



York & Vikings

SHOULD your UK incentive or event include Yorkshire, then the roaming supper that the Jorvik Group offers is worth including.



Available for groups of up to 45, it includes after hours access to three extraordinary attractions.

It starts at the JORVIK Viking Centre, built on the well-preserved remains of part of Viking Jorvik (York), with canapés as costumed interactive Vikings give guests private tours of the galleries and a time capsule ride.

Onwards to the medieval town house Barley Hall for a goblet of mead and private viewing of the *A Horrible History* exhibition, followed by a seated medieval banquet in the Great Hall.

The evening ends at the archaeological adventure DIG for dessert canapés and more fascinating insights - I can dig it!

Big year for Brisbane shows

BRISBANE Convention & Exhibition Centre is seeing a strong performance, with nine new events to be hosted this year.

The busy calendar covers a huge range of topics, such as food, health, family, lifestyle, finance and business along with holidays, travel and entertainment with both trade and consumer shows.

One of the key additions is Convenc Queensland, a "brand new business events expo" taking place on 29 July which will showcase the state's iconic and lesser-known hotels, destinations, venues and attractions.

Another trade event is the Australian Woodworking Industry Suppliers Association (AWISA 2014) taking place 6-9 August, with both local and international exhibitors taking part.

Thousands of geeky fans are expected to attend OZ Comic-Con Brisbane (6-7 September) and Supanova 2014

(28-30 November), while the Queensland Police Expo (22-23 August) is also predicted to be a big hit with Queenslanders.

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre gm Bob O'Keefe said the surge of events was evidence of a healthy capacity for industry innovation.

"The value of exhibitions cannot be underestimated, with benefits extending to all areas of the economy," he said.

ICE Sydney launch

THE newly formed ICE – Incentive, Conference & Event Society Asia Pacific (icesap.org) – is to hold its Sydney Membership Launch event in association with Marriott International.

It's on at Pier One Sydney Harbour from 6pm on Tue 08 Jul, hosted by inaugural ICE president Nigel Gaunt - to RSVP email georgia.proctor@icesap.org.

AAT Kings groupie

AUSTRALIA/NZ tour operator AAT Kings has created a new role of groups and charter manager, with Amy Halpin appointed to the position.

The move signals a new focus on the groups market, making it easier for clients to create an itinerary that suits their needs.

AAT Kings says it's seen a significant jump in group and customised bookings over the last year, with the company's large fleet and experienced driver/guides enabling it to provide "competitive quotes and innovative itineraries".

For more info call 1300 303 337.

Vanuatu Grand refurb

THE updated 74-room Grand Hotel and Casino Vanuatu is to be unveiled this week, with a revitalised restaurant, pool, grand lobby and conference facilities plus fast, free internet access.

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Aquis to tap MICE market

AN AMBITIOUS \$8.15 billion integrated resort planned for Cairns has earmarked the MICE sector as a key market.

Aquis Great Barrier Reef Resort last weekend

released its Environment Impact Statement for its proposed eight hotel and casino north of Cairns, which has seen the project refined after public consultation.

Developers plan to construct an island surrounded by a lagoon in wetlands at Yorkeys Knob, on which Aquis will be built in two stages over the next decade.

Phase 1 consists of four hotels - two 5-star and two 4-star - that will provide 4,000 beds, an 20,000m² casino, theatre, aquarium and retail space.

By 2024, it offer 7,500 rooms and the casino will double in size.

According to the EIS, a 25,000m² convention and exhibition centre now forms the central focal point of the Aquis Resort, however it is almost half the size of the initially planned 45,000m² facility.

The Convention & Exhibition component will feature a unique "shell-like" roof architecture.

It will be comprised of Expo Halls, Convention Meeting spaces and ancillary function rooms.

The three Expo Halls will be 3,900m² each, and can form one



large space of 11,700m².

The Convention facility consists of four 1,800m² Junior Ballrooms that can be linked to create two 3,600m² Grand Ballrooms "which will rank as amongst the largest in Australia."

