



Avert the eyes

When driving across Sydney's Western Distributor, it's not a pretty sight (and no doubt a distressing one to the architects, builders and those who worked at the SCEC during its 25 year life) to see the jagged and torn jumble of metal rods and broken concrete, as the halls of the exhibition centre are torn down.

On a lighter note, talking with the Singapore Tourism Board's Michelle Thoo at AIME, Singapore is moving at its usual break-neck speed with new hotels, reinventions and new hospitals under construction.

Chinatown's Food Street is due to reopen this month after undergoing a refurbishment, and opening in April is the Singapore Sports Hub, the first of its kind in the world.

The state-of-the-art complex will house everything from a water sports centre to a retail mall and include the country's National Stadium, a venue for large-scale sports and entertainment events with 55,000 seats.

In 2015, two monumental buildings, the City Hall and the former Supreme Court will be reborn as the National Art Gallery.

With so much going on, happy catch up week after AIME.

Jill



Dubai's record growth



DUBAI has kicked off the new year on the back of a 36.4% year on year increase in visitor numbers from Australia and New Zealand in 2013.

The Government of Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) said there had been a 39% increase on 2013 in the Australian market, and a record 21% increase in the NZ market.

The emirate had 21 major events, with an expected 46,000 delegates attending, locked down over the next three years, the DTCM said, and planned to up its hotel room inventory from 84,000 to between 140 and 160,000 by 2020.

DTCM director general His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri said Australia and New Zealand continued to be key markets for Dubai's tourism industry, both for leisure and business.

"In recent years we have seen consistent growth in visitor numbers from this market and the 2013 numbers show a significant increase in tourists from Australia and New Zealand visiting our Emirate."

Last year saw 19 hotels established and a number of new hotels coming online in the next three years, he said.

Dubai Convention and Events Bureau convention and business tourism director Steen Jakobsen said the emirate made up about half of the Middle East's entire business events market.

Sports events grows

A MAJOR growth area in sports events from Australian MICE operators has been identified by Hong Kong-based PC Tours, according to the company.

Speaking in Melbourne half way through a marketing tour of Australia, general manager Cary Chiu said there was a continuing demand for their ground services in all destinations in Hong Kong, China, the Pearl Delta region and Indo-China and in particular Vietnam and Cambodia.

"In recent years I have seen a steady 5% growth in business from Australia and expect this to grow to 10% over the next year or so, following the introduction of more diversified air services into Asia, such as the recent decision by Cathay Pacific to fly from Australia to Da Nang in Vietnam via Hong Kong."

Fiji PR position

TOURISM Fiji has announced the establishment of a dedicated public relations unit, based in the organisation's head office in Nadi.

Comprising two staff, the unit will be responsible for developing and implementing Tourism Fiji's public relations strategy across core source markets.

Applications are now open for the position of PR manager, with the role of PR coordinator to be advertised in the coming weeks.

Contact Asinate Ledua on +679 6722433 before 3 Mar.

Congratulations!

CONGRATULATIONS to Melbourne Business School conference and sales coordinator Kristen Bellsmith.

Bellsmith won a magnificent hamper courtesy of **BEN** at AIME 2014 last week.

Congratulations again, Kristen!

Majors sign up

EIBTM says major industry exhibitors have confirmed their participation at the trade show, held from 18 to 20 Nov in Barcelona.

Those who have already signed up include the Austrian National Tourist Office, Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions, Marriott Hotels International, Brand USA and the German Convention Bureau.

World's apart

POST AIME, the Asia Pacific team from WorldHotels were in Sydney on Friday to host a client lunch with a difference.

Held at Sokyo Restaurant in The Darling hotel, Asia Pacific executive vice president Roland Jegge was joined by Christina Spykerman, senior director of sales and marketing Asia Pacific and Ganessan Suppiah, director of sales ANZ.

Each gm or dsm waxed lyrical about a dish on the menu applicable to their hotel and gave away slabs of meat and fresh produce in exchange for answers to their questions.

For example, Jupiters Townsville presented a Cape Grim Kobe beef Tomahawk (the cut of meat, not the axe), while the delights of a Durian dessert (smells like hell, tastes like heaven) was lost on all but our Asian cousins.

