



Age shall not weary them

IT'S probably out of order for me to (openly) plug an advertiser, but I defy anybody, especially a conference or event organiser, to not be seriously impressed by the idea of a Club Med whole of resort buy-out, after seeing their full page ads currently in **BEN**.

MEANWHILE Max Kingston, one of the travel industries most recognisable figures, who started his career at the Bank of New South Wales Travel Service in Sydney in 1956, celebrated his 80th birthday at the weekend with "young" friends and fellow Skalleagues.

Max is still working in the industry as sales and marketing manager for Budget Rentals NSW and has been a leading light in the International SKAL network, having held many senior positions in the worldwide organisation including World President in 1992 and Honorary President of Sydney since 1993.

He's had postings in London, Fiji, New Zealand, New Guinea, Melbourne, Brisbane, aboard Orient Line ships and Sydney.

Max is an example of how a career in travel can show you the world ...and how retirement at 65 is not essential.

Skalleagues are pictured below with various generations of travel and SKAL friends. *Jill*



Six pages today

BEN has four pages of editorial plus full pages from (**click**):

- BridgeClimb Sydney
- Mantra Lorne

No MCEC expansion funding

EXPANSION of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) has been missed out in the latest round of Victorian government funding.

The 2014-15 Victorian budget, published yesterday, allocated \$25.7m over four years to develop Melbourne as a key destination for business events, to maximise business events' contribution to the state and for further support for the Melbourne Convention Bureau, Business Events Fund and marketing programs aimed at attracting business events.

However, no additional funding was allocated to further the Centre's expansion, prompting disappointment from the industry.

Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) ceo Dianne Smith said while it was good to see

the budget provide for several tourism industry priorities, it was disappointing to see the government had not allowed for the Centre's expansion at a time when infrastructure was a budget focus.

"An investment in business events is an investment in high yield economic activity, which is vital to boost the soft employment market in tourism and allied industries."

Smith has previously said the Centre turned away 17% of potential clients in the current financial year due to a lack of capacity (**BEN** 26 Mar).

MCEC ceo Peter King said while the Centre was disappointed no funding was made available, it would continue to work closely with the state government and industry partners to develop future investment opportunities for expansion.

The Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) said the lack of expansion funding was a missed opportunity.

Ceo Ken Morrison said while the increases in set funding for tourism marketing and business events was welcome, without the Centre's expansion, Victoria would lose its competitive edge to other cities.

TTF would continue to lobby for the project to be given high priority by the government, he said.

To read the budget, **CLICK HERE**.

Austrade event

AUSTRADE is looking for an event management company to organise the Australian Export Awards National Awards Ceremony, with a budget of \$160,000.

Up to 600 attendees are expected, including government officials and senior business executives.

The dinner would be held in Sydney in late November, Austrade said.

For more, **CLICK HERE**.

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New CFO for MCEC

THE Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) has a new chief financial officer (CFO) in Geoff Stephens.

Stephens will start on 10 Jun and was previously the finance manager of the Melbourne Cricket Club since 2002.

He also has 10 years' experience in various industries, MCEC said.

Ceo Peter King said Stephens would play an instrumental role in working with the executive team to implement the Centre's five year strategy.

"Our business is growing significantly, we have many exciting opportunities on the table and Geoff will develop his team to help us focus and prioritise these initiatives."

Stephens' appointment follows an "extensive" national search.

A NEW RYDGES ON THE BLOCK



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Nu Skin put Dubai on map

DUBAI has “opened the doors” for further large scale incentive projects after proclaiming a recent 14,500 delegate group from China a massive triumph.

The Dubai Convention & Events Bureau won the bid to host the Nu Skin mega-group in Jan last year, pitching against the much closer to home destinations of Singapore, Macau and Seoul.

Delegates from the China-based arm of Nu Skin arrived in waves to Dubai between 06 and 17 Apr, with participants from China, Singapore & Hong Kong, each spending five days exploring the emirate.

