



R U being served?

THE news from Etihad Airways that an elite team of 13 men and women have completed a specially tailored three week training course at London's world-renowned Savoy Hotel might well be termed the 'Downton Abbey' syndrome.



Not that there is anything wrong with that!

It follows on from the recent recruitment of more than 40 professional butlers from around the world to the St. Regis Doha.

And while this may seem a little OTT, it is in line with the St. Regis ethos to have a butler for every guest staying at the hotel.

BEN succumbed to the joy of the butler (BEN 09 Sep) at the St. Regis Bangkok, not such an easy transition for Aussie delegates who find it a bit weird to have a stranger ironing their newspaper (that may only be in Downton Abbey but I am sure the St. Regis butler would do it), unpack their suitcase or rummage through their bits.

According to London's British Butler and Housekeeper Academy, the Middle East has seen a surge in demand for British-trained butlers and Mary Poppins-style governesses, with some staff earning up to US\$240,000 a year.

But back to the hospitality skills of Etihad's Abu Dhabi based butlers; as the world's first flying butlers, their job is to look after VIP guests booked in The Residence by Etihad cabin, which features a living room, private shower room and double bedroom.

Beam me up Scottie! Jill

RTOs should up game



AUSTRALIAN Regional Tourism Network chair David Sheldon has said regional tourism organisations (RTOs) should "up their game" to improve regional tourism.

Sheldon told BEN RTOs needed to go back to their core responsibilities of representing their market at a local, state and government level, as many seemed preoccupied with their own sustainability.

Western Australia and the East Coast had examples of RTOs doing a good job, he said.

Maintaining local attractions, and investing in opportunities such as caravan parks, were ways for RTOs to improve regional tourism, as well as working more closely with local government, Sheldon said.

According to Tourism Research Australia, total regional overnight visitor trips increased to 52,497 in the year to June, up from 50,286 in 2013 and 49,459 in 2012, but saw a drop from 49,708 in 2008 to 45,596 in 2009.

Tourism WA ceo Stephanie Buckland said the organisation provided funding to five RTOs, which played an important role in marketing their respective regions, primarily to the intrastate market, but also to interstate and international

markets where aligned with Tourism WA activity.

"The five-year RTO contracts are due to expire in June 2015 and Tourism WA has commenced a review of its partnerships with the RTOs."

Picture credit: Tourism Western Australia.

BeAwesome @EIBTM

IN A first for EIBTM, exhibitors are now able to request additional appointments with hosted buyers following the initial appointment match.

This will allow them to browse hosted buyer profiles and request a meeting, and hosted buyers can accept or decline.

EIBTM senior exhibition director Graeme Barnett said research had shown that this was one of the key changes exhibitors wanted to see at EIBTM.

In addition, the Barcelona based trade show is also planning to launch a major social media initiative in advance of the show.

#BeAwesome #EIBTM14 encourages attendees to share how they are planning to #BeAwesome at #EIBTM14, whether from a business or personal perspective.

EIBTM will take place from 18 to 20 Nov.

Five pages today

BEN has three pages of editorial plus a full page invitation to the (click):

- Executive Networking Night and a full page of the
- Christmas Venue Guide



The Christmas Venue Guide

BUSINESS Events News has launched a Christmas Events guide - check out **page five** for the best end of year function venues out.

The last few issues are coming up so get in quick by emailing advertising@businessesnews.com.au



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business events news

22nd October 2014

Brisbane's new event space

BRISBANE'S Howard Smith Wharves is set to see a new 1,500 sqm exhibition space with the announcement that the HSW Consortium has been selected as the preferred developer for the site.

The 3.43 ha site would also see a new 150 room, five star boutique hotel under the Story Bridge, operated by the Asian Pacific Group, owners of the Art Series hotels, Brisbane City Council said.

The Consortium is led by Adam Flasks and Elisha Bickle, with Bickle telling the *Courier Mail* the organisation wanted to have the \$100m development finished by mid-2017.

