



## Flying high

I'VE a confession to make - I have been on one of Croydon Travel's



Antarctica Sightseeing Flights before, however the thrill of going once again last Sunday was a reminder of what a great reward or gift, flying over the world's last great wilderness really is.

On this one-day flight we travelled on a Qantas 747-400, in the 40-seat Premium Economy class cabin which is perfect for a small group buy out.

Onboard there are talks by expert lecturers who have spent time in the polar environment and video screenings depicting life on the ground.

Adding great moment to the event, Phil Asker founder and managing director of Croydon Travel was our flight manager for the day.

Newly gonged in the Australia Day awards with an OAM, Asker was cited for his service to the tourism industry and the community through his companies Croydon Travel and Captain's Choice Tours and with the Croydon Rotary Club.

Too much to tell in this small space but expect to learn more in **BEN** about getting your group up and flying on this icy adventure where your feet never get wet - Jill.



## Warning of skills shortage

A stern warning has been expressed by Linda Gaunt, chief executive officer of Meetings & Events Australia (MEA), prior to the launch of the inaugural Australian Events

Academy, a newly registered national training organisation dedicated to the education and training of students for the events industry – of an industry skill shortage in the Australian industry.

“We really need to train more people to improve the industry's overall competitiveness on the domestic and international stage,” Gaunt urged.

“It's a problem which must be solved sooner rather than later if we are to have the professionals to cope with the growing appeal for events and conferences and compete against other world markets.”

A large cross-section of corporate figures have been invited to the 21 February launch in Sydney – 6pm to 8pm, SMC Conference and Function Centre, 279 Castlereagh Street, Sydney.

Outlined will be how companies could benefit from such a fully accredited education training institution.

Available are a range of courses, from six and eight-week event management programs to customised training and



professional development training as well as an in-depth nine-month advanced diploma.

Echoing Linda Gaunt's views, AEA training manager John Wittingham said it was not enough to stage a conference or event where everyone received a warm glow from staging speakers, performers and many others.

Regarding the new academy and its benefit to the students, Wittingham said “We make sure that the students' training is readily transferable to their workplace - that it is experiential learning and they can readily apply it and get a practical benefit by learning it and doing it.”

Accompanying Wittingham in the AEA team is business development manager Olivia Wilson who will also be on hand to offer advice and assistance at the launch of the new specialist conference and events training college.

For more details contact AEA Student Services on (02) 9929 5400 or [training@a-e-a.edu.au](mailto:training@a-e-a.edu.au) further information on the training at - [www.australianeventsacademy.edu.au](http://www.australianeventsacademy.edu.au).

## MICE needed for Valentine's Day treat!

JC Travel Professionals in conjunction with La Sante Medi Spa in West Pennant Hills NSW are running a special online Valentine's Day deal.

Simply enter for your chance to win one of 10 Free \$50 gift vouchers.

Further details can be found on the website at [www.jctravel.com.au/valentines](http://www.jctravel.com.au/valentines).

## JQ exhibits at AIME

FOR the first time in five years, prior to further stamping their commitment to the MICE market, Jetstar will be exhibiting at AIME, revealed Kerryn Gonsalves Jetstar's sales executive – groups.

“Jetstar has realised the importance of the MICE market and spending money on such things as a booth at AIME and famil trips,” she said.

“We are also are planning on attending the MEA conference in Darwin and we have a second famil planned to Hamilton Island at the end of May.

“This past financial year we have been involved in a number of activities with more still to come, many of which we have either never done before or it has been a very long time since we have.

“All this is tied into our desire to grow our groups business.

“We now believe we have a really strong product with a dedicated team to look after groups,” Gonsalves concluded.

Find them on stand 2242.

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Visit us at AIME on stand 1522



# business events news

13th February 2013

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## Private jet to Wolgan

**TOUR**  
operator  
Bill Peach  
Journeys  
showcased  
its new  
Embraer  
jet to  
the MICE  
market  
last Friday,  
with the  
inaugural  
flight of



the aircraft taking a group from Sydney to have lunch at the swish Emirates Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa.

The Embraer 135LR enables groups of up to 36 to really travel in style, utilising private terminals and as a bonus it's able to operate after hours into airports which are affected by curfews.

The international range and high speed of the plane has also enabled a significant expansion of the Bill Peach Journeys product,

with the company offering a fabulous 18-day trip from Sydney to London, travelling in hops across the globe to enable passengers to tick some of the world's amazing sights off their bucket list.

**Pictured** above at Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa are, from left: Emma Prineas and Jan Musgrave, Bill Peach Journeys; Joost Heijmeyer, general manager Wolgan Valley; and Leann Cole, Offsite Connections.

## Resorting to elegance

A new layer of sophistication has been added to Nha Trang in Vietnam with the opening of an elegant beach resort, Amiana "on the bay", Nha Trang Vietnam.

The resort's gm, Duncan MacLean, an Australian, calls the property "an oasis of barefoot luxury."

