



Blood and fireworks



16 pylons have been sunk into Sydney Harbour to form the platform, for the staging of Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour: Carmen, which opens Friday 22 March for three weeks only.

Promising to be a spectacular event, as La Traviata was last year, the Spain-meets-Hollywood stage that appears to float on Sydney Harbour will be adorned with the giant letters of Carmen, spot-lit by lighting towers on and around the main stage.

Spectacular effects such as a life-sized slaughtered bull, fireworks and dancers whirling in dazzling flamenco costumes will combine with some of the world's best opera talents hailing from all parts of the world.

Each night an audience of 3,000 will be seated at the edge of The Royal Botanic Gardens, where tapas, paella, Spanish BBQ and cocktails will be quaffed in luxury as the drama of Carmen unfolds beneath the stars.

MEANWHILE today's issue of **Business Events News** also features stories on the four travel effects that will shape the Australian travel and tourism industry, Johannesburg's newest business hotel, The Maslow, Port Stephens Tourism's change of name to Destination Port Stephens and a Getting to know on Disneyland Resort California - Jill.

Amadeus shapes the future



RESEARCH into the big four travel effects that will shape the Australian travel and tourism industry has been released by leading travel technology partner, Amadeus in partnership with Frost & Sullivan.

Titled, "Shaping The Future of Travel: the big FOUR travel effects", the report numbers the challenges in remaining relevant as a travel destination over the next 20 years.

Emerging markets such as China, India and Indonesia will drive the growth in travel in Asia Pacific over the period to 2030 and will dominate traveller numbers.

A summary of these challenges are *The Me Effect*: The fragmentation of the travel market into ever-increasing niche, which showed that the independent traveller is a continuing trend in Australia.

The Red Tape Effect: The breaking down of barriers to travel within the Asia Pacific region, in areas such as the liberalisation of visa requirements and boost of business travel to these countries, resulting in huge

growth in numbers, especially from emerging economies.

The Leapfrog Effect: Technology, infrastructure and behaviours in the Asia Pacific region will leapfrog ahead of those elsewhere.

Beyond information technologies, massive roll-outs of transport technologies and infrastructure developments in the region such as 4G, high speed rail (HSR) and port upgrading and building.

The Barbell Effect: Growth will occur particularly at the upper and lower ends of the travel market, doubling in Asia Pacific destinations over the period to 2030.

Mark Dougan, managing director of Research, Frost & Sullivan said "We wanted to paint a broad yet perceptive view on the future of travel in Asia Pacific.

"We hope the study will stimulate discussion and debate on these developments and what needs to be done to effectively respond to these changes."

For a copy of the report visit - apacwhitepapers.amadeus.com.

Luxperience at Sydney Town Hall

THE Thought Leaders Program and Welcome Cocktail Party during Luxperience 2013 will be hosted at Sydney Town Hall.

The partnership which also includes Restaurant Associations is an opportunity for the iconic Hall to showcase its venue to buyers, specialist wholesalers, high-end retail agents, bespoke travel designers and corporate planners from Australia and the world.

500 delegates will be able to see first hand Sydney Town Hall's Centennial Hall



during the Thought Leaders Program and Welcome Cocktail Party on 1 September and more information will be available to those who attend Luxperience over 2 - 4 September when Sydney Town Hall exhibits at the event at the Overseas Passenger Terminal.

"Sydney Town Hall will use Luxperience to target companies and groups who are looking for a prestigious location for their corporate event or incentive in Australia," said Pamela Theophilou, sales and events manager at Sydney Town Hall.

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Tented pool villa special offer

A private island escape, the Banyan Tree Madivaru, on the secluded North Ari Atoll in the Maldives, is ideal for groups looking for absolute privacy and seclusion.

Here six luxury tented villas just steps from a pristine beach, feature plunge pools.

Designated for the use of groups of up to 18, meals are served whenever and wherever on the island, enabling guests the flexibility of their own schedule.

Valid from now till 30 September, the resort has a Private Island package priced from US\$9,420 ++ per night for accommodation in six tented pool villas.