It had six months to submit a Development Application, with development approval not



expected until the second half of 2015, and three years from submission to develop the site, the Council said.

The exhibition space would be situated in the centre of the site on a single level, allowing most of the cliffs to be viewed from the river, and would open up opportunities to host events such as conferences, the Council said.

It said 80% of the precinct would be public space, and a tourism, dining and retail centre would be developed using existing heritage buildings.

[CLICK HERE](#) to read more.

Pier-less new staff



AS PIER One Sydney Harbour transitions into its new skin this month following a significant refurbishment, a new operations team has been formed.

It includes a former roadie for bands like Deep Purple, Harry Singh (**pictured**) as director of operations; Brendan Hamson as business development manager; Emmie Sarangaya as business development manager corporate; Chris James as business development sales manager MICE; Feroza Saleem-Martin as conference and catering manager and Tanmay Joshi, conference and events operations manager.



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Restaurant Australia

TOURISM Australia has announced the more than 80 food and wine VIPs arriving in November to take part in a four day gastronomic tour of the country as part of its Restaurant Australia campaign.

The attendees came from 16 key markets for the organisation and included more than 40 food and wine journalists, 17 celebrity chefs, eight bloggers and five "broadcast celebrities", it said.

Guests include Sanjeev Kapoor, Takuro Tatsumi, Adrian Anthony Gill and Sherson Lian.

The guest list had a pulling power of 400m fans and followers, Tourism Australia said, with md John O'Sullivan saying the guests would share stories of the tour with their followers, which Tourism Australia hoped would inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

BCEC record period

THE Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre (BCEC) has said it experienced one of its busiest periods on record, with a 22% increase in the number of conventions held in August and September compared with the same period last year.

The Centre said it saw 223 events in the two months, in the lead up to the G20 Leaders Summit, including 35 conventions, with 15,000 delegates, which was estimated to provide \$30m to the city.

Gm Bob O'Keefe said there had been increased interest thanks to the G20, with momentum expected to build further.

The Centre had hosted 171 advance visits in relation to the Summit, with the G20 Task Force having arrived this week to start operational preparations, the BCEC said.



MOVEMBER will see multitudes of males growing mo's to raise funds for the Movember Foundation's programs and to encourage community awareness and support around men's health.

Amadeus IT Pacific men are putting out the challenge to the travel industry to raise funds for the cause. The person who raises the most money will win a **Shaving Brush Travel Kit**.

If you are game, **register at au.movember.com** (add your company name after your name and choose to join the **Amadeus IT Pacific team**) by the end of October.

Email your before and after pics and progress updates to mocomp@traveldaily.com.au and we will showcase them on **Facebook** and in **BEN**.

Get involved as an Amadeus Mo Bro! Click **HERE** to learn more about the program.

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NZ conferencing no's up



THE number of visitors to New Zealand for a conference or convention is up 4.4%, or 2,464, year on year to 58,304 visitors, according to figures from Statistics New Zealand.

However, visitors were down for the month of September compared with 2013, at 4,640 compared with 4,896 visitors.

Tourism NZ international business events manager Bjoern Spreitzer said the drop in September was due to the different timings of conferences, as month by month results could

vary due to the number or size of an event held in a given month.

The full year results provided a better overall picture, he said.

"Tourism New Zealand has significantly increased its efforts in the business events sector of the last few years and the country is now bidding for, and winning, more international conventions than ever before."

In the last financial year, Tourism NZ bid for 39 international conventions, securing seven, with a total economic value of NZ\$15.6m, he said.



business events news

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crumbs!

THE Hobbit Trilogy has been the gift that keeps on giving when it comes to NZ tourism, and groups can get in on the fun - just follow the lead of the 75 winners, including five Australians, of The Hobbit Fan Fellowship contest, who will take a five day tour from 02 Nov around the locations and landscapes of the film.