"Combining the Expo and Meeting spaces together allow for the hosting of internationally significant scaled events that require the staging of Exhibitions that can be supported by a parallel series of convention, meetings and seminars," Flanagan Consulting Group said in the EIS.

Two 600 seat Theatres will make up part of Aquis' Entertainment component but will also serve as additional plenary space to support major conferences.

The developers are expecting Aquis Resort will lure up to 1 million guests annually, 74% of which will be from overseas, with an average stay of four nights.

The public are invited to comment on Aquis Resort's EIS up until 05 Aug.

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New Pier One team

MARRIOTT'S Pier One Sydney, part of its Autograph Collection brand, has a new sales and marketing team.

GM Kim Mahaffy's appointees include BDM MICE, Chris James, Michael Anderson as director of sales, wedding sales manager Denee Wallace and wedding sales executive Erin York.

Wireless meetings

RYDGES' The Esplanade Hotel in Fremantle, WA has had Apple TV consoles installed in each of its nine meeting rooms.

The branch of AVPartners' Kris Licari, the initiative allows delegates to easily stream presentations, video and images from tablets, laptops and even mobile phones.

Star rating scheme revamp

STAR Ratings Australia has announced a significant change to its assessment processes, which will see properties reviewed every three years, rather than annually as at present.

The move follows the recent transfer of the Star Rating operations to Australian Motoring Services, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Australian auto clubs.

General manager Damien Hanger said the shift to a three yearly cycle followed extensive consultation with the industry, with the previous arrangement "simply unrealistic for commercial accommodation operators".

"A three year cycle increases our ability to identify areas for improvement, as well as maintenance or condition issues, and to support efforts to maintain quality standards," he said.

The new direction will include a \$1 million annual marketing budget, to be supported by a makeover of the Stars website and free property listings on a new search engine platform.

ABS survey reprieve

THE Australian Bureau of Statistics will continue to produce its Tourist Accommodation survey for another year, with the federal government announcing a continuation of funding.

Tourism Accommodation Australia has welcomed the decision, but called for a longer-term continuation of the survey.

The scrapping of the "independent, reliable" statistics had been criticised because they were used as the basis for investment in hotels and other tourism infrastructure.

A Tropical Recipe for Event Success!

Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef invites you to attend our annual showcase and discover the tropical recipe for event success.

BRISBANE
Tuesday 22 July 2014, 12:00pm – 2:00pm
Customs House, 399 Queen Street

SYDNEY
Wednesday 23 July 2014, 12:00pm – 2:00pm
Star Room, above IMAX, Darling Harbour

MELBOURNE
Friday 25 July 2014, 12:00pm – 2:00pm
Eureka 89, 7 Riverside Quay, Southbank

A cocktail lunch will be served. PLUS one lucky guest at each event will WIN a trip for two to Cairns & Great Barrier Reef.

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EEAA talks investment

TAKING its message about the importance of exhibitions and events to Vic politicians, EEAA chief executive, Joyce DiMascio met with the committee of the Parliament of Victoria's Rural and Regional Inquiry into exports of goods and services.

With a key message that the state govt must continue to invest in renewing its events infrastructure and precincts or it risks stifling the growth of the

events sector and the economic activity that stems from them.

"Venues like the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Melbourne Showgrounds and Royal Exhibition Building may be city-based – but what goes on in these centres has an economic impact across both the urban and regional economy," she said.

"Companies from regional Victoria exhibit at these venues meeting customers and doing business. With a growing number of events now "venue bound" or unable to secure space for exhibitions, conferences and corporate events, Victoria will miss out on crucial business," DiMascio cautioned.

She said the committee was particularly interested in the opportunity for an international standard events centre to be established in the regional Victorian city of Geelong.

EEAA stressed that transport, "fit for purpose" facilities and availability of accommodation were all major considerations for event organisers when considering locations.