What made DCEB’s proposal to Nu Skin so successful, according to Dubai Convention Bureau director Steen Jakobsen, was the mix of itineraries available.

Forty unique itineraries through Dubai were on offer to the Chinese delegates.

The tailored itineraries all featured similar iconic key elements, such as Burj Khalifa, Dubai Mall, Dubai Creek and the Palm Jumeirah, paired with world-class accommodation and transport infrastructure.

Arrivals were spread over 10 days, with 2,000 people swarming to the emirate each day, making the Nu Skin group the largest ever incentive group in the United Arab Emirates’ history.

Speaking to media during the Arabian Travel Market tradeshow this week, Jakobsen said what was key for Dubai was the range of options and an extensive list of once in a lifetime experiences.

Dubai Tourism’s director for Australia/NZ Julie King added that “every group wanted a different program” and that was one of the challenges that Dubai was very successful to promote.

The majority (14,000 seats) of air capacity for the incentive was carried by Emirates, divisional senior vp commercial operations for Far East and Australasia Barry Brown told **BEN** in Dubai.

Brown said, “These types of

events can be used to show the world, ‘Look, we’ve done this for China, imagine what we can do for you.’

“The success of the Nu Skin group will definitely persuade other big groups to come Dubai,” Brown suggested.

Pictured below are some of the Nu Skin delegates with the iconic Burj Khalifa in the background.



Attracting diversity

CONVENE Q has reported attracting a diversity of Queensland products and services not typically seen at conference and incentive expos.



The expo will be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre on 29 Jul.

Well represented are a number of organisations showcasing a less familiar side of Queensland including Visit Logan and Backdrops Fantastic Australia.

They join exhibitors like Destination Ipswich and The Events Centre Caloundra.

Convene Q director Stu Freeman said this had always been an objective of the expo.

CLICK HERE to register.

Balgownie retreats

THE Balgownie Estate Vineyard Resort & Spa, one hour’s drive from Melbourne, has a number of conference and corporate retreat offers.

For instance, book and hold a corporate retreat in May or June with a minimum of 10 guests and receive a complimentary spa suite for every 10 rooms booked, plus free use of a basic AV package.

Delegates also receive 15% off spa treatments and 15% off at cellar door for the duration.

Balgownie also has three packages for the remainder of this year, plus a range of Christmas packages.

Find out more at

www.balgownieestate.com.au.

Sheraton GCs offer

IN celebration of the launch of the Sheraton Mirage Resort & Spa Gold Coast new Pandanus venue, Sheraton is offering a complimentary one hour cocktail party.

Upgrading to a Silver meeting package will net you complimentary accommodation WiFi for all new group bookings.

The offer is valid for bookings held during the month of June with more than 20 rooms per night and include the resort meeting package.

For further information or to book, email christie.haworth@sheraton.com.

Restaurant Australia



TOURISM Australia has launched a new \$10m campaign based on the idea of Australia being the world’s greatest restaurant, ‘Restaurant Australia’.

The campaign is called ‘There’s nothing like Australia’ and involves broadcast and print advertising, a website for Australian businesses to share their food and wine experiences, consumer promotions in international markets and an event held at the Museum of Old and New Art in Tasmania, called the ‘Invite the World to Dinner’ gala, which will see 80 international media and people in the business of food and wine attending.

Campaign roll out would occur in stages, with the first being the ‘Rally Cry’, which would encourage Australian food and wine operators to get involved, Tourism Australia md John O’Sullivan said.

CLICK HERE for the campaign video.

Pictured from left is restaurateur Neil Perry, John O’Sullivan and Quay Restaurant’s Peter Gilmour.

Inflight PEDs all the time

BOTH Swiss and Austrian Airlines have changed regulations to allow the use of portable electronic devices (PEDs) throughout flight.

Tablets, e-readers and mobile phones are included in the change, with passengers now allowed to use the devices in airplane, or non-transmitting, mode throughout take off and landing, as opposed to solely during the flight.

