



## Dishing the dirt

ONE of the most surprising features of 'Celebrity Solstice,' which hosted Monday's launch of the Qantas/Cruise Guru partnership, was its quarter acre of manicured Lawn Club grass.



No synthetic lawn, this is the real deal and it doesn't use dirt which would cause issues internationally; the grass grows on volcanic rock.

Clad in thongs and bare feet, we had pre-launch drinks on its cool, green expanse, where out at sea, jazz concerts will be held. More surreally, passengers can enjoy a picnic here, complete with baskets and rugs.

Another unique feature is the Solstice's Hot Glass Show. In collaboration with The Corning Museum of Glass, this is held in an outdoor glassblowing studio.

Full to its 2850 passenger capacity when it left Sydney on Tuesday, the ship's Martini Bar & Crush serves more than 100 varieties of vodka and creates 26 kinds of iconic martinis.

Even James Bond would be stirred.

Jill

## All at sea with MICE



"It's complex," said Travel the World's managing director Andrew Millmore, when asked on board the 'Celebrity Solstice' how the launch of Cruise Guru's partnership with Qantas might be of benefit to the MICE industry.

"In regards to a group or incentive, a much more dynamic question is whether the technology suits that market or not."

The Cruise Choice technology, powered by Cruise Guru (part of Travel the World), allows Qantas customers to book cruises online through Qantas.com.

"The MICE question is something we would need to investigate," Millmore continued.

"Corporates want two or three day cruises where, at the moment the smaller ones are around 12 to 14 days.

"However, as more ships of great quality come down to Australia, like this one, I can see it working for individuals who win an incentive or reward.

"There would be many parameters we need to check off before we go too hard i.e. what facilities are on board to take conferences etc.

"It's certainly something we would consider in the future."

Cruise Guru's joint managing director Justin Montgomery said Australia was one of the fastest growing cruise markets in the world with 17 international cruise lines, 162 ships and over 10,000 itineraries.

"The integration of cruising onto Qantas.com will allow Qantas to leverage the largest and fastest growing market in the travel industry."

Montgomery is pictured above left with Royal Caribbean International's Gavin Smith.



## Bangkok update

WHILE the areas occupied by protestors remain at less than 0.5% of the total area of Bangkok, the Thai Government, in an effort to regain control of the anti-government protest, issued a decree last night that a State of Emergency exists in the capital, Bangkok, as well as parts of the Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani and Samut Prakan provinces.

Reports say there have been demonstrations at the Victory Monument and two small blasts were reported causing numerous injuries. A blockade of the core downtown protest areas from MBK, Siam Paragon, Central World, the Rajaprasong intersection and Central Chidlom, has been largely peaceful.

The 60 day decree allows security agencies to impose curfews, detain suspects without charge, censor media, ban political gatherings of more than five people and declare parts of the capital off-limits.

## Celebrating 21 years

INVISAGE, the provider of creative and technical services to the meeting and business events industry, is celebrating its 21st birthday.

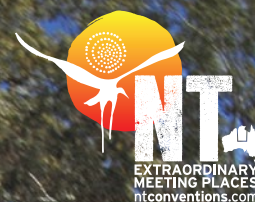
It started life as a design agency providing exhibit and graphic design services.

Today its products and services have changed considerably and now also include mobile event apps, event cloud solutions and website development.

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# business events news

22nd January 2014

## AIME sets hearts racing

**FANS** of ABC's *Gruen Planet* and its breakout star Todd Sampson, the thinking woman's crumpet (**below**), will be delighted to know that he is among some of the world-class speakers at AIME on 18 to 19 Feb at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.



This year has seen AIME invest more than ever in their education program.

Advertising executive Sampson will present on 'The Power of Creativity', which is built on real life experience and explores innovative ideas, cultural change and problem solving.

The program, covering topics such as creativity, interpersonal relations, events trends and business travel, includes one of Australia's leading human performance educators and researchers, Dr Adam Fraser; Forbes columnist Margie Warrell; one of the world's leading business productivity experts, Debbie Mayo-Smith and Graeme Joy, best known as joint leader and navigator of the International North Pole Expedition.