MEANWHILE, EEAA's advocacy program shifts to the national capital this week when the association joins other industry groups such as BECA, AACB and ISES and government agencies such as Austrade to participate in meetings organised by the National Tourism Alliance.

"We are getting greater traction in Canberra on a range of fronts," DiMascio said.



USA TODAY reports that lead Lego builder Ryan Ziegelbauer and his team of ten designers have created a seven-foot-tall replica of The Grand Budapest Hotel using 50,000 certified Lego bricks.

The fictional hotel portrayed in the film of the same name (now named The Grand Brick Hotel), took 575 hours of work to finish.

With unique pink hued bricks that actually came from a specialty Lego collector in Germany, Ziegelbauer commented that on its completion he couldn't tell the difference between pictures he'd taken of the Lego model and the actual on-screen version.

"It looks like it could be on the cover of the movie," he said.

The structure will be on display at Architect and Design Museum in Los Angeles through August.

"After that, we hope it makes its way to Legoland California's mini land," he said.

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Face to Face with...

John O'Sullivan

Tourism Australia managing director



Business Events News recently caught up with John O'Sullivan, who was appointed Managing Director of Tourism Australia earlier this year. O'Sullivan moved to TA from his former role as Fox Sports chief operating officer. He was also previously chief executive of Events Queensland, as well as being a member of the TTF Advisory Board.

What does your role entail?

As md of Tourism Australia, my role is to lead the dedicated team at Australia's national tourism organisation. Tourism Australia's primary responsibilities are governed by its Act and essentially mean that the organisation is the lead agency for the promotion of leisure tourism (VFR and Leisure) as well as Business Events via Business Events Australia. Our role is to create demand for Australia as an international destination in order for the industry to achieve its stated ambition of growing overnight expenditure to between \$115 billion and \$140 billion by 2020. I report to a Board of Directors, chaired by Geoff Dixon, and am responsible to the Minister for Trade and Investment, Andrew Robb.

What's the first thing you do when you get in the office?

My daily ritual is to have an espresso coffee, check my emails from overnight (often from our offshore offices and partners), do a quick scan of the media issues with my Corporate Affairs team and then do reading of key paperwork. I try and avoid organising meetings to start before 9am so I have some clear thinking time at the start of each day. I think it's important to focus on what your priorities will be as well as doing a walk-through of the office talking to the team.

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

The travel. Being responsible for tourism in Australia is a role that requires a lot of travel - both domestically and internationally. Often taking me away 2-3 nights per week. Domestic travel can be just as tiring as international travel in many ways.

Dealing with new technology - bonus or headache?

Bonus provided it's simple to use and functional!

What would you be doing if you were not managing director of Tourism Australia?

I would still (hopefully!) be the COO of Fox Sports. Fox is a great business with a great team and a great product. They have been behind some of the most successful stories in Australian sport – the professionalism of Rugby Union, the creation of the A-league and the birth of Fox Footy. Some of Australia's most creative and dynamic people work in that business – it was very hard to leave.

What are your favourites when it comes to Australia's tourism offerings?

Our unique and ever growing collection of luxury lodgings around Australia – places such as Southern Ocean Lodge/qualia – have really driven demand and growth for international tourism over recent years as well as our simplistic offerings such as beautiful coastline. The offering we have now as a country is starting to diversify which is great.

Who has inspired you?

From a personal perspective, undoubtedly my parents stand out but from a business perspective I have been inspired by a number of people throughout my career. Harvey Lister is one who stands out for me. I worked for Harvey during University as an usher at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre. The experience inspired me to pursue tourism as a career. Harvey's story is an amazing, one starting in regional Queensland in the 1970s and now being recognised as one the world's leading proponents of Business Event and Entertainment event venue managers/designers and entrepreneurs. Harvey has also been a great mentor to many in the industry (myself included). He has also taught me a lot about commercial negotiation along the way as well!

How do you relax?

Watching my two daughters (8 & 5) play soccer on a weekend – grass roots junior sport is such a relaxing and levelling experience!