The rate includes full board for up to 18 people, meals for two people, dining set-up on the beach, in the villa or at the resort's restaurant.

It also includes a dedicated personal host for each villa, and scheduled excursions to nearby islands, marine and sea sport activities.

Email bookings to - reservations-banyantree.com.

Fifty shades of Maslow

LIANNE
Kelly-Maartens international sales & marketing manager – Australia SE Asia & Korea, Sun International was in Sydney last week to introduce The Maslow, a new



4-star business hotel located in the heart of Johannesburg's Sandton business district.

Setting the scene for The Maslow, a hotel described as redefining what it means to host a conference or meeting in Sandton, the event was held at Sydney's hip new QT hotel.

Explaining the hotel's design and its monochromatic colour, Kelly-Maartens said, "It's 50 shades of grey but only in colour – what it's all about is 50 shades of experience."

With an interconnected conference centre, The Maslow's spacious facilities are able to accommodate up to 600 people.

There's a multi-divisible 491sqm ballroom, a smaller 219sqm salon

250sqm pre-assembly function area and a 50-seater auditorium.

In addition, 12 separate meeting rooms and a space called the Incubator, provide an area where ideas can be formulated and strategies decided.

"Our focus is on service excellence, quality conference and meeting rooms and over 30 years of experience in hosting meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions.

"It's where you should be, when you are planning your next event," she said.

Pictured above from left are: Elizabeth Penteado, Marianna Berzi, Qantas Group Sales and Tim Clyde-Smith, South African Airways.



BETHNAL Green Travelodge, a 131-room, £11million hotel has been built above the Backyard Comedy Club - which over the years has hosted many well-known comedians.

To mark the opening Travelodge has introduced loo laughs – a toilet roll printed with a selection of funny jokes and cartoons to keep customers entertained in the loo.

A survey of 2,000 Britons on reading in the smallest room revealed that just under half (49%) like to read on the toilet.

Eight out of ten respondents stated reading on the loo alleviates boredom and three quarters of adults thought loo roll printed with jokes was a good idea.

Rent a Resort For Exclusive Events



Club Med
GROUPS & INCENTIVES

Metro Ipswich deals

IPSWICH, 40 minutes South-East of Brisbane offers a semi-rural destination for groups who might want to get involved in outdoor pursuits.

The choice of which includes such things as hot air ballooning, messing about in canoes, visiting wineries by helicopter and a range of team-building exercises.

The Metro Hotel Ipswich has affordable conference packages at \$223pp, per day for a minimum of 15 delegates.

The package includes – one night stay with breakfast, lunch, morning and afternoon teas and use of the conference room facilities and standard equipment.

A day delegate package is also available at \$59 or half day at \$51.

Email - fedney@metrohg.com.

WIN a two night stay at O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat



This week **BEN** is giving one reader the chance to win two night's accommodation in a luxurious self contained villa for up to four people, a wine tasting at Canungra Valley Vineyards and early morning bird walk valued at over \$1,000 courtesy of **O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat, Villas, Lost World Spa and Conference Centre**.

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Port Stephens to grow conference business

A plan to build the Port Stephens brand and adopt a whole-of-industry approach to growing the region's \$377 million tourism industry has resulted in Port Stephens Tourism changing its name to Destination Port Stephens.

Taking a more holistic approach with a new focus on fostering collaborations in the wider business community, this includes facilitating product development and investment and attracting more business events and conferences to the region.

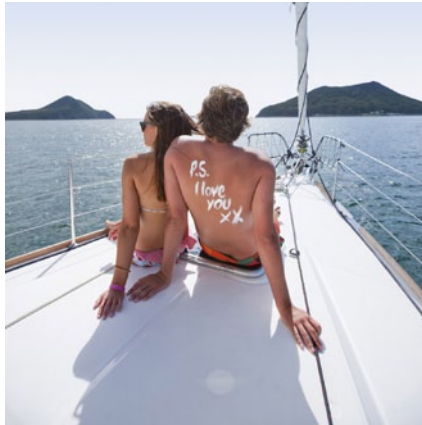
Currently drawing 1.2 million domestic visitors each year and another 127,000 from overseas who together inject \$377 million into the local economy, the aim is to boost tourism yield by attracting more visitors outside peak holiday periods and increasing the length of stay.

