



A real eye opener

I was talking to Robin Mould, groups & incentives senior executive



at Egencia last week about a 'Grow a Mo and win a Cunard cruise, Movember promotion in **BEN's** sister publication, **Travel Daily**, last year.

Robin had entered and won a two-night cruise on the Queen Mary 2 from Brisbane to Sydney with his answer to the question - *what you would look forward to the most, sailing onboard Cunard's iconic ocean liner Queen Mary 2 or elegant Cunarder Queen Victoria.*

"Cruising on any of the Cunard sisters, would be a classy affair, indulgent, sophisticated, and totally an unforgettable trip of a lifetime," he wrote.

As Robin then admitted to me, "It really opened my eyes.

"No one wearing thongs and people change for dinner.

"I never knew you could do a two or three night cruise as part of a world wide trip.

"Most people think you have to travel from Southampton or on a longer leg.

It's a perfect idea for a group but of course it would have to be booked well ahead" he added.

Enjoy today's issue - Jill.

Government funded tourism projects announced

THE Minister for Tourism, Martin Ferguson AM MP has announced the first round of the Tourism Industry Regional Development Fund (TIRF) Grants Program that will see 65 tourism projects offered \$13.1 million in government funding, with a total investment value over \$141 million.

"The funded projects will deliver a wide range of projects, including new and upgraded accommodation, innovative new attractions for visitors – such as water parks, playgrounds, agri-tourism ventures, wilderness camps and adventure trails - and new conference and function facilities," Minister Ferguson said.

Successful projects relevant to the business events industry and spread across Australia include: A new conference centre at Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley, with a capacity for 1200 guests.

The School House, Crackenback, Snowy Mountains will build a multi-functional training and event venue, co-located in the Pender Lea Post Office & chalets.

A new adventure attraction will be built in Wyong Creek, NSW - the world's longest and Australia's first roller coaster flying fox.

Crowne Plaza Alice Springs room refurbishment to improve the quality of its 235 rooms.

The construction of Mt Barney Lodge Eco Basecamp - located at the foothills of the Mount Barney National Park, Qld will deliver dining and conference facilities.

A refurbishment to the Maheno restaurant and kitchen facilities at Kingfisher Bay Resort, Fraser Island.

The redevelopment of the Barramundi Discovery Centre in Karumba Qld to support the construction of a new interpretive centre with café, fishing lake, community event venue and a small conference facility.

Peppers Cradle Mountain Lodge facilities upgrade - including the refurbishment of its reception, restaurant, guest lounge and meeting facilities.

Comfort Inn Sovereign Hill will renovate six motel rooms and spaces to create facilities for meetings and conferences.

The Cable Beach Club Resort and Spa in Broome will add capacity to the resort's current conference facilities to enhance its international conferences, exhibitions and events.

The Forte Cape View Apartments in Busselton, WA will construct a new conference facility which will meet the growing conferences and events market and complement the extensive work already undertaken.

Flaming heck – 10 years!

AFTER its temporary closure and annual refurbishment, Flames of the Forest, tucked away in a fairy tale pocket of Port Douglas rainforest, has marked 10 years of operation.

Commenting on the occasion, Flames' sales and marketing manager Natalie Johnson said, "A decade of creating special events is such a significant milestone for us and one that we are keen to celebrate.

"In that time over 60,000 leisure and business guests have dined in our special pocket of candle lit rainforest.

"From a corporate perspective, it is safe to say that our delegates have experienced something completely unique," she said.

The 2013 refurbishment has included the updating and installation of decorative lighting, including an increased number of bud-light stars and thorough overhaul of the bathrooms.

Also updated is the menu and dining options with executive chef David Spencer upping the presence of tropical produce.

BEN competition

BUSINESS Events News is this week offering readers the chance to stay for two night at O'Reilly's Rainforest Retreat, Villas, Lost World Spa and Conference Centre in a self contained villa for up to four people plus more see **page 3**.



NOVOTEL WOLLONGONG NORTHBEACH
WINTER RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE SPECIAL
 Accommodation + Breakfast + Internet
 from \$179 per delegate!*

Enjoy flexible event space featuring natural light, stunning ocean views & unique catering options.

Contact the Novotel Sales Team on (02) 4224 3111 or email H1654-sb3@accor.com

www.novotelnorthbeach.com.au



MERCURE GERRINGONG RESORT BY THE SEA
AUTUMN/WINTER CONFERENCE SPECIAL
 Accommodation + Breakfast +
 Day Delegate Package. \$229 per delegate.*

Admire stunning landscaped gardens, the ideal South Coast conference venue with gorgeous views from the mountains to the sea!

