



What's in a name?

DISCUSSING the forthcoming AIME program with an industry colleague, I mentioned I was taking part in the post-AIME Great Ocean Road famil, somewhere I hadn't been for more than a decade.



Expressing that she had long wanted to see that part of the Victorian coastline, and especially the 12 Apostles, she added, "I'd better do it soon or there won't be any left!"

The fact is, even when these limestone stacks were christened by Victorian tourism in the 1920s, there were only nine in the cluster.

In 1990, the span known as the London Bridge collapsed and is now known as the London Arch.

Then in July 2005, in the harsh and extreme weather conditions of the Southern Ocean, a 50 metre tall stack collapsed, leaving eight remaining.

Forecasts are that this will reduce even further, as the rate of erosion at the base of the limestone pillars is approximately two centimetres per year.

With a number of excellent venues in which to conference along this great route, about which you will hear more in an upcoming issue, don't say you weren't warned! *Jill*

Creative conference

REGISTRATION is now open for the Emergence Creative Conference and Festival.

To be held from 08 to 11 Mar in Margaret River, the event aims to encourage creativity.

CLICK HERE to read more.

Industry nods events boost

TOURISM industry groups have welcomed the NSW government's announcement of an additional \$123.35m to attract major events to the state, including business events.

NSW Premier Mike Baird and Deputy Premier Troy Grant committed the 25% budget boost yesterday, bringing the total tourism and major events budget to more than \$643m, the Premier's office said.

The funding would comprise \$73.25m to attract events to Sydney, with \$22m for Western Sydney, as well as \$40.6m to grow regional tourism.

A spokesperson for the Deputy Premier said business events would also be targeted, with funding used for infrastructure, marketing and bidding for events.

However the percentage of funding for business events specifically had not yet been broken down, the spokesperson said.

The Premier said the funding



boost was estimated to see visitor expenditure increase by \$481m.

More major events, such as the Major League Baseball Opening Series (**pictured**) would attract more tourist, who would boost the state economy through expenditure on accommodation, food and transport, he said.

Tourism and Transport Forum ceo Margy Osmond welcomed the government's focus on business events, and said the proper funding of Business Events Sydney would ensure the true economic value of the International Convention Centre Sydney was realised.

Accor chief operating officer Simon McGrath said the funding would give Sydney the "competitive edge" over other major event cities in Asia Pacific.

"Events are no longer optional extras in tourism, in fact they are the number one way to stimulate a dynamic tourism market."

Level playing field for procurement

ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr has created a new Local Industry Advocate to ensure local businesses get a "fair go" when it comes to government procurement.

The Advocate would look at improvements to procurement processes to make sure rules were not designed around the needs of big players in a way which changed the process to the detriment of local businesses, Barr said.

"Our local businesses tell me they don't need protection or any special advantages, they just need a level playing field when they compete for government work."

CLICK HERE to read more.

Today's issue of BEN

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

- AA Appointments

Funding commitment 'encouraging' - TAA

TOURISM Accommodation Australia (TAA) has said the commitment by the NSW government to additional funding to attract more events and conferences to regional NSW is "encouraging".

Acting ceo Carol Giuseppi said while Sydney's hotel and tourism venues had performed strongly in recent years, many areas in regional NSW were in need of "considerable stimulus".

It had taken a long time for government to understand the "substantial" impact that events, conferences and exhibitions could deliver to the economy, she said.

"The NSW Government demonstrated their commitment to the tourism sector emphatically with the decision to rebuild Sydney's convention and exhibition centre, and they will now support that with extra funds to bid for substantial tourist, sporting and business events."

The funding would particularly benefit Western Sydney which had world-class venues, she said.

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MANY venues held Valentine's Day events over the weekend to celebrate the triumph of commercialism that is the 14 Feb, but we're guessing nobody went with the weirdest gifts kindly listed by *stuff.co.nz*.

These include Klingon Bloodwine for the Star Trek fan in your life, to help make the films slightly more bearable (BOOM) and chocolates in the form of a **certain part** of the human anatomy.