Destination Port Stephens chairman, Michael Aylmer, said the name change is part of a five year plan to build a unique brand for Port Stephens, one that embraces and benefits the whole community.

"Rather than just marketing the region, Destination Port Stephens will aim to build a local sense of



I love you xx



ownership of brand Port Stephens so that locals and business operators alike are working together to make Port Stephens an even more compelling place to live and invest in and visit.

"Our task is to build supply and grow demand, particularly for conference business and visitation outside Christmas, Easter and school holidays," he said.

See - www.portstephens.org.au.

China's Jade Riverside Resort

STERLING Design a collection of independent hotels and a brand of the Preferred Hotel Group has announced its latest member in Asia Pacific, Purple Jade Riverside Resort.

Located near Chang Bai Shan Mountain, northeast of China, and famous for growing of wild ginseng, the 117-room resort is surrounded by a natural and pristine environment.

In addition, there is approximately 500 square metres of meeting space, six food and beverage facilities including an Ice Bar, where guests can enjoy drinks in an igloo.

Other facilities include a fitness centre, heated indoor swimming pool, and an outdoor snow spa with eight large and small bubble pools.

Monaco wows MICE market



PURPOSE built for the MICE market, the Principality of Monaco may be one of the smallest countries in Europe with an area of just two square kilometres, is able to host group sizes in their thousands.

Reportedly to be 30% cheaper than London and Paris, Monaco's MICE market has grown exponentially over the past 12 months, regional director of the Monaco Government Tourist & Convention Authority (MGTC) Alison Roberts-Brown told **BEN** last week at a function in Sydney.

"Both leads and confirmed business have grown" with companies ending there "aversion" to luxury travel and realising the "value proposition" of Monaco due to the strength of the Australian dollar Roberts-Brown added.

The Principality offers indoor and outdoor function spaces as well as 3,000 hotel rooms within its nine main hotels and smaller hotel options.

All hotels have meeting facilities with the biggest property, the Fairmont Monte Carlo, featuring 602 rooms and suites offering views of the Mediterranean Sea or tranquil gardens and 18 functions rooms.

Monte Carlo SBM's four hotels - Hotel de Paris, Hotel Hermitage, Monte Carlo Bay Hotel & Resort and Monte Carlo Beach - have 836 rooms between them 33 bars and restaurants, 60 meeting and banquet rooms that can accommodate up to 1,000 delegates, as well as other features including five casinos, 23 tennis courts and an 18 hole golf course.

The Monaco Convention Bureau is able to handle the coordination of the MICE market and there are a number of DMC's who are able to organise any kind of out of the box activity that a company might

want.

Activities in Monaco include perfume making, wine tasting, sea and land adventure activities and so much more - see visitmonaco.com.

The Monaco delegates are **pictured** include Guillaume Rose, president and Alison Roberts-Brown, MGTC and Jean-Francois Gourdon, director Australia Monaco Tourist Authority.

Japan's tsunami recovery

JAPAN National Tourism Organization (JNTO) has released preliminary inbound visitor numbers for 2012 that are based on arrivals of Australian passport holders and include business, leisure and stopover visitors.

Australian arrivals have reached a total of 206,600, 27% (44,022 people) increase compared to 2011.

January 2013 alone saw a total of 31,700 Australians visit the country, which is the highest number on record.

This was an increase of 42.6% (or 9,500 people) compared to the same month in 2012.

The figure also surpassed the 30,689 people in January 2011, which was the highest number of Australian visitors at the time.

Overseas arrivals across all markets in 2012 were up 34.6% from previous year, to 8.4million.

The weak yen makes Japan an attractive and cost effective travel destination for Australians, where they can get the most for their dollar.

