



## Analyse this

**FOR** the most part, when it comes to evaluating a hotel on an internet booking site, we tend to return home with happy memories and report as such, while at other times we may find fault with our stay.



The international booking portal hotel.info, which has analysed the comments of its customers since 2012, thus providing an opportunity for the hotelier to improve their service and aspects of hygiene, shows that poor service, lack of cleanliness and a poor selection on the breakfast buffet are the main points criticised.

The numbers for the top three complaints were 65.5% had negative comments about the extra costs for internet access, parking, and breakfast, 53.9% commented on a lack of service and 48.2% about breakfast choice.

After this, it was comfortable beds at 45.9%, dirty rooms at 43.10%, unfriendliness at 35.2%, quality of breakfast at 32.9%, noise level in the room at 30.6% and value for money at 29.9%.

Hotels.com did caution that a hotel in the budget price segment could not offer the same level of service as one with four or five stars.

It was important, it said, for all potential hotel guests to realise before they set off on their journey that those who expected five star service had to pay accordingly.

Jill

## NEXT gm appointed

**RUSSELL** Durnell has been appointed as general manager of NEXT Hotel Brisbane, the first NEXT hotel to open, SilverNeedle Hospitality said.

Durnell was most recently the gm of the Palazzo Versace on the Gold Coast.

The NEXT Hotel Brisbane is set to open in September.

## AIDS conference success

**THE** AIDS 2014 conference, held in Melbourne last week (**BEN** 18 Jul), has been labelled a success by those involved.

Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) ceo Karen Bolinger said city organisers had told the MCB that everything had gone smoothly.

Feedback from the organisers and delegates had highlighted the city's support of the conference, which saw about 13,500 attendees, including 1,000 volunteers and 500 media, she said.

Lessons learned included that not every delegate was, or wanted, the same thing, with flexibility needed when it came to accommodation, food and activities, Bolinger said.

There had been a "significant number" of pre and post tours,

as well as satellite conferences held in the city and its regions, Bolinger said.

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre ceo Peter King said the conference had allowed the Centre to build networks with international organisations, create new alliances and leave a legacy of new opportunities for research and business.

"Importantly it has created a new level of understanding about the social impacts and human rights of AIDS/HIV.

"It was wonderful for our staff to be part of such an important event."

He said the Centre shone, with 80 MCEC technicians facilitating worldwide broadcast of more than 100 satellite events and uploading 400 presentations to the AIDS 2014 website.

## Four pages today

**BEN** has three pages of editorial plus a full page from (**click**):

- Tangalooma Island Resort

## \$90m Sunshine Park

**THE** proposed development of a privately funded \$90m water theme park, slated to include function facilities and a hotel, has been welcomed by Sunshine Coast Development Ltd (SCDL).

The organisation said it would boost the area's reputation as a popular destination for groups.

Waterplay Pty Ltd had proposed the park, which would also include restaurants, at Glenview on a 24ha site, with the first stages of development set to start next year, SCDL said.

## How flash is this?



**THIS** morning, delegates from the NSW Nurses & Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) heading by dedicated train to Rosehill Gardens for the annual conference, received a surprise.

Courtesy of the Mercure Sydney, a troupe of 'employees' sprang to life in a flash mob song and dance performance outside the hotel.

The train idea was such a hit last year that the delegates decided to hop on board the train again this year, so Mercure Sydney upped the ante by organising the flash mob to see them off to Central Station on the first day of the 69th edition of the conference.

NSWNMA member Liz Rivas said the flash mob was "totally unexpected" and had the 'wow' factor.

"I've seen flash mobs on the internet and in clips on TV but I'd never seen one in person – it was just great.

"A big thrill and a great start to the conference."

Mercure Sydney general manager Greg Brady said the hotel was delighted to be able to provide the innovative conferencing solution as well as a bright start to the Association's conference.

**CLICK HERE** to view a video and **HERE** for more photos.



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# business events news

30th July 2014



## crumbs!

**EVER** run out of electronic juice while tweeting, networking or just plain Facebooking at an exhibition or event?

Expo Direct might have what you need with its newly announced mobile phone charging station kiosk.

As reported by the Exhibition and Event Association of Australia, the Mobile Phone Charging Station Kiosk was suited to more than 90% of smart phones on the market and came with advertising screens and panels that could be tailored, Expo Direct said.

Some convention centres (and airports) these days have charging stations for phones, with leads contained in cabinets for a fee (\$1 for 12 minutes and \$5 for an hour at the Melbourne Convention Centre, which also provides vending machines that sell power pods to charge phones).

Chargers are a good idea in this fandangled new age of technology and doo-dads, but surely access to power ought to be a given - computers have been around for a while.