Our favourite has to be the various zoos offering to name repulsive creatures after your ex (or loved one, if you like that).

Bronx Zoo offered the opportunity to name a Madagascar hissing cockroach after your boo for the low, low price of US\$10 and probably a break up, although the tag line does kind of sell it: "What has six legs, a surprisingly high tolerance for radiation and is bound to crawl into your loved one's heart?"

San Francisco Zoo, on the other hand, allows spurned lovers to name its Giant Hairy Scorpion after the Devil Incarnate/One Who Got Away, for US\$25, saying the creature "just like you-know-who" waits for a suitable victim to wander by, then stings them.

Making a pass at NYC



WITH Australia the fifth largest source of overseas visitors to New York, Sydney's York Trading & Co was the venue on Friday for an intimate 'Friends of New York' evening, held by NYC & Company.

Headed by senior vp Makiko Matsuda Healy and accompanied by representatives from The Roosevelt, Marriott International, New York Hilton Midtown, Wellington Hotel and The Mamara, NYC & Co is currently touring Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne for a week (**BEN 13 Feb**).

Healy said the organisation had received "great feedback" from the business community about the NYC & Co Delegate Pass launched earlier this year, which adds value to delegate programs (**BEN 14 Jan**) but that as far as results were concerned, it was too early to give figures or say what its impact was.

"On this trip which is part of the Visit USA program, we are talking to Australian tour operators who organise corporate events and

we are also keen for anyone who wants to know more to contact us on nycgo.com."

Pictured from left are Jacqui Walshe, Sarah Stevenson and Jane Wilson, Walshe Group; Healy; Lucille Yokell, Wellington Hotel; Elio Arrabito, The Roosevelt Hotel.

Daydream Island sold

SUBJECT to government approval, Daydream Island Resort and Spa is set to be sold to China Capital Investment Group in mid-March for an "undisclosed sum".

The new owners intended to refurbish the Resort and continue operating it with the current management team, Daydream said.

Previous owner Vaughan Bullivant said the new owners had the opportunity to develop the southern end of the island.

Ceo Scott Wilkinson said it was "business as usual", with the conferencing sector having strong forward bookings for this year.

MEA webinar rego

MEA is holding a webinar on 19 Feb to launch the MEA 2015 Sponsorship and Exhibition opportunities on Hamilton Island.

MEA ceo Linda Gaunt said participants would hear of the opportunities available to businesses.

"Those that join the webinar will have the sponsorship opportunity available to them two days ahead of the rest of the industry."

CLICK HERE to register.



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ben Events Calendar

BEN's calendar details events at various venues across Australia.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email info@businesseventsnews.com.au.

18-20 FEB

Fundraising Institute Australia Conference 2015; Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre; visit www.fiaconference.org.au

20 FEB

DMS Workshop; Doltone House Hyde Park, Sydney; enquiries email sydneysvp@destinationmarketing.com.au

23 FEB

DMS Workshop; Crown Towers, Melbourne; enquiries email melbournersvp@destinationmarketing.com.au

23 FEB

Women in Leadership Event; Crown Towers, Melbourne; enquiries email melbournersvp@destinationmarketing.com.au

24 FEB

International Marketing workshop; Newcastle Airport; for more visit www.portstephentourism.com.au

24 - 25 FEB

AIME 2015 Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre; for more visit www.aime.com.au

4 MAR

NT Muster; Ivy Ballroom, Sydney; enquiries email trade.tourismnt@nt.gov.au

5 MAR

NT Muster; Park Hyatt Melbourne Ballroom; enquiries email trade.tourismnt@nt.gov.au

16 MAR

Ni hao WA 2015; Aravina Estate, Yallingup; for more visit www.tourism.wa.gov.au

24-26 MAY

MEA Conference 2015; Hamilton Island; for more visit www.meetingevents.com.au/hamiltonisland/

17-18 AUG

Inspire EX; Sydney Exhibition Centre @ Glebe Island; Sydney; for more visit www.inspireex.com.au



Three pillars of wisdom

IT WASN'T an official opening but a preview and get together on Thursday evening with the staff and executive chef Anthony Flowers at The Ternary, the Novotel Sydney Darling Harbour's new place to meet, drink wine, taste cheese and dine.



