



Well may you say.....

BEN is in Canberra today on a mission so secret our pages are sealed until this evening.



Things are afoot – news is in the making and mercifully it's not about the Labor party rebellion or the argy bargy of politics.

As this is our last edition before Easter, keep your eyes open on Thursday for breaking news from the National Capital, when all will be revealed.

May the Easter break bring you chocolate to excess, if that is your addiction.

On the other hand will be checking out the splendid accommodation at The Star, more of which you will hear post Easter - *Jill*.

New ballroom for Shangri-La, Sydney

RENOVATIONS are to commence in June on Shangri-La Hotel, Sydney's Grand Ballroom with an expected completion in October.

The ballroom is the hotel's largest event area and its location on the lower floor of the hotel, means there will be minimal disruption to the hotel's operations.

Meanwhile the Shangri-La has 17 other event spaces, including the iconic Altitude Restaurant on level 36 with capacity to cater for up to 120 people.

"We can expect to see a very chic event space with advanced technology, unique ceiling design and an increased capacity, which can be customised for various events," said gm Franz Donhauser.

"We foresee great potential for large business and social events in Sydney, with many international conferences and global events coming to Sydney over the next few years."

The grand opening of the new space is set to occur before the closing of the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre in Dec.

Metro Perth responds to demand

ACCORDING to George Bedwani, Metro Hospitality Group's chief operating officer, the hotel industry in Perth will remain buoyant over the next five years as capacity constraints endure due to few major hotel developments being built.

Backed up by the latest Deloitte Global Performance Review, by the end of 2014, Perth is forecast to have the highest hotel occupancy rate of 89% on the back of business demand due to the resources boom.

Mining-related construction activity, set to peak in 2014, will place added pressure on Perth room rates, which are forecast to increase by 10.3% per annum over the next three years.

In order to meet this increased demand, Metro Hotel Perth is to add 46 rooms to its existing hotel of 94 rooms.

The redevelopment expected to commence in mid 2013, will also include major renovations to the lobby, pool area, restaurant and car park, with minimal disruption to guests.

Bedwani said the property with seven conference rooms and a seating capacity for 200 people is performing extremely well, the result of the sustained

strength of mining-related business travel and increased demand for affordable, spacious accommodation in close proximity to the city.

"This particular hotel is in high demand as it's just outside but within easy access to the CBD.

"Four years ago we completed a \$3.5 million renovation to all 94 rooms.

"That renovation has been instrumental in us capitalising on the current boom.

"We are now going the next step to ensure we benefit from the anticipated growth and demand over the next 4-5 years."

Hamilton Island offers free wi-fi



GUESTS staying at the Reef View Hotel and Palm Bungalows on Hamilton Island will now receive a complimentary 400MB broadband package upon arrival, which can be used both in room and around the Island including in the Reef View Foyer and Lounge Bar, at the Tour Desk/Outrigger Centre, Island Bar (Main Pool), Kegal Bowling, Hamilton Island Yacht Club and the Airport Lounge and Baggage Area.

Waltzing in Austria

AFTER a year of records in Austria in 2011, 2012 reported another all-time high in Australian visitor numbers, up to 335,000 overnights (+10.2% year-on-year).

Now the Austrian National Tourist Office's new campaign "Moments of Bliss" continues Austria's big success with travellers from Down Under that gives authentic, hands-on travel experiences beyond the ordinary.

With a choice of 250 authentic activities, diversion, meals and landmarks, such as Learn to waltz in Vienna and Bake your own apple strudel at Schonbrunn Palace, the offerings are perfectly suited to the incentive market.

MCEC supports local producers

WHEN the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre (MCEC), hosted the Melbourne Food & Wine Festival event last Thursday - 'From Farm to Fork', some 50 guests were taken on a tour of the southern hemisphere's largest kitchen and enjoyed an intimate five-course dinner.

Partnering with suppliers Yarra Valley Gourmet Greenhouse and Warialda Belted Galloway Beef, MCEC's executive chef Tony Panetta created a one-off menu featuring produce direct from their Victorian farms, including alpine strawberries picked fresh that day.

Panetta said "Our dinner was an example of how MCEC support local producers across Victoria which is rare for a venue of our size and something we're particularly proud of."

MCEC's food and wine philosophy is to think local and draw on the best produce from around the state, breaking the mould that surrounds traditional business events catering by producing the venue's dishes in-house.

Novotel Competition

TODAY is your last chance to be in the running to win a conference package at Novotel Brisbane Airport for up to 11 delegates.

For more info see **page 2**.

Break-outs. More fun in the Philippines

facebook.com/ismorefuninthephilippines
 Visit morefuninthephilippines.com.au



business events news

27th March 2013



crumbs!

IT'S official.

The world knows what's good for them and it's Aussie wine.

According to Wine Australia (the Australian Government authority responsible for identifying and maximising sustainable demand for Australian wine both globally and in Australia) 30 million glasses of Australian wine are consumed worldwide, on any given day.

