



## My heart sank!

AT first glance, the boardwalk that fronts the harbour, across the road from the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, looked as though the barricades were up and ready for the closure and demolition of The Centre.



How could they, I thought! Not yet cold and crumpled on the ground and already the fortifications were in place, next the vultures would be circling to pick at the corpse.

However, no such fanciful event was imminent - not yet, anyway.

As it turns out the barricades were merely erected as the wear and tear of some 25 million visitors to Darling Harbour has taken its toll on the Cockle Bay Promenade.

Long past their use by date, the existing concrete, steel and timber structures of the boardwalk were built between 1988 and 1992.

The fence is just a temporary block by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, behind whose hoarding work is in full swing to replace the timber in the boardwalk, the terraced seating, the access stairs and marina fender piles.

Once it's finished the project will bring a fresh new look to the popular precinct - all ready for another 25 million visitors.

All will be revealed later this month.

**MEANWHILE** think of me today, I'm doing a Vibe Hotels Stay in Shape Yoga workout in Rushcutters Bay Park.

The things we do! Jill

## arinex celebrates 40 years



"THE Queen," retired naval architect John Jeremy, chair of the IMC conference said last night at the arinex 40th anniversary celebrations, held in the Bayside Terrace at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, "was the first person to walk into the convention centre when it opened.

"Undoubtedly, arinex's md Roslyn McLeod was the second!"

Annabel Norris, the SCEC's director of sales who spoke on behalf of the SCEC said in honour of Ros and her team, "The Centre, from senior staff and those at the pointy end have developed a very successful and rewarding partnership.

"They are very much part of the fabric of our business and of its success and in three years time I have no doubt that Ros will once again be there when the new convention centre opens, probably elbowing the Queen out of the way to get in first!"

Addressing attendees, Roslyn reminisced about her years in the business from operating as a multilingual guide business in 1973 to the decision in 1976 to specialise in international conferences.

The event, which was also a fitting farewell to The Centre, topped off a wonderful year for arinex which has seen



management of over 18,000 delegates, the release of cutting edge abstract management software, and recognition for Roslyn as Industry Person of the Year Award at AIME.

**Pictured** above at the event are, from left: Amanda Anker, SCEC; Simon Lomas, SCEC; Roslyn McLeod, arinex; Ton van Amerongen, SCEC; and Linda Gaunt, Meetings Events Australia.

## TRAVELUTION nears

IT'S now less than three weeks until ACTE's Australasia Corporate Travel Education Conference being held 5-6 December, at the Sheraton on the Park Sydney.

With the theme 'TRAVELUTION - Evolving Solutions for the Corporate Travel Community', presenters include Scott Gillespie, revered as a leading authority on the sourcing and management of corporate travel programs.

In his first Australian visit he will be discussing his views on the emerging reality of significant evolution in travel management and the key implications for both travel buyers and suppliers.

Info from [akelly@acte.org](mailto:akelly@acte.org).

## BEN comp winner

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Holly Scully from Orchard, who was the lucky winner of last week's Novotel Parramatta competition in **Business Events News**.

Holly has won an overnight stay for two in a Superior King room along with buffet breakfast in the Two Forks restaurant.

## Check out Uncle Jed

**AUSTRALIA'S** Got Talent 2014 winners - Uncle Jed - made up of lead vocalist Laura, with her cousins Danny and Matt have joined the Enhance Entertainment stable.

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**Mercure**  
HOTELS

SYDNEY



# business events news

20th November 2013

## SYD Airport Mercure for MICE



**MERCURE** Sydney International Airport has joined the growing list of airport hotels gunning for the conference and events market.

The 271-room hotel has just spent \$10m updating the entire property, deconstructing the entire interior, installing new walls, new decorations, new furniture, new marble floors, a new lobby and updating its impressive conference rooms.

**BEN** visited the hotel last week and was taken on a site inspection by general manager Joleen Hurst, who was keen to showcase the new facilities.