However, laptops and notebooks are not included in the revision and still need to be switched off and stowed at taxi, takeoff and landing, with Swiss adding the proviso that all electronics be switched off during departures or arrivals in low visibility conditions.

Austrian Airlines said personal electronics with a maximum

weight of 1 kg could be used.

Swiss said the change followed the European Aviation Safety Agency modifying its guidelines in December, which itself followed on from the US Federal Aviation Administration change last year.

Previously, personal electronic devices needed to be switched off at take off and landing due to possible interference problems, a UK Civil Aviation Authority spokesman has said.

A Qantas spokesperson said its policy of switch off during landing and take off remained the same.

“We are however always interested in regulatory developments that could benefit our customers and have been taking a close look at all options since the United States FAA came out with new guidance last November.”



business events news

7th May 2014

Fiji's \$70m upgrade

THE Fijian government has said it will invest roughly \$59m into upgrading Nadi international airport over the next two years.

Announced at the opening of the Fijian Tourism Expo this week, attorney general and Minister for Tourism Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum said the upgrades, which would include expanding departures and arrivals, would position Fiji well for the future by modernising and expanding the primary entry point.

The upgrades are expected to take 12 to 18 months.

MEANWHILE Tourism Fiji ceo Rick Hamilton has said the nation would expand its reach into niche markets and increase the number of proactive marketing initiatives with trade this year.

Tourism Fiji was looking to work with industry representatives globally to offer a tailored product to specific types of travellers that may not have previously been a focus, Hamilton said.

Breaking free at Coffs



WHEN the APOLA conference (Australian Professional Ocean Lifeguard Association) was held at BreakFree Aanuka Coffs Harbour recently, the boys from Network 10's 'Bondi Rescue' were part of the 60 strong event.

For two and a half days the delegates participated in beach activities, using the resort's beachside lawns for Pilates, and surprise, surprise, in their free time, they went surfing.

Vision's three resorts

THE Vision Group has bought three resorts; Sonaisali Island Resort, Tadrai Island Resort and Sonaisali Premium (Fiji) Residences, from the McGrath family for an undisclosed sum.

Staff will remain in place.

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Shangri-La Shard

THE Shangri-La Hotel at the Shard in London, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts' first UK property, is now open.

The opening ceremony included a dance procession and an official ribbon cutting by London mayor Boris Johnson.



The hotel is located on floors 34 to 52 of the Shard and has 202 rooms and suites, averaging more than 42 sqm in size, as well as three river-facing event spaces on level 34, which are connected to the sky lobby by a staircase with a view of St Paul's Cathedral.

The hotel is the group's 83rd, and third in Europe.



crumbs!

QANTAS has launched a new social media campaign designed to encourage passengers to get creative while they travel.

All it takes is a Qantas inflight bag, napkin, luggage tag or boarding pass to share their travel art via social media using #qantasblankcanvas.

The idea is a collaboration with Australian freelance typographer Gemma O'Brien, whose inflight bag became the canvas for her pen and ink designs during a Qantas flight last year; you can see her subsequent series exhibited throughout the Sydney Domestic Qantas Club.

The most creative entries will be shared via Qantas' Instagram (@QantasAirways) every Friday in May and winners will receive a double Qantas Club pass.

THE ULURU MEETING PLACE

EASY ACCESS TO ULURU WITH NEW MELBOURNE SERVICE

Jetstar will commence a four times weekly return service between Melbourne and Ayers Rock Airport (Uluru) from 29 June 2014 and increase its Sydney route to a daily return service. Virgin Australia already offer a daily service connecting Sydney and the spiritual heart of Australia. Never has there been a better time to hold your event, conference and incentive at Uluru Meeting Place. Enquire today!

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business events news

7th May 2014

Keeping up appearances



THE Residence, the luxury accommodation that allows single or double occupancy with a living room, separate double bedroom and ensuite shower room plus a personal butler, isn't a new resort development to rival the Qasar Al Sarab in Abu Dhabi's Liwar desert but the new forward upper-deck cabin on Etihad's A380.

