



Strewth Shirli!

WHAT was started in Western Australia in 1996 by Shirley



Brown getting together with a few friends also called Shirley, saw close to 200 Shirleys flock to the nation's capital last week for the Annual Shirley Convention.

Back in the day, the original group came up with the idea of inviting other Shirleys to join the fun and approached local media to get the word out.

The only requirement for membership is to be named Shirley.

There are now Shirley Clubs around Australia, New Zealand and even the United States.

Members meet once every two years for a national convention.

In Canberra, the Capital Hotel Group was chosen for the group's accommodation and the event was timed to coincide with the city's centenary celebrations.

With a motto of 'Fun, Food and Friendship,' Capital Hotel Group's sales manager Justin Henry said that the Shirley Convention raised some eyebrows at the weekly management meeting with the prospect of 200 Shirleys checking in.

"At least we are confident that we know our guests name over the weekend," he joked. *Jill*

Food and wine focus

TOURISM Australia has today launched a major appeal to the culinary appetites of the world, with a new campaign aiming to close the "perception gap" over Australia's fabulous food and wine.

TAM Andrew McEvoy said the move follows research which showed that the view of local cuisine in the eyes of foreign travellers changes significantly once they arrive and they see it is some of the best in the world.

The new 'Restaurant Australia' campaign is being launched in partnership with Wine Australia.

India/Australia tourism to soar

THE importance of international tourism to India now that Air India has resumed direct services to and from Melbourne and Sydney was the focus of an address by India's Secretary Ministry of Tourism, Parvez Dewan at an Incredible India and PATA Roadshow last week.

The roadshow, which took in both Melbourne and Sydney, was supported by a delegation of more than 20 travel companies, hotels and suppliers and followed a successful visit last year.

Addressing about 200 industry guests, the Minister spoke of the upgrade of airports in New Delhi and Mumbai from being among the world's worst to now being among the world's best.

He acknowledged the slow immigration processing at the airports but said improvements were being made, albeit it could take 12 months.

Dewan, who is also chairman of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) India Chapter, said his country had witnessed a substantial increase in the inflow of tourists from Australia in the past few years and spoke

passionately of a country which now has thirty UNESCO World Heritage listed sites and plenty of wildlife.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, more than 214,000 Australians visited India in 2012, an increase of 11.8% on the previous year's figure of 191,300 - and that was before the new direct flights.

"The recent re-launch of Air India services to Australia coupled with regular visits by leading tourism delegates from India will lead to a healthy growth in numbers of Australian tourists to India," Dewan said.

"India's tag as an incredibly diverse and affordable product 'within the reach of consumers' will also help in the increase which sees Australia among the top 10 tourist-generating markets in the world for India's inbound tourism," he added.

Air India is now flying its brand new Boeing 787 *Dreamliner* aircraft from Delhi to Australia every day, with a triangular service to both Sydney and Melbourne being the only non-stop flight between the countries.

CIBTM stimulates future growth

FIGURES released from the CIBTM show which took place last week at the China National Convention Centre in Beijing, saw some 9,402 pre-scheduled business appointments taking place over the course of the show - up 10% on the 2012 figures.

The number of exhibitors who attended also increased by 17%, with the event showcasing new and returning brands to the China meetings and incentive industry including Sri Lanka, Japan National Tourism Organization, Madrid, the Czech Tourist Authority, Hungarian National Tourist Office, Saint Petersburg Express, JSC and the Russian Federation.

Jacqui Timmins (**pictured**), exhibitions director for both CIBTM and AIME commented, "CIBTM continues to be the leading trade show for meetings and events organisers, venue providers and incentive and business travel services in China and Asia and as a team, we are committed to developing the show further through strategic partners and new innovations to ensure that the show continues to catalyze an already booming industry in China.

CIBTM 2014 takes place 17-19 September next year.



You must be there

THE Northern Territory Convention Bureau is inviting meetings professionals to attend this year's Meetings Muster, with key NT business event suppliers showcasing their wares in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne next month.

Participants include the Alice Springs Convention Centre, Toga, Hilton, Darwin Turf Club, Total Event Services, Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia, SKYCITY Darwin, Great Southern Rail, Fusion Exhibition and Hire Services, Australia's Outback Journeys, the Darwin Convention Centre and Total Event Services.

Attendees will have the opportunity to win an NT adventure for two.

See **page four** of today's *Business Events News* for details.

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Always bet on BLACK

QUEENSLAND'S upcoming Brisbane Festival will be the venue for the launch of Moreton Hire's never-before-seen black marquee.

The new marquee, which will host the best seats in the house for the Santos GLNG



Lounge for the duration of the festival, sits directly under the Wheel of Brisbane and on the shores of South Bank.

The first of its kind for Queensland and something new and unique for special events, Brisbane Festival artistic director Noel Staunton said the black marquee adds a level of sophistication to the Santos GLNG Lounge which will be the perfect place to enjoy some drinks while taking in the spectacle of Brisbane Festival.