"We have eleven conferencing spaces and breakout rooms, catering for up to 400 delegates, the grand ballroom even has roller door access so we can actually bring cars and trucks into the room, along with heavy equipment," said Hurst.

"We have classrooms and runways, you can be closed off from the rest of the world, and we're able to handle all kinds of events from meetings big and small, launches, special dinners, weddings, you name it," she said.

Hurst said that being right next

to Sydney International Airport, the hotel is very convenient for the fly in, meet and fly out market and the hotel also provides a shuttle bus to/from the terminal.

**Pictured** above from left are the Mercure Sydney International Airport Conference & Events team of Hardev Hansra, Alex Robertson, Joleen Hurst, gm and Melissa Paz.

## Tassie events grants

**76** events are to receive over \$330,000 from the Events Tasmania's 2014 Grants Program.

20 New Ideas grants will receive funding of up to \$10,000 to establish new or innovative events and 56 Small Projects will receive up to \$3,000 to improve existing events state-wide, the Tasmanian Minister for Tourism, Scott Bacon said this week.

"Over 30 events will take place outside the main population centres of Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie," he said.

It is estimated they have the potential to draw around 50,000 interstate and international visitors to Tasmania.

## OCEC appoints McCartney gm

**THE** Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre, due for completion in late 2016, has appointed internationally respected convention centre executive, Trevor McCartney as its inaugural general manager.

McCartney who will commence his new role in early 2014 was previously the director of business development at the Qatar National Convention Centre, a role he has held since June 2011.

Prior to that he was chief executive at the Borneo Convention Centre Kuching, Malaysia for three years.

Geoff Donaghy, the director of convention centres for AEG Ogden, which manages the venue, said there was considerable international interest in the position but the internal promotion of McCartney was an endorsement of the strength and talent within the AEG Ogden network.

"In the past decade, he has developed a strong understanding of the local cultures and managing congress venues in Asia and the Middle East and is suitably qualified to meet the challenges in the highly competitive business events industry," he said.

## Murderous weekends

**HOST-A-MURDER** now offer weekends away which include a cookery class with a Host-a-Murder dinner or lunch at the Beautiful Forgotten Valley Retreat on the Hawkesbury River at Wisemans Ferry.

The weekend cost for 10 to 20 people is \$280 per head including a Host-a-Murder lunch or dinner.

The class cooks three nominated dishes and gets to eat what they prepare.

Classes are taught by a chef who worked for Prince Charles, Mick Jagger and the Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Elliott Trader.

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



**NOT** everything runs smoothly at a conference, as these two stories reveal.

Names have been changed to guard against further embarrassment.

"Samantha" travelled to a trade show in the United Kingdom and like many people at the convention her hands were full of freebies from various vendors.

She jammed all of them into a blue plastic bag she'd been given early in the day.

Unfortunately, the blue ink from the bag transferred to her sweaty palm and from there to her cheeks.

She spent hours there without anyone telling her.

Coincidentally, she now works at a company called Inkhouse!

Meanwhile "Mark", who was hosting a panel at a conference, was feeling very comfortable with the audience of 200, however, probably too comfortable.

"I was talking away, leaning back in my chair, as my mother always told me not to, when I toppled over backwards mid-sentence."

"As I was falling, I really didn't know what to do," he laughs.

"It was a world-class embarrassing moment."

Have you got a funny conference story to tell?

Email them through to [info@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:info@businesseventsnews.com.au).

## Beat a retreat

**THE** Retreat in Port Stephens, a conference venue set on four acres of natural bushland, ideal for conferencing and team building events, offers two conference locations and a fully functional games room able to be transformed into a full meeting area or dining space.

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# business events news

20th November 2013

## Vivid wins big



**DESTINATION NSW** is celebrating after its Vivid Sydney 2013 festival was last night named Event of the Year at the Australian Event Awards.

Vivid also won the Best Tourism Event category, while other awards went to the Tour Down Under 2013 which took out the Best Sporting Event category.

Other notable wins included Best Meeting or Conference which was taken out by the 34th International Geological Congress run by Carillon Conference Management.

Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre won for Best Venue, while Event Planet took out the Event Manager of the

Year category.

NSW also won the "Best Event State" award, with a Destination NSW spokesperson telling **BEN** that events are a major driver of visitation.

"Vivid Sydney is a great example of an event that has grown significantly since it began five years ago," she said.

"In 2013 it attracted over 800,000 visitors and over 11,000 travel packages were sold, including 7200 from China".

She said it's great that Vivid Sydney has been recognised for its contribution to the economic development of the state.

To see the full list of winners see [www.eventawards.com.au](http://www.eventawards.com.au).

## New ShowGizmo

**SHOWGIZMO** has released a new version of its iOS smartphone app making the most of the dramatically different look and feel of iOS 7.

New features include a private social network and event feed to capture the commentary and excitement of events, as well as fully configurable branding and colours - [showgizmo.com](http://showgizmo.com).

## CTM acquisition

**CORPORATE** Travel Management, the parent company of Event Travel Management, today confirmed the \$49m acquisition of a majority stake in Asia-based Westminster Travel which operates in Macau, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China and Singapore.

The move gives CTM a ready-made presence in Asia.

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## Grays' Say

Peter Gray, managing partner of **Motivating People**, presents a regular **Business Events News** feature on current issues in the Conference and Incentive industries.



## WHEN SIZE DOES MATTER

I'M often asked "how big is the incentive market - what is it worth?" and I'm very sorry to say that I can only hazard an intelligent guess at the answer.

Because little, if any, market research has been conducted into this high yield market here in Australia. The research that has been done is generally limited to a small part of the market: inbound, outbound, business-to-business, loyalty, performance improvement or engagement (yes, they're all part of the incentive industry).

And, what's worse is that definitions provided by one or other of the USA-based incentive organisations are used (mainly because they sponsor the research).

Now the Incentive Association is about to commence research into the incentive markets in Australia and New Zealand.

This will be undertaken by Monash University's Department of Marketing and will use the definitions which Australia, NZ, Europe and most of the rest of the world (apart from the USA and a few other countries) use.

So what's the difference? The USA studies include business gifts and premiums (premiums are products are purchased in order to

acquire another, usually of higher value) and this has a remarkable effect on the size of the market.

Business gifts and premiums account for more than 40% of the USA incentive market according to SITE and the Incentive Research Foundation which last year amounted to some US\$30b.

Yes, the US market dwarfs our own (even with business gifts and premiums taken out) but the size of our market is no less important.

Important to hotels, airlines, tourism bodies, manufacturers and others who provide products and services for use in or as incentive rewards.

Important, too, for sponsors of incentive programmes so they can judge how their spend - and results - compare.

It's not rocket science but it's the first time such a comprehensive study has been undertaken.

Watch this space!

**Peter Gray is the founder of and a consultant to Motivating People. He can be contacted at [peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net](mailto:peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net)**



## Global Eco 2013

**NOOSA** on Qld's Sunshine Coast was chosen specifically as the host venue of the Global Eco 2013 Conference being held this week, because it is Queensland's first designated UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and is bordered by national parks, a pristine river system, ocean, rainforest and hinterland.

A number of high-calibre international and national delegates are attending the three-day conference to examine trends in responsible tourism and ecotourism.

Featured speakers include Keith Sproule from the World Wildlife Fund, Mariglo Laririt, Ten Knots Corporation in the Philippines and Neil Anderson, gm strategy at Tourism Australia.

## Summertime saving

**MERCURE** Hunter Valley Gardens in NSW is offering conference bookers a summertime saving for those who book a 2014 conference by 31 December.

For this they receive 50% off the food cost of the Poolside BBQ Dinner, which is included in any residential package.

The offer is applicable to residential conference bookings from Saturday to Thursday with a minimum of 20 guests.

Catering for up to 250 delegates, the resort has nine flexible conference spaces, 72 spacious guestrooms and facilities that include tennis courts, a heated pool and spa, day spa and a cosy lodge library complete with open fireplace - call 02 4998 2000.