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Reborn

TUESDAY and oh, didn't it rain, and still continues its damaging way across NSW.



BEN was heading to Sydney Airport, safely cosseted in a limousine courtesy of TFE Hotels, on our way to attend the launch event of Vibe Hotel Marysville in a town ravaged at the opposite end of the weather spectrum by the Black Saturday bushfires of 2009.

The rain and blustering winds delayed our 9 am flight, which eventually lifted off at 11.10 am, arriving in Melbourne to a bright, sunny day.

The two-hour journey to Marysville took us through the picturesque Yarra Valley, twisting and turning along a roadway dappled in the sunlight by mile upon mile of soaring trees of Mountain Ash.

The surprise of picture-perfect Marysville is that you'd hardly believe it had been devastated by fire, and occupying pride of place in the main street is Vibe Hotel Marysville, a modern take on a mountain ski lodge.

The local people we talked to are full of praise for the hotel group, which they credit with renewing hope and employing 64 people from Marysville and the surrounding area, with 60 Vibe team members coming from between Healesville and Alexandra.

On Tuesday evening, 250 people, including Victorian government bodies, TFE hotel's senior management and the media, kicked up their heels in the hotel's new conference centre at a party the scale of which Marysville hasn't seen for a long time.

Today we are going to see what the rest of the region offers in local attractions. *Jill*



Sofitel for Adelaide in 2018

ADELAIDE will see a new build Sofitel hotel, slated to open in 2018 with construction due to start in 2017.

The 250 room hotel would include a ballroom and meeting and conference rooms as part of developer Palumbo's \$140m 106 Currie Street property, Accor said.

Specifics regarding meeting spaces would likely be available closer to 2016, an Accor spokesperson said.

Accor Pacific chief operating officer Simon McGrath said the demand from Adelaide's visitor economy was growing, with factors for growth including investment in infrastructure such as the Adelaide Convention Centre.

"The new-build Sofitel will open shortly after the stage two completion of the Convention Centre's East Building and the



proposed Adelaide Airport expansion which will drive additional demand into the city's accommodation market – this a significant win for the economic development of Adelaide."

Adelaide Convention Bureau ceo Damien Kitto said the hotel opening was

testament to the continuing development in Adelaide for the business events sector.

The opening of the hotel, which followed the opening of about 600 accommodation rooms in 2014-15, would support the Bureau's drive to attract larger events to the city, on the back of the Riverbank business and entertainment precinct and the development of the largest biomedical hub in the southern hemisphere, he said.

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business events news



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has three pages of news, a front full page from **jito** plus a full page from (**click**)

- The Travel Industry Exhibition

jito connects

JITO is changing the way people connect, the company says.

See the **front page** for more details.

Sydney to see new hotel in York Street



SYDNEY is set to see a new hotel at 143-145 York Street, with the purchase of the property for \$21.25m at auction last week.

Sydney Hotel City Pty Limited, under the Yeh family, bought the property with the intention of converting the nine storey building into a boutique hotel with about 75 rooms, Knight Frank Asian markets associate director Andy Hu said in a release from the agents.

There had been three hotel operators interested in the property, with "limited existing hotel opportunities" in the market, Hu said.

The property has a net area of 2,654 sqm.

FTE registrations closing soon

REGISTRATIONS for the Fiji Tourism Expo (FTE) close on 01 May.

About 280 exhibitors were expected, Tourism Fiji has said.



Just one click away from keeping up to date with all the *Business Events News* as it comes to hand



THERE'S no avoiding it, non-Star Wars fans.

On your way to your next conference or famil, you could be boarding a 787-9 Dreamliner outfitted to look like R2D2.

Yes, the Star Wars love has well and truly arrived in the lead up to the new film.

All Nippon Airways (ANA) is set to launch its plane in Northern Hemisphere autumn as part of a five year project that will, the airline says, connect Japan to the global market - via Star Wars, we guess?

"With the skies as our stage, we will embark on a range of novel initiatives".

Whether it's a prank or Star Wars is a New Hope for the aviation industry, only time will tell - **CLICK HERE** for more.



Feather in NT's cap

THE thirteenth National Rural Health Conference is another "feather in the cap" for the Northern Territory, Chief Minister Adam Giles has said.

To be held from 24 to 27 May at the Darwin Convention Centre, Giles said the government was "working hard" to make the NT a destination of choice for business events.

The NT Convention Bureau was allocated \$2.5m in the 2014-15 state budget to boost the region as a business events destination (**BEN 19 May**).

About 1,000 delegates were expected to attend the national conference, with the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) partnering with the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) to bring the conference to Darwin, the Chief Minister's office said.

A spokesperson for the Chief Minister's office said the economic impact of the conference to the state economy



was estimated to be \$4.6m.

NRHA conference organiser Leanne Coleman said most states had been interested in hosting the conference, with Darwin chosen because it had not been hosted there before and was a smaller capital city.

A number of events around the conference had been organised, including lunch at Banyan Farm, with the Alliance trying to use local services and people as much as possible, Coleman said.