The AIME Knowledge program will also encompass the fifth annual Saxton Ultimate Event Experience, which will showcase 12 presenters and includes ARIA-winning group, The Ides of North; and personal trainer of The Biggest Loser fame, Michelle Bridges (**below**).

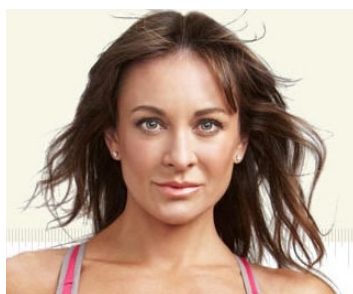
The line up also features musician Darren Percival, best known for his performances on *The Voice Australia*.

"This year we've created a comprehensive program that we expect will appeal to the varied audience that comes to AIME," said Jacqui Timmins, exhibition director at AIME and China Incentive, Business Travel & Meetings Exhibition.

Tickets to all sessions are \$55 for visitors. There is also a Visitor All Access Pass that will allow attendees to go to all sessions for \$175.

Exhibitors can attend the education sessions by purchasing an Exhibitor Company Pass for \$175, allowing one staff member to join any seminar in the program.

Visit [www.aime.com.au](http://www.aime.com.au).



## The Jelly Bean Cruise

**ON** Friday, the Danii Meads-Barlow Foundation set sail on *Celebrity Solstice* on the inaugural Jelly Bean Cruise.

In support of Intense Management of Type 1 Diabetes, the three day cruise aimed to provide a short break and an educational programme for more than 100 Type 1 kids from age four to 21 and their family and friends, to help the kids make new friends and to lessen the gap in the education of kids and parents about managing their diabetes, Foundation director Donna Meads-Barlow said.

Scholarships were provided for under-privileged kids and their parents to attend by the Foundation in conjunction with AMSL and Medtronic.

Tickets are now on sale for the third annual Danii Meads-Barlow Foundation Jelly Bean Ball to be held at the Sofitel Sydney Wentworth Hotel on 14 Jun.

The foundation is also looking for corporate sponsors and donations of auction items.

Contact Bill Goyen on 0411 061 794 or email Donna Meads-Barlow at [donna@danii.org.au](mailto:donna@danii.org.au).

## NTWR's event app



**NOVOTEL** Twin Waters Resort has introduced a tailored, multi event app 'Events@NTWR', said to be the first hotel in Australia to do so and one set to raise the bar in conferencing and events.

The events app, created by AVPartners, enhances the conference experience by serving as an interactive conference guide and social network.

Conference delegates can access up-to-date event documentation such as programs, videos and speaker, attendee and exhibitor information, through the app.

Delegates can post updates, tag their location, like and comment on each other's posts, send private messages, and respond to surveys and live polls from within the app, which also integrates with Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

The app is available on iOS, Android and HTML5.



**IS** it a man, is it a bird, is it a plane? Yes, it's Sky Whale!



Be prepared, for the future is nigh with the AWWA "Sky Whale," a concept air plane from Spanish designer and aviation enthusiast Oscar Viñals.

Designed with self-healing wings, virtual reality windows and room for up to 755 passengers, it uses technological innovation to make air travel more efficient and eco-friendly.

Using a mix of existing and anticipated technology, the lightweight air plane would have a wingspan of 88m, compared to 80m on an Airbus A380, the largest passenger aircraft on the market.

Viñals claims his flying behemoth could reduce aircraft noise, drag, weight, fuel consumption and emissions.

"The AWWA-VA could be equipped with new advanced technologies from alloys, ceramic or fiber composites, carbon nanotube and fiber optic cabling to self-healing skin, hybrid electric engines, active wings, double fuselages and virtual reality windows with adaptable opacity."

## Sweet smell of Ayana

**ANY** event planners looking for inspiration could take a leaf from Bulgari's book; the company invited key regional press to Ayana in Bali to celebrate the launch of its new fragrance for men, *Aqva Amara*.

The launch included a series of oceanic-inspired experiences to match the aquatic theme.

Named after "bitter water" in Italian, guests gathered for sunset cocktails at the resort's iconic Rock Bar, located on natural rocks 14m above the ocean before a seafood barbecue dinner at the adjacent sand-floored Kisik seafood restaurant.

The next day, guests enjoyed spa treatments at AYANA's Thermes Marins Bali Spa.