It has 113 rooms, of which 22 are oceanfront villas, 16 2-bedroom apartments and 72 bungalow-style deluxe rooms.

There are three oceanfront pool villas with private pool, each of which is 340sqm and has three bedrooms, while the Amiana Conference Center has spectacular views and "the best location of any other conference or incentive venue in Vietnam," boasts MacLean.

Ideal for either indoor/outdoor receptions, dinners, theme evenings or cocktail parties, the indoor meeting & function rooms offer the ideal venue for meetings and ample space for individual functions for up to 700 people.



## crumbs!



**YEAR** of the snake bite.

As undeserved as the snake's reputation might be, the Year of the Snake did not go well in its last two years: 2001 was the year of the September 11 attacks and 1989 was when Chinese forces crushed pro-democracy protests around Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

"The snake sign is a symbol of fear," said Taiwanese astrologer Tsai Shang-chi.

"People get scared when they see or hear the snake."

However, Hong Kong feng shui master Raymond Lo is largely upbeat.

He believes much-needed liquidity will be injected into struggling world economies, and that babies born during the next 12 months will be both self-motivated and agile.

A downer though - he warned there could also be massive flooding and tsunamis.

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# business events news

13th February 2013

## LATAM targets groups

**SOUTH** American carriers LAN and TAM Airlines, which merged late last year to form LATAM Airlines Group, will make a concerted push for the Australian MICE market by exhibiting at AIME under the new brand.

Eleven operators from South America will also participate, with the carriers' marketing manager Johanna Raeder, saying that the merger has significantly strengthened their offering, with the industry seeing a lot of potential to attract more groups from our region.

"With a South American network this comprehensive, LATAM has an exceptional offering for the MICE market," she said, with AIME participants including operators from Chile, Peru, Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil and Bolivia.

They'll promote product ranging from cruises, hotels and ground operators on stand 3724.

LAN Airlines, which is a member of the **oneworld** alliance

along with Qantas, operates six one-stop flights per week between Sydney and Santiago via Auckland, as well as codesharing on QF's three nonstops.

In-flight product includes state-of-the-art flat-bed seating in business class, personal in-flight entertainment screens and Salvatore Ferragamo amenities.

Raeder added that LATAM's network offers easy connections to inspiring post-touring and incentive options such as Machu Picchu, Iguaza Falls and the Galapagos Islands.

Get ready for AIME by advertising your company in Business Events News

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## Splash into this offer

**WITH** daily Fitzroy Island transfers available, Sunlover Reef Cruises is offering great specials on their fast, air-conditioned catamarans to their spacious outer reef activity pontoon at Moore Reef.

The special group rate is \$119pp, a saving of \$71.

In addition - one person goes free per 10 paying passengers, one free soft drink voucher per person; free use of Lycra suits if required and a 20% discount off Seawalker Helmet Diving and Introductory Diving - email [salesmgr@oceangroup.com.au](mailto:salesmgr@oceangroup.com.au).

## MEA conference 2013

**THE** 'MEA splits program into 5' story featured in (**BEN** 8 Feb) incorrectly states that the MEA 26th National Conference will take place at Skycity Darwin 4-7 May.

This should read the Darwin Convention Centre.

For more information about the conference visit - [www.meaevents.com.au/darwin](http://www.meaevents.com.au/darwin).



## Ten sparkling destinations to visit

**THIS** year Crystal Cruises are offering their well-travelled guests a list of 'Top 10' surprising travel opportunities that stretch from Asia to Antarctica.

There are also travel experiences that offer 'grist for the mill' for organisers looking for new destination ideas or cruise options for their corporate and incentive clients.

**Málaga, Spain:** the lesser known neighbour to Madrid and Barcelona named by *Departures* magazine as one of the world's most "under the radar" destinations.

**New England/Canada:** especially in spring, when the more familiar autumn foliage is traded for spectacular spring blooms and landscapes.

**Yalta, Ukraine:** the rugged, mountainous Crimean peninsula and lush forest by 4x4 or horseback provide a picturesque contrast to the historic urban landscape for which the city is known.

**Hong Kong, China:** an invigorating hike through the lush Dragon's Back Trail for an escape from the bustling Central District.

**Oslo, Norway:** an Olympian's view from the wheel bob track in Lillehammer.

**Sainte Agnès, France:** a French Riviera jaunt to the highest coastal village in Europe with breathtaking

views and much medieval charm.

**Edinburgh, Scotland:** tracing the steps of the centuries-old tale connecting the Knights Templar to the Grail, and visiting sites featured in *The Da Vinci Code*.

**St. Petersburg, Russia:** an interactive look at Russia's modern art - an alternative to the city's famous palaces and classical museums.