JNTO's executive director, Hiroshi Kuwamoto commented "Now is a great time to visit Japan. Not only can you get more yen for your dollar, but also Japan is entering spring, a great season to visit with beautiful cherry blossoms and fine weather."



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Marriott looms large

THE largest hotel ballroom on Hong Kong Island at 736 square metres and accommodating up to 1,000 guests can be found at the JW Marriott Hotel Hong Kong.

In total the hotel offers 1,117 sqm of meeting and conference space and comprises of 15 modern function rooms on the ground floor, 3rd and 30th floor.

Equipped with the latest technology infrastructure, including high-speed wired and wireless internet connectivity, cutting-edge lighting and audio-visual facilities, a spacious foyer provides an ideal setting for pre-dinner welcome drinks and coffee breaks.

The Executive Meeting Suites provides venues for a cocktail reception for 30 and boardroom set-up for 18, complemented by views of the Victoria Harbour and city skyline.

Houston part of BestCities

BESTCITIES

Global Alliance, a unique partnership among nine top convention cities - Berlin, Cape Town, Copenhagen, Dubai, Edinburgh, Houston, Melbourne, Singapore and Vancouver, report that Houston the only city in the United States that is a member of the BestCities Global Alliance, is one of the friendliest for international meeting planners in the United States.

The city boasts more than 70,000 hotel rooms and two convention centres - the George R. Brown Convention Center and Reliant Park – that work side-by-side with the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau (GHCVB).

Located in the southern United States, Houston is the 4th largest city in the country and



its main airport, George Bush Intercontinental (IAH) connects Houston to the world via 70 international non-stop flights plus an additional 110 non-stop domestic flights.

The city is home to NASA and the largest medical centre in the world, the Texas Medical Center who specialise in helping the meeting planner connect with those sectors by helping to locate potential speakers, sponsors and technical tours that can help enhance a conference held in the city.

The New York Times ranked Houston No. 7 on its list of the 46 places world-wide to visit in 2013.



Getting to Know: Disneyland Resort California

by: Jenny Piper

ON a recent trip to the USA, I had the privilege of staying a few nights at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim. Although I was there for leisure, I couldn't help but notice an elegant looking cocktail party taking place near my room. On further examination I discovered the extensive meeting facilities that the hotel has. When most people think of Disneyland they think of holidays, but the Disneyland Resort in fact offers a huge array of conferencing, meeting and event options.

Disneyland Resort consists of three hotel properties, the Downtown Disney shopping and dining precinct, and two theme parks - the world famous Disneyland, and the newer California Adventure. All of the hotels offer function space so can cater for both small and large numbers of delegates. The *Disneyland Hotel* has 975 guest rooms and a massive 12,000sqm of flexible indoor/outdoor function space. This includes various ballrooms, an exhibit hall, 26 flexible breakout rooms and 18 meeting rooms. The hotel in 2012 opened two new event lawns for meal functions and receptions, one which includes a permanent outdoor stage. The spaces are suitable for small groups of 10 through to large groups of 1000.

Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel, also in close walking distance of the theme parks and Downtown Disney, has 481 guest rooms and about 2000sqm of indoor/ outdoor function space available, including a poolside event area. It has a casual beach boardwalk ambience, and after a day of meetings attendees can relax in the rooftop pool or experience the rollercoaster inspired waterslide.

The grandest of the hotels is *Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa*. It is located adjacent to California Adventure, with its own private entrance to the park. Its 948 guest rooms with added extras make it an attractive option for business travellers. The hotel has about 1800sqm of function space including a ballroom and an outdoor space set within an attractive redwood grove.

All hotels have pools and restaurant facilities, as well as easy access to Downtown Disney with its array of restaurant options.

The beauty of choosing the Disneyland Resort is of course access to 'the happiest place on Earth', a great drawcard for delegates and their families. The unique attraction of Disneyland is the ready made themeing. Parts of the parks are available for private group events eg. the new Cars Land. Disney's dedicated convention team can organise customised entertainment, menus and much more, as well as special theme park tickets.