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## Ghan famil a first



**WHEN** Great Southern Rail and the NT Convention Bureau hosted a group of event planners on an Alice Springs-Darwin incentive famil last week, it was a first for the MICE industry.

This joint partnership offered the opportunity to experience this iconic rail journey in concert with the ever-changing landscape of the Northern Territory.

Participants flew in from Sydney and Melbourne to Alice Springs.

They were immediately helicoptered across the landscape to Doubletree by Hilton for a site inspection, followed by a look at the new developments and lunch at Lasseters' new Tali restaurant.

A tour of Alice Springs Desert Park and its unique venues was followed by a 4WD touring experience with Direct Four WD Awareness, who in turn drove the group to The Ghan train terminal.

Travelling in the train's Sir John Forrest private car, an option for incentive groups, they dined in style in the Queen Adelaide restaurant carriage and travelled through the Red Centre.

The group arrived in Katherine

the following morning for a boat tour of Nitmiluk (Katherine) Gorge with its distinctive escarpments and bird life.

Back on the train and continuing on to Darwin, the landscape changed from scrubby dry to lush greenery, as the rains came down and the waters rose.

In Darwin the group enjoyed a special dinner organised by APEvents at Pee Wee's at the Point and stayed the night on the Darwin waterfront at the stylish Adina apartment hotel.

The next day there were visits to diCroco, who specialise in high quality crocodile products and corporate gifts, as well as Paspaley to admire the magnificent pearls and to sip a glass of Moet before departure.

**Pictured** cruising on Nitmiluk Gorge are, from left, Penny Whitelaw of Solterbeck, Anne Gowllett of Insignia Managment, Sonja Soderbom of Ovation Australia, Claudia Renner of NT Conventions. In the back row are Polly Maitland of cievevents and Guy Fitzpatrick of Events Beyond.

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## Check In App makes tracking event attendance 'easy'

It's had mixed reviews, but an Android and iPhone app that manages the often cumbersome check-in process for conferences and events has been launched by US company Certain.

Check In Easy helps with simple and fast guest registration, check-in, and management at events – for two people to 20,000.

Key features include:

- eliminate the need for paper guest lists, clipboards and binders.
- upload an excel file guest list and you are ready to go.
- add guests on the fly.
- check in through web app and live sync with Android, iPads and iPhones.
- email and text alerts tell you when important guests arrive.
- boarding pass feature lets you send your guests printable tickets with unique bar codes.
- quick check-in using the integrated ticket scanner.
- search for guests quickly using

smart search technology.

- get live stats during the event.
- easily download guest list of who attended and when.

How much the app costs depends on the size of your event, so it's worth checking this out first to see if it meets your budget. You will need to create a user name and password with the app developer to do this.

More information is available at: <http://www.checkineasy.com/>

The app can be

downloaded from the Apple or Android app store.

*To check out the latest tech news for small business visit Tony Wragg's TechTalk online at [tonystechtalk.com.au](http://tonystechtalk.com.au).*



## Plan it with Starwood

**STARWOOD** is making the New Year more rewarding for Starwood Preferred Planners, when they book a meeting by 28 Feb at any of their participating properties in Asia Pacific.

With every US\$18,000 spend they receive a mini tablet.

This can be combined from multiple bookings across all participating properties.

It is also a new way to earn Starpoints.

Preferred Planners earn one Starpoint for every US\$3 and one room night credit toward elite status for every 10 group room nights used.

Starwood Preferred Planner Gold and Platinum members earn one Starpoint for every US\$2 (50% more earnings) and one room night credit toward 'elite status' for every 10 group room nights consumed.

## Medical tourism in Oz

**AN** increasing number of Australians may be travelling to Asian countries such as Thailand and Singapore for cheap medical procedures but data from Tourism Research Australia showed 10,739 people flew into Australia for medical reasons in the year to Sep 2013, spending more than \$26 million and staying an average of 28 nights.

The total spend was down on the previous year, but almost double that spent in 2006.

The news came as the Vic government worked to increase health and medical exports including medical tourism, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported.

The Australian Medical Association president Dr Steve Hambleton told *Pharmacy Daily* that Australia had a highly respected medical environment and rigorous medical training.