"It really has the wow factor and we are grateful to our partners Moreton Hire for helping to make Brisbane Festival a wonderful event," he said.

WIN A TRIP FOR TWO TO VANUATU



During the months of August and September, **BEN** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win an amazing holiday for two people to Vanuatu, courtesy of **Air Vanuatu** and **the Grand Hotel & Casino**.

The prize includes Air Vanuatu return airfares from Syd/Bne/Mel to Port Vila, and five nights accommodation in a Harbour View Room including breakfast daily at the Grand Hotel and Casino.

Air Vanuatu offers daily flights from Australia, just over 3 hours away. Complimentary inflight service and the friendliest smiles in the Pacific!

Grand Hotel and Casino offers a relaxing yet sophisticated setting, in a prime waterfront location in the heart of Port Vila. The hotel is central to Port Vila's business and entertainment district and just 200 metres to the markets. The Grand's business facilities cater well for small groups and conferences. With water views from every room, the hotel also features an outdoor pool, Aromessence Day Spa, Crystals Restaurant and Hemisphere Bar. The Grand Casino also offers the very best in gaming facilities.

Q16. Jungle buggy Tours, horseriding, abseiling, zipline tours, Blokars and safari tours are some of the adventure tours available to be booked from the Grand Hotel and Casino tour desk?

Email each of the daily questions and the final creative response by Friday 20 September to:

vanuatu@businessesnews.com.au

Click here for terms & conditions Hint: www.vanuatu.travel/



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Who else but Alex De Waal?

IN 1996-2003 when he was Tourism Queensland's executive director of marketing



Alex De Waal developed the brief for the State's most successful brand campaign, 'Where Else But Queensland'.

Now this former Sunlover Holidays boss and Tourism Queensland executive has been appointed as chief executive officer of Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ).

Commencing his role on 06 January, De Waal takes over from Rob Giason who is leaving after eight years to take on project management consultancy roles.

TTNQ chairman Stephen Gregg praised De Waal's skills, saying the travel industry professional would take the destination of Tropical North Queensland to a new level.

"Alex turned Sunlover Holidays into a profitable business when he was executive general manager in 2003-2005," he said.

Malaysia's hat trick

THREE bid wins have been announced by the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau.

To take place over the next two years, these include the 9th Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society Conference (APCCN) 2015; Spine Week 2016; and The Asia Pacific Conference of the Junior Chamber International 2015.

Fiji IHG MICE offer

THE InterContinental Fiji has a special deal for an end of year corporate retreat or inspired strategy meeting.

Valid 01 Nov-28 Feb, the package includes three nights twin share accom, daily breakfast, daily dinners and a day delegate package from FJ\$1519.

Contact meetings.fiji@ihg.com.

Time to take AIME

WITH Hosted Buyer applications now open it's not too early to start getting organised for AIME 2014, where 750 exhibitors from five continents will be on show.

The Hosted Buyer program is 90% larger than any other in Australia and 99% who attended AIME 2013 agreed it was a good use of time for their business.

There's a 10% saving on the registration fee available for applications completed by 25 Oct.

If you'd prefer to attend AIME as a visitor, registration will open at the end of November.

For more info see - aime.com.au/en/hosted-buyers.



A SOMEWHAT sticky situation...

The leak of 1,400 tonnes of molasses into Honolulu harbour last week is causing quite a few problems, not the least of which is the potential for shark attacks.

Warnings have been given by Hawaii health officials to stay out of the waters near the harbour as the spill has killed hundreds of fish, which in turn could lead to an increase in "predator species" such as sharks and barracuda.

Boats were deployed to remove the dead fish by the Hawaii Health Department who said they expected to deal with thousands more in the coming weeks.

The cause of the brown plume of sweet, sticky liquid was a faulty pipeline used to load the molasses on to ships operated by Matson Navigation Company.

A dive shop owner, who went underwater to survey the damage, said there was a layer of molasses coating the sea floor.

"Everything that was underwater suffocated and the whole sea bottom was covered with fish, crabs, lobsters, worms, sea fans – anything that was down there was dead."

Hawaii Tourism Authority ceo Mike McCartney said in a statement, "At this time, we do not foresee any immediate impact on our visitor industry."



The business of Varga



DEANNA Varga, well-known specialist consultant to the tourism and business event industry, has been

nominated as a finalist in the 2013 MyBusiness Awards, in the category Best Business Leader.

Starting her consultancy two years ago after over a decade in senior sales, marketing and tourism roles, Varga says she's pleased to be recognised for "the

work that we've achieved over a relatively short period of time."

The winners of the MyBusiness Awards will be announced on Thursday 19 September at Sydney's Marquee, The Star.

inPlace winners

CONGRATULATIONS to the three lucky winners of inPlace Recruitment's Visa Card competition which featured in **BEN** two weeks ago.