The Star came up trumps on their signature lamp chop dish, with their chef revealing a secret ingredient – Vegemite.

Jegge also disclosed WorldHotel's intention to launch a Priority Points program, "to incentivise our clients."

Peugeot giveaway

THE Sofitel Sydney Wentworth is giving away a new Peugeot 308 Sportium Touring, valued at more than \$40,000, to one lucky conference and event organiser, as part of its new MICE incentive.

All you need to do is contract a new residential conference, meeting or event at the Wentworth, valued at a minimum of \$40,000.

Bookings and a deposit must be received by 30 Nov for events held anytime.

Find out more on 02 9228 9180.



business events news

24th February 2014

GCCEC - 10 and counting



AS the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC) prepares to celebrate 10 years of operation in June, it has cause to revel in amassing more than 25 industry awards, numerous international credentials and being heralded as 'a new era in conventions and events.'

Adrienne Readings, the first woman to be appointed general manager of a convention centre in Australia, has helped increase the Gold Coast's event capacity six-fold since opening and still oversees the venue which saw a \$40 million extension in 2010.

Since then the Centre has gone on to increase its

technological offerings, whilst the Commonwealth Games in 2018 will shine a further spotlight on the nation's fastest growing regional city in the years to come.

The centre is the first in the world to achieve EarthCheck Gold certification and averages 160 business events with 350,000 delegate days annually, it said.

Since its opening in 2004, the GCCEC has seen two million people through its doors at 2000 meetings and events, the Centre said.

Cutler for Nanuku

PAUL Cutler has been appointed sales and marketing manager at Fiji's newest luxury resort, Nanuku Resort & Spa.

Cutler's international hotel experience extends to senior sales roles with both Le Méridien Hotels and Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts, as well as having managed sales and marketing activity for several resorts in Fiji.



General manager Karen Taylor said Cutler would take immediate responsibility for all aspects of the new all-villa boutique resort's sales and marketing activity on an international basis.

Tennis anyone?

A NEW venue worth checking out is located in one of Melbourne's pre-eminent private sporting and social clubs, the historic Royal South Yarra Lawn Tennis Club.



The Club, which recently hosted Victoria's first Club MEA event for 2014, to rave reviews, is located in the leafy inner Melbourne suburb of Toorak.

Founded in 1884, it was recently redeveloped and refurbished throughout and now offers extensive clubhouse facilities and striking contemporary décor.

Flexible function space includes the Como Room with seating for up to 180 and an elegant space for cocktail receptions for up to 350 guests.

Additionally, the Norman Brookes Room has a capacity for up to 90, or for cocktail parties of up to 120.

For more, visit the website at www.rsyltc.org.au.

Not such a blip!



IN the afterglow of attending AIME, Positively Wellington venues sales development manager Raewyn Tse described the annual event as a great success, securing several promising leads for Wellington and for 2016 and beyond.

"New Zealand is still just a blip on the Asia Pacific stage and the size and scale of Wellington will never compete with the likes of Dubai, Macau and Sydney.

"However AIME gave us a great opportunity to promote our unique Wellington solution and demonstrate that you certainly can pack more into a business day in Wellington than anywhere else in Australasia!"



HOTEL transfers don't come much more special than that offered by the far north Norwegian Kirkenes Snowhotel's dog taxi service.

More user friendly and much cuter than your average taxi, the launch of the service is thought to be the first of its kind.

What you get when you arrive at Kirkenes Airport is a pack of eight Alaskan Huskies and a thermal suit to keep you warm during the ride, which lasts around 45 minutes.

The hotel, located in Norway's easternmost town, has 20 snow suites and an ice bar made from 15 tons of ice.

Each room features a different theme representing Arctic culture or nature and is open until 20 Apr.

Rates of NOK2450 per person (\$400) include a three-course dinner in the "wilderness restaurant," breakfast and sauna.

The dogs are part of the hotel's own pack of 80, that also take guests on dog-sledding trips during their stay.

Sounds terrific? Hmmm, that is if you are not averse to shelling out about \$400 for the experience.