However, at a recent conference **BEN** attended, power points were nowhere to be seen.

A helpful AV person hooked up a multi-plug to a special panel behind the wall and dragged it over to the table, but this unfortunately meant a few delegates taking a dive over the trailing cord (**BEN** hid).

Another hiccup was WiFi, which was not readily accessible (after a post haste mission by organisers, the password had to be whispered during the keynote speech - surely one of the weirder heckles of all time) and could only handle a certain number of devices.

Grumble grumble - but cardinal conference sins in a reporter's eyes!

## Newport Mirage fires up



**NEWPORT** Mirage's 'Christmas in July' Business Expo, held last Friday (**BEN** 28 Jul) at the four star waterfront hotel and function centre, was a first for the hotel and a first look for many of the invited event and conference planners.

With 38 executive rooms, nine waterfront spa suites (accommodating up to 94 guests) and conference space for up to 130 theatre style, the event was held in the hotel's glass-encased Pittwater Reception room, and if the stunning vistas across Pittwater and beyond weren't enough to impress the guests then the fire cooking demonstrations by Leona Watson, director of Cheeky Foods, certainly stopped them in



Make a Splash...

Conference  
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One Hour North of Sydney

their tracks.

"I have a very simple philosophy in life...if it's not fun, I'm not interested!"

"But it can't be frivolous either.

"My objective is to create big smiles all round and to bring people together, which is what being 'Cheeky' is all about."

Joining her was Mindy Wood, Masterchef finalist who cooked up a storm and gave tips and David Biddle from Smart Boating who provides team sailing.

## Alice famil drives biz

**THE** recent 2014 Alice Stampede mega-familiarisation in Alice Springs looks set to attract more business to the area.

Nineteen association, corporate and event planners viewed venues and accommodation and experienced an array of 'uniquely Alice' experiences.

A joint initiative of the Alice Springs Convention Centre and the Northern Territory Convention Bureau (NTCB), NTCB assistant director Nicole Jervis said it was already clear that there would be some "serious new business" as a result of the famil.

The packed itinerary included a mini Henley-on-Todd regatta in the dry river bed before a performance by an Indigenous children's drumming group, Drum Atweme, and a visit from some unusual Territorians from the Alice Springs Reptile Centre as well as a Business Forum held at the Alice Springs Convention Centre with five local speakers.

## ADVERTISING SALES EXECUTIVE Sydney-based

Travel Bulletin, the Australian travel industry's pre-eminent print publication, is seeking a sales professional to promote our respected monthly magazine to existing and new clients across the country.

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# travelBulletin

## EIBTM expects biz ev appt growth

**EIBTM** has said it is expecting to "significantly exceed" the 17,300 appointments that took place between exhibitors and hosted buyers at EIBTM 2013 at its meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions platform, the Global Village.

EIBTM senior exhibition director Graeme Barnett said the organisation continued to see growing interest by brands looking to take part in the Global Village.

Of the more than 17,000 appointments, there were 780 companies, more than half of which were hotels, he said.





# business events news

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## Tjapukai spends \$14m

**ON TRACK** and due for completion by the end of the year, the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park in Cairns is undergoing a \$14m redevelopment, which includes upgrading, renewing and introducing new aspects to the depiction of Indigenous culture.

An official relaunch was scheduled to take place in April 2015 once new branding had been completed, sales executive Saskia Wrobluskie told **BEN** at the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef Show held in Sydney recently.

The Park is recognised as the national ambassador for Australia's Aboriginal cultural tourism and is well utilised for conference and team building activities and incentive programs.

## Accor appointments

**ACCOR** has announced a host of new appointments this month.

D'orne Fitzpatrick has been appointed gm of the Sebel Resort Noosa, previously Mercure & ibis Brisbane rooms division manager.

Victoria Deak has been appointed gm of the ibis Sydney Thornleigh; most recently she was ibis Sydney Airport hotel operations manager.

Antony Platford has been appointed gm of the Novotel Melbourne on Collins, replacing Hayden Hughes, who will be gm ibis Budget Brand and gm ibis Sydney Airport; Platford was most recently Novotel Century Hong Kong vice president operations - Greater China.

## A whale of a time



**A TWO** day famil organised by The Byron at Byron Resort and Spa's Sydney and Melbourne offices showcased some of the town's natural attractions, including gourmet chocolates, luxurious spa treatments and encounters with the 'local' wildlife.

The famil group enjoyed a chocolate making session at Byron Bay Cacao and dinner on the Byron at Byron's rainforest veranda where guests enjoyed the Northern Rivers' finest locally farmed produce.