Always up for a challenge, and in order to tip a bit more back down our own throats, Wine Australia is encouraging Australians to enjoy a glass of Australian wine during Aussie Wine Month from 1 to 30 April.

"This April, we urge Australians to get behind Aussie Wine Month and take a trip to a local wine region, try a new Australian wine when dining at a restaurant and enjoy any one of the nearly 100 events happening across the country," said Wine Australia regional director, Aaron Brasher

Do your bit this April and order one more for Australia!

MCEC wins 4 awards

LAST Monday night saw the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) taking home four awards in recognition for its service and innovation at the Victorian Meetings and Events Australia (MEA) Awards, held at the ANZ Pavilion, Arts Centre Melbourne.

The MCEC was awarded 'Meeting Venue 500 delegates or more', 'Banquet and Catering', 'In-house AV Services' (3rd year) and 'Business Development Person of the Year' Prue Rogers, assistant director of sales.

The awards were assessed across a wide range of criteria, including business and financial planning, marketing activities, sustainability and innovation.

As winners MCEC will now represent Victoria in all four categories at the 2012 MEA National Awards in Darwin.

Waving the Omani flag

FOLLOWING on from the successful hosting of the Arabian Coast Conference at Sultan Qaboos University in 2010, the Sultanate of Oman has been selected as one of the finalists to host 1,500 delegates at the 37th annual congress of the International Association of Hydro-Environment Engineering and Research (IAHR) at the new Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre in 2017.

Competing against some of the world's best convention destinations of Turkey, Singapore, India, Malaysia and South America, the chairman of the IAHR Middle East North Africa Collaborative Committee and director of Centre for Environmental Research and Studies at Sultan Qaboos University, Dr. Mahad bin Said Baawain said if the Sultanate bid was successful, it would be the first time the Middle East or North Africa region would host this congress.

"We have received an excellent response and support from IAHR members in Africa, China, Japan and Korea who have welcomed Oman's bid to place a global spotlight on fields related to hydro-environmental studies and its complexities and open new avenues of research collaboration not only in Oman but in the Middle East and North African region," Dr. Baawain said.

Venue manager, AEG Ogden's group manager, convention sales development, Rochelle Uechtritz said, "While 2017 is a long way off, most international organisations plan five to eight years ahead and IAHR would be no exception.

"We have had enormous confidence in Oman as a convention destination, we cannot bid for these events alone.

"They must be supported by the Omani member, association or society to become the local host.

"That support will again be crucial in another bid soon to



be lodged for a world medical congress for 3,000 delegates in 2018," Uechtritz said.

The successful host country for 2017 will be announced at the 36th Annual IAHR Congress in Chengdu, China in September.

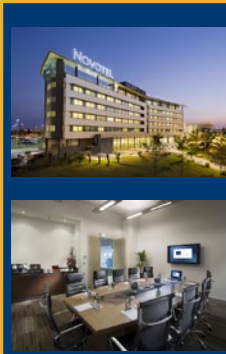
Scaling the heights for cancer

JORDAN'S King Hussein Bin Talal Convention Centre managed by Hilton, is to provide the conference centre venue and its extensive facilities for the 'Lowest Point to the Highest Point for Cancer' expedition crew and their supporters.

The expedition brings together a team of 22 prominent Jordanians as they trek from the Dead Sea to the base camp of Mount Everest.

During the event, the team will be meeting with young cancer patients receiving treatment.

WIN an Exclusive Meeting Package at Novotel Brisbane Airport



BEN is giving readers the chance to win a Premium Conference Package courtesy of **Novotel Brisbane Airport**.

The prize includes full day use of the Executive Boardroom for up to 11 delegates, Premium Conference Package and audio visual equipment.

Brisbane's airport hotel offers a dedicated conference centre, six event rooms, state of the art audio visual & capacity of up to 120 delegates.

To enter tell us in 25 words or less why winning the Premium Conference Package would benefit your company?

Email comp@businesseventsnews.com.au

HINT! www.novotelbrisbaneairport.com.au

Terms & Conditions



ENJOY THE TOTAL EXPERIENCE OF WORK AND PLAY AT CYPRESS LAKES RESORT

WWW.CYPRESSLAKES.COM.AU


Cypress Lakes Resort
Hunter Valley
Grand Mercure Apartments

Mantra opens in Noosa

AFTER an extensive \$5 million refurbishment to the former BreakFree French Quarter, the Mantra French Quarter has opened on Noosa's Hastings Street strip.

As part of the rebranding process, a series of improvements have been carried out including building a new Hastings Street reception and lobby and upgrading the original lobby at the Halse Lane entrance.

More than \$3m has been spent on 68 one and two bedroom apartments to upgrade them to a deluxe status with improvements such as a full internal refit.