Yours for around \$20,000 on a Dubai to London leg!

Unveiling the new product and service offerings on its Airbus A380 and Boeing B787 Dreamliner aircraft last Sunday, Etihad also redefined and renamed its cabin classes.

The premium cabins are allocated to the upper deck of the A380, while the B787 will have an enhanced First Suite, adding new features including a chilled mini-bar.

In keeping up appearances, Business Studio and Economy Smart Seat will feature on both the A380 and the B787.

Right across all cabins in both fleets, the latest Panasonic eX3 entertainment system will provide more than 750 hours of on-demand entertainment, with high definition screens and noise cancelling headsets with built-in magnetic audio jacks to ensure the best sound quality.



As with the growing trend in Europe, the A380 aircraft will have full mobile and WiFi service while the B787 will be equipped with WiFi.

For more photos, [CLICK HERE](#).

Fun and games

DARWIN will host the third Asian Pacific Outgames later this week, held from 10 to 16 May.

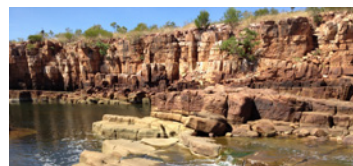
And in conjunction with the games, the Asia Pacific Outgames Human Rights Forum 'Power Through Action' is being held at Darwin's DoubleTree by Hilton.

The Forum program has keynote speakers including the Honourable Michael Kirby who will talk about the highs and lows of LGBT rights in the region.

The opening ceremony will be held in the Garden's Oval, the Forum dinner at the Darwin Sailing Club, and sporting events include track, field, roller derby and lawn bowls.

And, as nobody parties better than the gay community, queens from around Australia will challenge each other in the true art of drag during the Queens Pageant.

Kimberley famil



EVENT organisers who are considering the Kimberley region, or who deal in the luxury end of corporate travel, are invited to register their interest in an upcoming famil to the Berkeley River Lodge, nestled on Western Australia's remote north Kimberley coast.

The resort, positioned along a 65 m high dune commanding 180 degree sweeping ocean and river views with twenty luxury villas, is an outback adventure incentive bar none.

Check out **BEN's** Getting to Know by [CLICKING HERE](#).

To register your interest, [CLICK HERE](#).



Microsoft finally releases Office for iPad

AFTER a long wait, Microsoft has finally released its Office suite for iPad, and already it's the number one download on Apple's App Store worldwide.

Word, Excel and PowerPoint apps can be downloaded free from the App Store and used to view data or documents and make presentations.

However if you want to use the apps to create or edit documents, you will

need a paid subscription to Microsoft's cloud-based Office 365 service, costing \$100+ a year.

I've had a play with the apps and they work brilliantly. The downside is they don't link to Dropbox or Google Drive. You have to use Microsoft's OneDrive (formerly SkyDrive) to save to the cloud – assuming you have a 365 subscription. You can however access the file in your Dropbox app on your iPad and ask it to 'Open with' Word, Excel or PowerPoint. Currently you can't print from

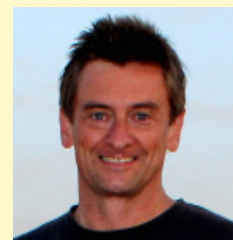
the apps, but I understand that is coming with future upgrades. It's worth a look, even if you just use it as a viewer. Importantly, the apps maintain font integrity, which means your documents look exactly the way you created them

(unless you have used a non-Microsoft font).

Before you establish a 365 account, check what version of the Office Suite is available. For example, the Mac version in 365 is only

Office for Mac 2011. I already have a paid version of that, so I will wait until Office for Mac 2014 comes out later this year before thinking about a 365 subscription.

To check out the latest tech news for small business visit Tony Wragg's TechTalk online at tonystechtalk.com.au.



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