Contact the Mercure Sales Team on (02) 4234 1359 or email sales@mercuregerringong.com.au

www.mercuregerringong.com.au

*Terms & Conditions apply

Launching soon

TRAVEL enchilada

Exclusive events | Connected People | Unique Opportunities

Australia's first business and social community for the key players of the Travel & Tourism industry.

SIGN UP FOR YOUR EXCLUSIVE INVITATION



business events news

20th March 2013



crumbs!

WITH the UN's International Day of Happiness being celebrated throughout the world today, 20 March, an independent survey commissioned by Tourism Fiji has thrown a spanner into the proverbial works, revealing that the majority of Australians do not consider Australia to be a happy place.

The current Government and economy, a lack of holidays and the current high cost of living are the reasons given.

59% of Baby Boomers are more pessimistic than Generation Y.

57% of Gen Y do think the population is happy overall.

81% of Australians of all age-groups who don't perceive Australia to be a happy place mainly blame the current economy and high cost of living.

The majority surveyed (55%) said a holiday would make them happier than more sex and romance (38%).

"While Australia has traditionally been considered the 'lucky country', it is clear that many Australians do not feel a personal state of happiness," said Paresh Pant, regional director of Tourism Fiji.

"The survey reveals that taking a holiday is a way of improving one's state of happiness and we encourage Australians to visit Fiji - where happiness finds you," he said.

Fiji beat a list of 58 countries in 2011, which found Fijian people to be the happiest in the world.



Shop 'til you drop



TWO of Accor's newest hotels in Thailand, the Mercure Bangkok Siam and Ibis Bangkok Siam, are located just metres from the city's MBK shopping centre

With the city's best shopping, dining and entertainment venues just a few steps away, the newly-built hotel complex features 189 rooms each in the Ibis and Mercure for a total of 378 international-standard rooms.

Special opening rates from around AU\$40 plus taxes for Ibis and AU\$65 plus taxes at Mercure, mean guests can enjoy a brand new hotel in an uptown location at downtown prices.

With increasing demand for quality affordable accommodation in the Thai capital, these hotels will provide the ultimate convenience for shopaholics, with the city's best shopping, dining and entertainment venues just a few steps away.

"Although they share one building, Mercure Bangkok Siam and Ibis Bangkok Siam are two different hotels, each of which has been uniquely designed with modern facilities and attractive room rates," says Simone Hansen, gm Mercure Bangkok Siam & Ibis Bangkok Siam.

For more information or to make a booking at the properties visit www.mercure.com and www.ibishotel.com/thailand.

Advertise in BEN

- Cost Effective • Targeted • Easy

For details call us today:
1300 799 220



Geelong makes it easy

AFTER unveiling their new website at AIME last month, following months of research into its development, Business Events Geelong has developed a new request for proposal (RFP) function which has been targeted towards, both a first time event planner right through to an experienced PCO/event planner.

The function has been put in place to educate event planners on what the Geelong and Great



Ocean Road region has to offer and then to assist them in finding a venue, accommodation and incentive activity suitable to their event.

Once the RFP is submitted it is sent to the team at Business Events Geelong, where contact is made with the venues on behalf of the event planner.

A free service, it is available to anyone wishing to enquire about an event through the Business Events Geelong website www.businesseventsgeelong.com.au.

Year of the horse

CONTINUING its history of delivering quality, professional services, Royal Randwick will open its much anticipated, five level Grandstand and outdoor tiered amphitheatre known as the 'Theatre of the Horse,' in August.

The new facilities multi-purpose Grandstand for trade shows, gala dinners, conferences and product launches, is set within more than 81 hectares and offers some 15 unique indoor/outdoor event areas able to provide state of the art technology with full wifi connectivity throughout the new Grandstand.

In addition, a ballroom with a seating capacity of up to 1000 has the flexibility to be divided into individual function spaces.

The 4,500 capacity 'Theatre of the Horse' amphitheatre will have an adjoining dining pavilion; 2,700sqm of ground floor space which will seamlessly connect to the front lawn and rear boulevard.

See and sup

TO add a little something to a Hunter Valley conference program, Movies in the Vineyard at Hungerford Hill Wines is presenting its final movie program from 28 March - 6 April.

Food, wine and soft drinks are available on site as are bean bags for hire at \$10.

There are also food hampers for two, which includes two tickets, a bottle of wine and a selection of tasty treats for \$99 or a bottle of wine and tickets for two at \$49.50.

Tickets are available online at www.moviesinthevineyard.com.au and from Hungerford Hill's cellar door.

NOVOTEL TWIN WATERS RESORT- A FREE IPAD MINI ON US!

This idyllic Sunshine Coast multipurpose property offers a variety of unique dining options and experiences. With capacity for up to 1400 delegates Novotel Twin Waters Resort is the perfect destination for your next conference or event.