When not enjoying the region's epicurean delights, the group experienced The Byron at Byron's legendary Spa and Wellness Centre and spotted whales from Cape Byron Bay Lighthouse and dolphins from beautiful Watagos Beach.

## Dockside Pav opens

**THE** Dockside Pavilion Darling Harbour has officially opened today.

After two years of planning and eight weeks of construction, the first guests would cross the gangway on Thursday for the Sydney International Boat Show, Dockside Group said.



## Sitting Pretty

### Malaysia Airlines Business Class

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

***IT HAS** been a woeful four months for Malaysia Airlines. As the drama around the recent MH17 disaster continues to bubble, the conjecture around MH370 remains unresolved and a perfect mystery, but one which continues to bring largely negative publicity to the carrier. Despite all the theories, it is just that, a mystery for which no fault can yet be attributed to the airline itself. Crystal clear however is that Malaysia Airlines remains one of the finest Asian carriers in the sky, delivering outstanding service and a comfortable ride from take-off to landing. **BEN** recently flew with MH in Business Class to Sydney and found this never to be more true.*

#### CHECK-IN

KLIA is a somewhat intimidating labyrinth of an airport due to its size, but is well signposted to help travellers find their check-in counters and the departures area. Foreign passport control lanes offer a dedicated section for Business Class passengers and security is quick and efficient for passengers to board the SkyTrain to another terminal from which many flights to Australia depart. The newly renovated MH Business Class lounge is gigantic with hundreds of different seating areas and a selection of hot and cold food, TVs and reading material.

#### THE SEAT

Passengers are seated in a 2-2-2 configuration across the A330-300 aircraft operating **BEN's** flight, and we were allocated a window on this occasion. Seats are divided with a centre table which is small but provides adequate space to rest a drink. An easy-to-use control panel allows the passenger to position the seat in different stages of recline and goes almost completely flat to sleep.

#### IN-FLIGHT CUISINE

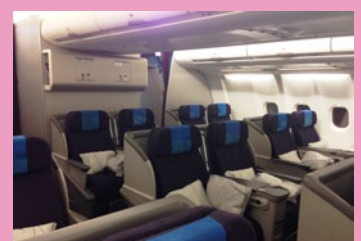
Departing on time at 7:50pm, the aircraft had barely levelled out when **BEN's** taste buds were presented with the first of two delectable courses. Up first were a selection of delicious beef and chicken sticks smothered in satay sauce, followed by our main choice in Ayam Masak Kuzi, or stewed chicken in Arabic herbs with tomato rice. In between came a selection of breads including the most tender garlic bread known to mankind. A small salad and fruit selection closed the affair.

#### SEAT-BACK ENTERTAINMENT

Nestled in the armrest is the hand-held controller to operate a large seat-back screen, with over 100 hours of entertainment on offer. This consisted of not just the latest movies but a selection of classics, foreign language films and children's viewing. This is on top of many popular TV shows, music and games, all made for peaceful viewing through the provided noise-cancelling headphones.

#### THE VERDICT

Asia-based carriers are renowned for their exemplary service and inflight experience, and Malaysia Airlines continues to maintain its position as a global leader in excellence in the sky. Try it for yourself.



#### CONTACT US:

Editor	Deputy editor	Contributor
Jill Varley	Alex Walls	Matt Lennon

For advertising enquiries email Sean Harrigan & Katrina Ford at: [advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au](mailto:advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au)

P: 1300 799 220 F: 1300 799 221

PO Box 1010 Epping, NSW, 1710

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# Enviably Conferences On Moreton Bay's Doorstep



One fiery new restaurant plus two refreshing renovations equals three enviable eats. The last 6 months has seen Tangalooma reinvigorate its culinary offerings from the humble fish and chips to Asian-infused a-la-carte dining. Guests can now enjoy their delicious food in awe of the breathtaking Moreton Bay vistas, with all outlets optimising their location and seating layouts to offer absolute beachfront dining.

The edible enhancements extend further than family feasts and romantic

reservations, with the introduction of the Waterfront Pavilion. Situated right on the beach, this private slice of absolute ocean frontage caters specifically to conferences, events and wedding receptions.

Sporting fans and movie buffs alike will appreciate the overhaul of the Sportsman's Bar and Club Lounge, soon boating premium comfort in an energising atmosphere to watch the latest national and international sporting events.

Tangalooma's had more than a face lift, it's revitalised its food, dining and entertainment experiences to truly cater to all taste buds and budgets all while optimising on those spectacular, and unique, East Coast sunsets.

**Booked your 2014 Staff Christmas Party yet? Dates and great rates still available in November.**  
**To find out more, contact**  
**[corporate@tangalooma.com](mailto:corporate@tangalooma.com)**



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