Pictured from left is RFDS corporate services gm Stephen Batt; Giles; NRHA director Lynne Strathie; and NT RFDS central operations gm Michael Toomey.

AVANI positive news for Perth tourism

THE new AVANI hotel in the Perth City Link project (**BEN 20 Apr**) is positive news for Western Australia's tourism industry, Tourism WA ceo Stephanie Buckland has said.

The hotel would be well positioned to support Perth Arena events, she said.

Tourism WA had calculated in 2010 that without growth in hotel capacity, about \$660m in visitor activity growth would be lost to the state economy by 2020.

Perth was on its way to achieving the additional 1,900 rooms needed to reach its Tourism 2020 goal, Buckland said.

Perth Convention Bureau ceo Paul Beeson said improvement of the accommodation offering, and qualified expansion, in Perth and the state was welcome so that capacity matched venue, tourism and amenity improvements occurring in the city.

What was important was continued support from the state government to market additional capacity, he said.

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Travel Daily



business events news



Airport hotel's good Choice

A **THREE** million dollar refurbishment to the Quality Hotel CKS Sydney Airport, part of the Choice Hotels franchise, was officially relaunched last Thursday evening.

Choice ceo Trent Fraser said it was the biggest transformation the company had had to one of its hotels, putting the property at the top of its range.

Purchased in August 2014 for \$23.9m by Singapore's TEE Land in a joint-venture partnership with Singaporean company Kenmooreland and Melbourne hoteliers Jan and Peter Clark of the Lancemore Group, it is the same partnership that recently took over the Diamant Hotel Sydney in Potts Point.

Strong on technology, it offers free guest WiFi, a gastro pub and, if not already included in the



room rate, \$15 per night parking.

The hotel's minimalist design, modern artwork and grey, white and blue palette was described by Lancemore Group ceo Julian Clark as "Champagne taste on a beer budget."

"We think this in part is what accommodation should be."

Pictured from left is Fraser; Paul Brasch, gm Quality Hotel CKS Sydney Airport; and Julian Clark, ceo Lancemore Group.

Expedia, EventBlocks partner up



COMPARISON site EventBlocks has signed a deal with Expedia Affiliate Network, which will allow EventsBlocks users to compare event rate for groups at hotels with nearby properties from the Network's inventory.

This would show users any lower rates or better reviewed hotels, EventBlocks said.

Founder Greg Young said group rates advertised by many large events were often not the best option available.

SA, NT agreement

THE South Australian and Northern Territory governments have partnered to work more closely on building new infrastructure and growing tourism.

SA Premier Jay Weatherill and NT Chief Minister Adam Giles signed a Memorandum of Understanding last week which would include looking at ways to make the most of economic opportunities from the growing tourism sector in both states, Weatherill said.

The five year Agreement would see a forum with the ability to create joint task-forces, Weatherill's office said.



Sitting Pretty Scootbiz Dreamliner

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

***BEN** flew out from Sydney the day after Scoot's Boeing 787 Dreamliner inaugural flight. Nicknamed 'Dreamstart', this was the first of 20 787s Scoot will receive over the next few years, as part of its bid to be the only airline to have a Dreamliner-only fleet.*

THE SEAT

The Scootbiz cabin spans 35 seats in a 2-3-2 in layout, with an adjustable headrest and a sizeable armrest. As with other Dreamliners, there are larger, dimmable windows and overhead bins. The full leather seats offer 96cm of legroom, 56cm of width, and a 20cm extendable leg rest, but forget about an angled bed, that's not what ScootBiz is about – think Premium Economy.

ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

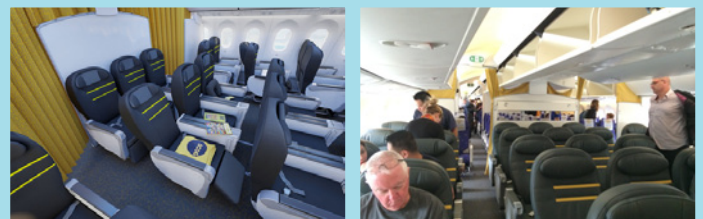
In-seat power outlets are available throughout the aircraft, while inflight WiFi entertainment can be streamed to your own device. To ensure a smooth viewing experience, you need to have installed the Gogo Video Player app to stream ScooTV. Pricing starts at US\$11.95 for one hour through to US\$21.95 for a 24-hour pass.

THE FOOD

Neil Perry it ain't. If you haven't pre-ordered before the flight, you get a predetermined meal. **BEN's** soya sauce chicken rice came with a small bottle of Wolf Blass Shiraz, a tiny carton of water and a Toblerone chocolate. If this disappoints, you can pay for something else from the 'scootilicious' menu (a word that may go down in the annals of crook food history), with options such as a beef casserole and creamy al dente (in another life) pasta with chicken sausage.

TIPS

Eat before you fly or take some snacks. Take an empty water bottle and fill it up inside the departure lounge. Pack your own amenities. Remember, this is a budget airline, so no illusions of grandeur and at a cost of about \$499 one-way SYD/SNG, it isn't half bad.



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