**Padua, Italy:** a bird's eye view of Italy's second most ancient city from hot air balloon.

**Reykjavik, Iceland:** Trekking across Icelandic lava fields riding one of the country's characteristic small horses.

## Jetstar to fly to Ayers Rock

**THIS** week, Qantas announced that it is about to make changes to its operations to the Northern Territory, including the replacement of Qantas flights between Sydney and Ayers Rock by Jetstar planes.

The change will see Jetstar fly directly to Ayers Rock for the first time, with four weekly A320 services effective from Tuesday 4 June.

This route will be the airlines 19th domestic destination - [www.jetstar.com](http://www.jetstar.com).

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# business events news

13th February 2013

## Tourism Portfolio debuts at AIME 2013

**SYDNEY-BASED** Tourism Portfolio is making its first appearance at AIME this year.

Created in 2002 by Donna Kessler, with more than 20 years working with some of the world's most prestigious hotel brands, Tourism Portfolio boasts a broad collection of five-star MICE clientele in Australia, including The Byron at Byron Resort and Spa and Emirates Wolgan Valley Resort and Spa.

Representing a growing list of international destinations and event specialists across Africa, Europe, Asia, the Middle East and the Americas, the award winning company also includes the US-based Lizard IncentEvents, which will share Stand 1708 with Tourism Portfolio at AIME.

## A taxing time

A statement issued from Mike McCarthy, president and ceo Hawaii Tourism Authority, said he does not support a proposed increase of Hawaii's transient accommodation tax (TAT) beyond the current 9.25%.

The additional tax he said would negatively affect Hawaii's competitive position in the marketplace and cause them to lose momentum in the significant gains in visitor arrivals & spending experienced over the past 3 years.

"Instead of increasing the TAT, we believe that by investing in opportunities to maintain market share and diversify our tourism profile in the leisure, meetings, conventions and incentive markets to our established and emerging major market areas, we can generate greater revenue that will benefit the entire state.

"We will also continue our efforts to maintain and expand airlift and neighbour island distribution, improve the cruise ship arrival program, build on the experiential assets of our people, place and culture, and support career development for our youth - all of which are an investment into the state," he said.

## Yokohama's 2013

**THE** Yokohama Convention & Visitors Bureau (YCVB) reports having won a number of major international meetings scheduled for this year.

It's a list that includes the 5th Tokyo International Conference on African Development - TICAD, the second time for the city, with more than 3,000 attendees expected to converge in Yokohama.

TICAD will take place from 1-3 June at PACIFICO Yokohama.

In addition there's the 28th Int'l Congress of Chemotherapy and Infection, the 12th International Wheat Genetics Symposium, and the 12th Annual World Congress of the Human Proteome Organisation - HUPO2013, estimated to bring some 2,000 delegates from 14-18 September.

tony wragg's

# techtalk

Technology made simple for small business

## Mobile payment technology gains momentum

**HOW** would you like to pay for that? Not so long ago, this question had two answers: cash or card. Not any more.

Customers can now 'check in' on their credit-card enabled phone, or hover their credit card over a scanner.

But as companies compete to win the point-of-sale battle, payment innovations will move consumers further away from the worlds of cash and plastic and onto mobile payments.

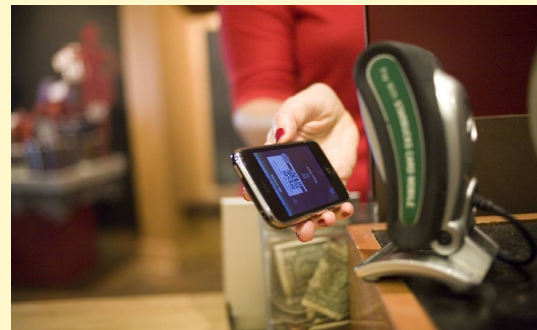
With 64 per cent of Australians owning smartphones, mobile analysts are predicting the mobile payment industry will be worth almost \$50 billion worldwide by 2014.

The newest competitor in the mobile payment battlefield is PayPal, which is predicted to earn \$10 billion in global mobile transactions this year.

Late last year, the online payment company's first in-store payment app was activated.

Customers who have a PayPal account can download the app, sign in with their account details and "check in" to the store they are visiting using GPS technology.

They can order their bread or coffee at the counter and then pay on their PayPal app via



few taps on their phone.

But the transaction doesn't stop there.

When the customer checks in to the store, the retail worker can see their customer's face on a screen and their full purchase history.

Mr Christie said there were "at least 20" retailers, including cafes and fashion stores, using the PayPal app, which he refers to as a "digital wallet".

But PayPal is not alone in implementing innovative ways for customers to pay.

In August, MasterCard and Westpac started the first trial of their mobile technology called "tap and go".

Customers can hover the back of their mobile phone (fitted with a SIM card that contains their credit-card details) over a scanner that operates as a "virtual debit card".

*Story adapted from an article in Sydney Morning Herald.*

To check out the latest tech news for small business visit: [www.tonystechtalk.com.au](http://www.tonystechtalk.com.au).



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(in 25 words or less)

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