470 events including 58 conventions and hosting 73,000 delegates.

The five level boutique expansion, specifically designed to meet increased market demand for smaller and medium sized meetings, increased its total number of business events in the calendar year in 2012 by 28% over the previous year.

BCEC gm, Bob O'Keeffe said the boutique venue had been a catalyst for growth for the Centre.

"2012 was a year of transformation for us with achievements of expansionary growth across the entire Centre's operations.

"Many clients are seeking a

more intimate and personal experience when it comes to planning conferences for numbers of 500 delegates or fewer which now account for 70% of the market.

"Interest and bookings have far exceeded original targets and continue to do so," he said.

"Growth in conventions has more than doubled in the past five years with the trend set to continue with increased investment and innovation in both research and infrastructure," he said.

The momentum and lead up BCEC's selection as the official venue for the G20 Leaders Summit in 2014 is expected to have enormous impact placing the Centre, Brisbane and Australia at the very centre of international attention.



## Face to Face with...

### Kent Davidson, Mantra Group, Director of Sales



*Business Events News* recently caught up with Mantra Group's director of sales, Kent Davidson. In his current role Davidson oversees the sales and revenue function for the Group's 140 resorts, retreats and hotels under the Breakfree, Mantra and Peppers brands. Prior to joining the Mantra Group he was group general manager of sales at Peppers where he headed up the international, domestic and conference teams and was part of the Peppers Executive Committee.

#### What does your role entail?

I oversee all of Mantra Groups National Sales teams; as well as the MICE team that includes, corporate, international, trade, online etc. I also have regional teams that are out in the front line of the business working with GM's; then there's the trade reservations division that has more than \$100m in gross booking turnover. All in all, more than 100 staff that need to come to work with a clear understanding of their job roles & the motivation to execute effectively.

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

Priority management & staff management. I have a lot going on and problems can grow quickly if I leave areas untended for too long. I meet with all my senior staff weekly and dive into their areas so I understand what potential problems we may encounter, so we can address them proactively.

#### How do you inspire your team?

Mantra Group has built a culture of encouraging people to stretch themselves inside and outside of work....and I'd like to think our division has been at the fore of that. In the last year, as a team we have had people variously, run their first marathon, participated in triathlons, run

team races, put on charity events and launched amateur boxing careers. People who are active and challenge themselves tend to succeed and have positive effects on the people around them.

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

Absolute bonus...we have gone out of our way to ensure we have tech savvy people in all aspects of the business and ensure they spread their knowledge. New technology is a readymade competitive advantage if you are willing to embrace it.

#### What would you be doing if you weren't Group Director of Sales for Mantra Group?

Breeding Black Angus cattle and organic micro farming on the mid north coast of NSW.

#### What makes a great conference?

Throwing out the rule book and starting with a blank sheet. Most conferences follow the same formula of sessions, breakouts, morning tea, buffet lunch....shift your thinking I say, and find a venue and organiser that can help you do that. We pride ourselves on our venues and people thinking outside the square, we have run workshops for conference organisers with free thinkers like David Pointon from FAST Meetings, having people with this type of expertise really helps.

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