FOR ENQUIRIES CALL 07 5450 9582
EMAIL conference@twinwatersresort.com.au
QUOTE - iPad Mini

1 x iPad mini per booking. Must be confirmed by 31st May 2013. Minimum 25 room nights and \$5000 spend per event. New bookings only. Terms and Conditions apply.



www.novoteltwinwatersresort.com.au





business events news

20th March 2013

Wrest Points milestone offer

JIMMY Barnes entertained 2,600 fans when Wrest Point Hotel & Conference Centre celebrated its 40th birthday on Sunday 10 February.

The milestone concert in the hotel's waterfront gardens capped off a month of celebrations.

Festivities also featured two significant conferences, the International Climate Change Symposium that brought 270 scientists from around the world and the Australian Masters' Golf Championships enjoyed by 450 golfers and their partners.

In the spirit of celebrating its 40th year, Wrest Point is offering an exclusive Residential Conference Package priced at \$237pp per day for new conferences or meetings booked and held prior to 30 August.

The package includes - accommodation in the hotel's 4.5 star Tower rooms, with their backdrops of Mount Wellington, the Derwent River and the city of Hobart; full buffet breakfast each morning; a daily meeting package including room set up to

specific requirements, all catering and standard AV equipment; free wifi in conference/meeting rooms; internet access in all guest rooms; full use of the gymnasium, pool, tennis court and mini golf; a minimum of 10 rooms must be booked per night; plus bring a minimum of 25 delegates and the hotel will throw in a Tai Chi or Yoga class.

Email - conferences@wrestpoint.com.au.

Sic 'em Rex

EFFECTIVE from April the number of Rex services between Dubbo and Sydney will be cut from 82 weekly services to 73 weekly services, equating to a reduction in annual seats of 15,912.

The Dubbo to Sydney cutbacks will see weekday services reduced from seven return services to six.

The reduction of nine weekly frequencies between Dubbo and Sydney are all linked to peak Sydney airport slots, which have been reallocated to Rex's Wagga Wagga to Sydney route.

Grays' Say

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



CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

I see from the ABC that from today the RBA has granted credit card companies the power to limit surcharges on credit card transactions to what it actually costs the merchant to process the application. In the case of Visa and MasterCard transactions this averages around 0.86% of the value of the transaction and for Amex and Diners Club this should be around 2%.

Visa has apparently already acted to restrict surcharges; let's hope that the other credit card companies join them soon.

However, Fairfax Media is quoting CHOICE Head of Campaigns Matt Levey as saying some companies, including Cabcharge – which has a 10 per cent surcharge for credit card payments – and Australia's domestic airlines are attempting to avoid the rules by disguising their surcharges as booking fees or fees for financial services.

Jetstar, apparently no longer has surcharges just booking and service fees!

Convenient that.

Qantas, too, claims that it's not profiteering from excess charges for the use of credit cards merely covering its costs.

What these companies seem to forget is that they require passengers to pay by credit card if they book on-line, and that's what airlines seem to want us to do more and more.

It used to be the case that if a customer paid by credit

card this usually meant they would spend more - an extra bottle of wine at a restaurant, several more drinks at the pub, an extra item or two at the supermarket and so on.

I accept that it's hard to buy more when what you want is a flight but it could make the difference, say, between travelling Qantas or Virgin if one of them would only realise the benefit of eliminating credit card surcharges altogether.

Taxis are not cheap in Melbourne or Sydney and the ten percent surcharge applied by Cabcharge for the use of plastic often means that the taxi driver doesn't get a tip.

Perhaps Cabcharge should use some of the reported \$90million it gets from the surcharge to clean up its act...and the taxis.

But it's not all bad news.

Apparently 64% of Australian businesses don't charge anything for the use of a credit card.

Airlines (and Cabcharge) please note.

Peter Gray is an independent incentive practitioner and Managing Partner of Motivating People.

For more information or to get in contact with Peter email - peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net.



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.**

O'Reilly's is South East Queensland's leading conference and incentive destination, offering unique eco-friendly experiences to create the ultimate event program.

To enter in 25 words or less, tell us what you would include in your ultimate conference program at O'Reilly's?

Email comp@businesseventsnews.com.au

HINT! www.oreillys.com.au

Terms & Conditions apply



CONTACT US:

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Publisher Bruce Piper | Editor Jill Varley | Contributors/Coordinator Chantel Housler |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---|

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

Business Events News is part of the Travel Daily group of publications which also include: Travel Daily, Cruise Weekly & Pharmacy Daily.

Disclaimer: While every care has been taken in the preparation of *Business Events News* no liability can be accepted for errors or omissions. **BEN** takes no responsibility for the opinions of its contributors/columnists. Information is published in good faith to stimulate independent investigation of the matters canvassed.