The group will also meet director Sir Peter Jackson and watch a preview of the third instalment of the film.

The contest saw more than 140,000 people from about 30 countries enter, with the winners to be flown by Air NZ to places such as Rotorua, for a hangi, and Queenstown, to visit film locations, Tourism NZ said.

Major fan Stephen Colbert has already had the best fan experience by making a **CAMEO**, so it's unlikely he's a winner, but we can always hope for more videos of shrieking fan reactions à la **THIS** Elf sneak peak.



Perth Qantas lounge

QANTAS has begun construction on its new domestic business lounge at Perth Airport.

The new lounge would add 30% more capacity, to cater for more than 350 people, the airline said.

Featuring meeting rooms and conference facilities, the lounge is set to open next year, it said.

Deals for Aucklanders



AUCKLANDERS can explore the experiences of visiting delegates thanks to a campaign by Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED).

The campaign aimed to get residents of the City of Sails to explore their own backyard and experience Auckland like a tourist would, ATEED said.

Half price deals were on offer through the voucher website GrabOne from yesterday.

Deals include a whale and dolphin safari, entry to the Stardome Observatory and Auckland Adventure Jet.

For more, **CLICK HERE**.

Really Royal Convention

THE Royal International Convention Centre at the Brisbane Showgrounds has lived up to its name with a visit from another royal.

The Princess Royal, Princess Anne, addressed the more than 230 delegates of the 26th Royal Agricultural Society of Commonwealth conference yesterday.

The conference continues to 24 Oct, with the bid to host the event won by the Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland (RNA) four years ago against other world cities, RNA said.

The organisation said the conference was expected to inject more than \$2.1m into the Brisbane economy.



Sitting Pretty Air Vanuatu Business Class

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

BEN recently sampled the premium cabin offering of Air Vanuatu on a 3.45 hour flight between Port Vila and Sydney. The national carrier of Vanuatu offers Business Class on its sole Boeing 737-800 aircraft which also operates on routes to/from Melbourne, Brisbane and Auckland. The cabin features eight seats in a 2-2 configuration.

THE SEAT

The 737-800 was introduced into Air Vanuatu's fleet in 2008. By today's Business Class standard the seat offers a limited recline and is more akin to nowadays Premium Economy product. The leather seats feature a 39" pitch and a very spacious 16.5" width with plenty of legroom and a footrest for customers in the second row.

MEALS

A five course meal with full bar service is provided to Business class passengers. The meal service includes assorted canapes and a selection of three choices for entree, main course and dessert, followed by a cheese plate. **BEN** chose the kanikama (crab meat) and cucumber salad, Japanese mayonnaise and tobiko roe (entree), the braised boneless lamb shank, farmhouse potatoes with pan jus (main) and warm sticky date pudding with butterscotch sauce.

ENTERTAINMENT

There are no seat-back, on-demand in-flight entertainment options; instead bulk-head mounted and drop-down TV monitors screen a selection of current and classic TV shows and destination information on the AV1 Entertainment channel. Additionally, there are a number of audio channels and an in-flight magazine.

THE SERVICE

Air Vanuatu's cabin crew are friendly and attentive. So much so, on the outbound flight from Sydney and with a full Business Class, **BEN** was handed a business card from the pilot with a handwritten message saying "do not hesitate to ask for anything".



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Postal address: PO Box 1010, Epping, NSW 1710 Australia

Street address: 4/41 Rawson St, Epping NSW 2121 Australia

P: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760) F: 1300 799 221 (+61 2 8007 6769)

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Publisher: Bruce Piper

Editor: Jill Varley info@businesseventsnews.com.au

Deputy Editor: Alex Walls Contributor: Guy Dundas

Advertising and Marketing: Sean Harrigan and Katrina Ford advertising@businesseventsnews.com.au

Business Manager: Jenny Piper accounts@businesseventsnews.com.au

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