Peter Lyons, MCEC; Cathy Hammond, Forum Group Events; and Blake Esler, CGU Insurance have each won a \$100 prepaid Visa Card to spend online or in a store of their choice.

New NSW events calendar

A **NEW** Sydney and NSW Events Calendar, which showcases a world-class line up of sporting, arts, culture and lifestyle events across the State for the next ten months, has been unveiled by the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, George Souris.

Destination NSW say the calendar will inject more than \$500 million into the economy from visitor expenditure.

"The NSW Government is committed to securing major events that appeal to a variety of audiences and the event line-up from September 2013 to June 2014 is no exception," Souris said.

"From the highly-anticipated return of *The Lion King* to Sydney's world-renowned New Year's Eve fireworks, the RAN International Fleet Review Sydney, BMW Sydney Carnival, Tamworth Country Music Festival, 2014 Toyota IRONMAN Australia in Port Macquarie and the Deni Ute Muster in Deniliquin, there is something for everyone across every location and season in NSW," Souris said.

"Regional events," he continued, "are particularly impressive this year and an important contributor to regional tourism." Major wins for Sydney and

NSW featured include the world premiere of *Strictly Ballroom- The Musical*; the opening series of the Major League Baseball, the Australian premiere of Monster Jam, and Corroboree Sydney, the largest annual national Indigenous arts and cultural festival in Australia.

CLICK HERE to view the calendar.

Mantra adds Long Island Resort

NEXT month Long Island Resort in the Whitsundays is to be added to the Mantra Group's BreakFree brand portfolio.

To be known as BreakFree Long Island Resort, the 140-room property will be the 27th in the BreakFree network across Australia and New Zealand.

Its acquisition follows the recent announcement of the brand's first hotel in Asia - BreakFree Sing Ken Ken in Legian, Bali.

Mantra Group ceo, Bob East said, "BreakFree prides itself on being a quality, cost-effective accommodation option for travellers in exceptional locations and Long Island is an excellent representation of this that I'm sure will be well received by our guests."

The latest from the Gold Coast

IN a city that doesn't rest on its laurels, there is always much on which to report.

RACV Royal Pines Resort has a new multi-million dollar One Spa under construction with an expected opening date of early December.

Being built next to the main resort and attached by a glass corridor, it will offer an expanded range of services, all of which will be available to conference delegates.

With such luxuries as geisha tubs, a luser shower and a six-seater salt-water spa, John Morris, RACV Queensland Resorts general manager said, "The new One Spa will be a haven from the pressures of working and conference life complemented by a diverse range of treatments available."

Palazzo Versace is gearing up for the festive season with a bespoke menu of corporate offerings.

From a Christmas themed cocktail selection to amazing event add-ons including reindeer

centrepieces, photo booths, DJs and Santa for hire, it's worth checking out.



Meanwhile a recent Events Showcase at **Dreamworld** gave a group of corporate clients a

comprehensive taste of the theme park's events offering.

From canapés and carnival games in Gold Rush Country to a visit to Tiger Island, the evening culminated in a first for the venue, dinner served up on the Skadoosh Bumper Cars ride!

Accor is partnering with **Virgin Australia** to invite conference organisers to stay, fly, meet and experience the GC in style.

Staying at the luxurious **Sofitel Gold Coast Broadbeach** and the 4.5 star **Mercure Gold Coast**, the 'Ultimate Gold Coast Conference Incentive' adds Virgin Australia flights and entry to 'The Lounge', day and evening experiences



to the region's best tourism attractions, plus a hotel room upgrade and a complimentary poolside reception event to create the ultimate Gold Coast conference package.

For more info on the promotion visit www.meetonthecoast.com.

And last but not least, **The Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa** is rewarding early bird organisers who book their 2014 meetings and events by 30 November with group room rates starting from \$215 per night including breakfast.

For details on the offer email them at marriottsurfers.sales@marriotthotels.com.



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INVITATION



DISCOVER why the NT should be the first place you think of when deciding your next event.

CONNECT with the local professionals who do what it takes to make it happen!

INSPIRE your team to bring their next event to the NT with the knowledge you gain and the contacts you make at **NT MEETINGS MUSTER 2013**.

VENUE

BRISBANE:

TIKI BAR - ALFRED AND CONSTANCE

Tuesday 22nd October 5.30pm
130 Constance Street
Fortitude Valley,
Brisbane

SYDNEY:

SUN ROOM - THE IVY

Wednesday 23rd October 5.30pm
Level 3, 330 George Street
Sydney

MELBOURNE:

RIVERS EDGE

Thursday 24th October 5.30pm
World Trade Centre, 18 - 38 Siddeley Street
Melbourne

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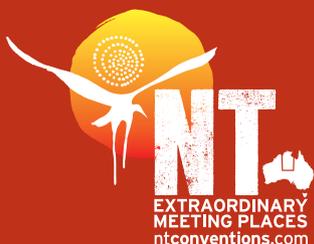
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