The Ternary's (the Latin meaning of which is 'three elements') open-spaced dining concept

Commenting on the concept, Anthony Flowers said of the open kitchens that diners were encouraged to sit around and interact with the chefs.

"I choose our chefs and employ them not only for their cooking ability but also for their personality."

Pictured behind the grill is the Novotel team, from left, Christy Hui, food and beverage duty manager; Joanna Lewis, business development manager; Tim Chen, and Ruwan Peiris, gm.



embraces three pillars; Asian cuisine, grill and a charcuterie wine bar, each allowing guests the opportunity to explore a range of cuisines from East to West.

Within the Ternary is the Sydney Wine Bar which, unlike the theatre, colour and action of the open kitchen, is a place for conversation and relaxation.

FTE reg open

REGISTRATIONS for the Fiji Tourism Expo (FTE) are now open.

The event, to be held from 16 to 18 Jun at the Denarau Island Convention Centre, was expected to see more than 250 operators and businesses attend, Tourism Fiji said.

CLICK HERE to register.

More Hyatt benefits

HYATT Hotels is enhancing its Hyatt Gold Passport loyalty scheme, adding exclusive benefits to 'Diamond' status members.

From 01 Mar, Diamond guests can extend their in-hotel benefits such as club access, free breakfast and late check-out to family or friends when they transfer a free night stay using Hyatt points.

Diamond Members will receive two complimentary United Airlines Club one-time passes annually, valid at over 45 airports served by United Airlines.

Diamond and Platinum members will have free access to premium WiFi in guestrooms and spaces.



Michael Cottan
General manager
Shangri-La Hotel, Sydney



Business Events News recently caught up with Michael Cottan, vice president and gm of the Shangri-La Hotel, Sydney, with more than 30 years' hospitality experience. Previously gm of the hotel from 2003 to 2008, Cottan returned in 2014 after serving as executive vice president for Southeast Asia and Oceania from 2011.

What is the first thing you do when you get to work?

I have a quick look at my emails, check the sports results (see how Newcastle is faring), then I do a lap of the lobby and the meeting rooms before my morning coffee.

What analogy best describes being gm of a hotel and why?

A magician, because you're often being asked to produce rooms you don't have. Seriously, though, general managers are somewhere between a host and a business leader. We have to sit in that weird divide.

You started in food and beverage operations 30 years ago – what one thing do you remember about service staff to this day as gm?

I started in front desk then moved to service. Life was a lot less complicated and the expectations were a little less complicated – in general and for me now. The customer has changed a lot. They are more demanding, they are always right.

'Shangri-La' is a fictional, isolated paradise in the 1933 novel Lost Horizon. Have you read the book? What's the most heavenly, and secret, feature of the Shangri-La Hotel, Sydney?

Yes, I read the book a few times and it's lovely. I also watched the film. The most heavenly thing to do here is to sit in a corner room on one of those big window ledges watching the ships move about in the magnificent harbour. It's

pretty hard to beat that. A real secret is that sometimes I sneak up to the top of the building and take in the view from the rooftop, up above Level 36. That's a real treat.

How can hotels better appeal to the business events market?

We need to adapt our executives to the different requirements of business events now. We may even need to hire execs from outside the industry at times. And we certainly need to have a better understanding of technology and modern communications.

What are Shangri-La Hotel, Sydney's plans for the Australian business events sector this year?

We are upgrading several of our smaller meeting rooms to give us a larger variety of options and upgrading technology in those rooms and promoting our new Horizon Club executive lounge as a place for high level board and executive groups.

Where do you stand on free WiFi for guests?

I think we can justifiably call ourselves pioneers as we were the first major deluxe hotel chain to introduce this to the market. That is the case in all Shangri-La hotels throughout the world – free WiFi without limitation.

If you could create any animal hybrid, what would it be and why?
A Seal/Lion. It combines my love of the ocean with the character of a fierce, bold animal.

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