However, if you had something cheaper in mind, a two-hour dog sled excursion with the same huskies costs \$230.

Oaks in Gladstone

THE 4.5 star Oaks Grand Gladstone hotel in Queensland has opened.

The 144 room hotel spreads across nine levels and pays homage to Gladstone's heritage with a six panel mural around the property's exterior.

The Oaks offers a choice of studio and one bedroom apartments while on-site leisure facilities include a swimming pool, gymnasium and restaurants.

Each restaurant also doubles as a state of the art function space with the ability to host up to 150 guests, whilst the recently refurbished Grand Hotel features conferencing and meeting facilities and a gaming lounge, located opposite the hotel.

Studios start from \$179 per night.



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Danii Meads-Barlow

THE Danii Meads-Barlow Foundation is looking for items to be auctioned at the third annual Jelly Bean Ball.

The ball will be held at the Sydney Sofitel Wentworth Hotel on 14 Jun.

Donations go towards helping the Foundation introduce technology for people with diabetes that will alert a parent or carer to life-threatening nocturnal hypoglycaemia.

The Foundation, named in memory of Danii Meads-Barlow, is looking for items for its auction, which can be anything from hotel nights, tour packages, restaurant vouchers to a case of wine or a coffee maker.

CLICK HERE to donate an item.

Alternatively, you can register and book a seat or table for the ball by **CLICKING HERE**.

Accor & AFL partner up



ACCOR has entered an exclusive agreement with the Australian Football League (AFL) as its official hotel partner.

The two year contract means the AFL, its clubs and subsidiaries will stay at 70 Accor hotels across both Australia and New Zealand, including Sofitel Gold Coast Broadbeach, Pullman Sydney Hyde Park, Mercure Perth and Mercure Wellington.

The hotel group operates more than 200 hotels across Australia, and Pacific chief operating officer Simon McGrath (pictured left) said the agreement went beyond providing accommodation, to include working with the AFL in areas including Indigenous

programs and job development.

"We have had a long experience working with major sporting bodies such as the Australian Olympic team, Swimming Australia and the National Rugby League so we are very much used to looking after the needs of elite sports people."

AFL ceo Andrew Demetriou said as Australia's game, there was a "natural synergy" between the AFL and the country's largest hotel group.

"This partnership ensures the vast number of people that make up the AFL industry have access to an exceptional level of service and support in relation to accommodation."



Getting to Know: The Central Coast

by: Jill Varley

When a group of PCOs from Melbourne were invited on an Accor Central Coast famil recently, they expressed delight in the opportunity to discover a part of Sydney not so familiar even to Sydneysiders.

First stop on their journey one hour north of Sydney was Glenworth Valley, the largest horse riding and outdoor adventure centre in the southern hemisphere.

Set on more than 3000 acres of unspoilt wilderness, the centre offers a range of team building activities, including quad biking, which the group took part in on new Honda TRX250EX bikes.

Following this was a site inspection of Quay West Resort Magenta Shores (soon to be a Pullman), which sits between Tuggerah Lakes and the Pacific Ocean and can only be described as a real stunner.

It has a conferencing capacity of up to 400 delegates, 85 villa style guest rooms and an 18 hole championship golf course.

After a lunch, cooked and served on the resort's lakeside lawn, a competitive few rounds of laser clay shooting was enjoyed with Pinnacle Team Events, who specialise in a broad range of activities and conference events at both Accor's Magenta and Kooindah resorts.

It was on then to the 4.5 star Mercure Kooindah Waters for the remainder of the afternoon and for an overnight stay.

This included pre-putting on the green, cocktails and a competition, before a tented dinner overlooking the fairway of Kooindah's 18 hole, 72 par championship golf course.

The resort, with 83 stylish rooms and apartments, has six conference rooms, the largest seating 224 cabaret style.

When it comes to accommodation for large groups and resort buyouts, Kooindah works with Magenta Shores and vice-versa.

Departing the resort for the airport the following morning, the group had morning tea at the Australian Reptile Park at Somersby, available for private functions and corporate events, for a hands-on experience with Tassie Devils and koalas.

And on a behind the scenes tour, the group witnessed the milking of a tiger snake's venom!