A further \$1 million has also been spent to fully repaint and upgrade the resort's exterior, and to refresh the pool area and gardens.

To celebrate the launch, Mantra French Quarter Noosa has a two-night 'Relax & Refresh' package offering in-house movies, popcorn and a cheese platter on arrival, from \$187 per night in a one bedroom deluxe apartment.

Plus, guests will receive a free 30-minute facial when they purchase a one hour massage at Noosa's Endota Day Spa.

Offer is valid for booking until 20 May and for travel until 24 December - mantra.com.au.



One for spooky kooks

IF you are up for a hair-raising night, the Sofitel Wentworth, the official accommodation partner for the hair-raising musical, The Addams Family are not only transforming their lobby bar Soirée into the spectacular lounge of The Addams Family, complete with tombstones, coffins, grand gates, headless roses and life-size figures of the characters, they have a special The Addams Family



Suite package priced from \$235 per person twin share.

It includes accommodation in the hotel's one-off themed suite and a complimentary 'A' reserve ticket and souvenir program.

In addition Sofitel will provide a special gift for guests - a sinister coffee table book called "The Addams Family – An Evulution" for a full history and insight into the world of Charles Addams and his creations to keep as a special memento of the stay.

Available now until 28 April.

To book, visit showbiz.com.au/addams-family/hotel.html.

Rendezvous Christchurch to reopen

CLOSED to the public since the February 2011 earthquake, the Rendezvous Hotel Christchurch with repairs to the building almost complete is to open its doors once more on 1 May.

From now, for a limited time only they are offering 10% off the best available rate every day of the week as well as free internet connectivity and local telephone calls and discounted charges for other hotel services.

General manager Brad Watts said, "The hotel is looking fantastic and we're thrilled to be in a position to re-open and again provide high quality accommodation within the city centre for people visiting either for business or for leisure."

The hotel with 171 guest rooms occupies levels 4 to 15 of the Pacific Tower building on Gloucester Street.

BCEC's new app

THE Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC) has produced a new app for delegates and conference organisers that developers say is the most intuitive and easy to use convention app on the market.

Adam Penberthy from The App Network, a Brisbane based agency, says the venue app enables visitors to have a better experience at the Centre, with the agency already working on stage 2 of the app.

CONTACT US:

Publisher	Editor	Contributors/Coordinator
Bruce Piper	Jill Varley	Chantel Housler

For advertising enquiries email Christie-Lee or Chantel email: advertising@businessnews.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.



Sitting Pretty

Jetstar Business Class

Welcome to *Sitting Pretty*, our regular review of experiences up the front of the plane.

Recently upgraded to four times weekly due to strong demand, Jetstar Airways A330-200 transported *Business Events News* on a sector home from Phuket to Sydney.

THE AIRCRAFT

Despite the service being full, upon settling into the seat, *BEN* enjoyed a comfortable flight all the way home to Sydney. The A330-200 aircraft offers 38 Business Class seats. A well looked after and well maintained aircraft is standard expectation for an Australian carrier, and there was no disappointment from Jetstar.

THE CABIN

Airbus A330 aircraft make up the entire fleet of Jetstar's international operation, and the Business Class cabin is an inviting prospect for a mid-range flight home from Asia. Seats across the cabin are in a 2-3-2 layout, with the exception of the front row, which is 2-2-2.

SERVICE

It is important to remember that Jetstar is not a full service carrier unlike its parent Qantas, but this is easy to forget after experiencing the service of the crew, who were polite, friendly, well trained and a credit to the carrier all the way. A choice of orange juice or champagne is offered upon settling into your seat, and the flight is not long into its journey before an iPad loaded with a wide choice of entertainment options is offered to each Business Class pax. Takeoff from Phuket is usually quite late in the evening, so a blanket is also available for those wishing to nod off for the journey home.

THE SEAT

BEN was seated in the third row of the Business-Class cabin, a spacious leather seat capable of a comfy recline, not totally flat but further than those in Economy were able to enjoy. It was comfortable, but don't be under any illusions of expecting a full lie-flat experience. As mentioned earlier, the seats are spread out in a 2-3-2 layout over most of the cabin, but plenty of room is available between you and the person at your side. Along with a wider seat, there is a small table in between to rest drinks.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Different Jetstar routes offer different food choices, but on this sector, *BEN* enjoyed a rice-noodle combo for entree, rigatoni pasta for main and a selection of desserts including macadamia royale & chocolate cake. Plenty of tea and coffee is readily offered, with fruit and cheeses presented close to dinnertime. Scrambled eggs or egg noodles are the morning choices, along with yoghurt or fruit.

AT THE AIRPORT

Phuket Airport isn't the easiest to get around, not really helped by only being able to see the departure info for the next two hours of flights, leading to a bit of waiting around in the check-in area. Jetstar's check-in area is actually in another section which can take a bit of finding, before back-tracking to the security & customs area prior to reaching the gate.

