



How wizard is this?

HARRY Potter

fans, spellbound public and groups visiting the UK this year might like to take in Warner Bros Studio Tour London - The Making of Harry Potter tour, where a new 20,000 sqft expansion is to be unveiled on 19 Mar.

The expansion is set to include the original 78 year old Hogwarts Express steam engine and a recreation of Platform 9 ¾.

The new, permanent section gives visitors the chance to climb aboard the British steam train No. 5972, 'Olton Hall', used throughout the Harry Potter film series and pose with a luggage trolley as it disappears through the platform wall.

The set, which offers unique locations for creative event installations, is available for corporate events, team building, and dinner in the Great Hall.

Guests can also meet John Richardson, HP's special effects supervisor, to discover the secrets behind special effects, fly a broomstick with the aid of green screen technology, meet with the feathered and furred animal actors and learn wizardry moves with a wand.

For more information, email events@wbstudiotour.co.uk.



Cook Islands centre plans

THE deadline for a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a convention centre feasibility study by the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation (CITC) has been extended.

Proposals are sought from consulting firms or individuals for the development of a feasibility study for the design, construction, development and management of a convention centre in Rarotonga, with capacity for 500 people.

The RFP document said currently, there were no facilities in the Cook Islands that could host more than 150 delegates seated.

This had been a "major stumbling block" for the expansion of the MICE market, which had the potential to serve as a strong base for the development of additional growth in the tourism economy, the RFP said.

The study would include site selection, with a recommended suitable size, and the centre would need to be capable of



hosting competitive events of "international significance".

A convention centre had been identified as "much needed" infrastructure, with tourism the leading economic sector for the Cook Islands, generating, with related service industries, an average 80% of GDP in recent years, the CITC said.

The deadline has been extended to 09 Feb.

CLICK HERE to find out more.

ACEM bookings open

FOLLOWING the completion of the Australian Centre for Event Management (ACEM) Executive Certificate in Event Management program by more than 300 students in Australia and internationally last year, the highly successful four day course will again be taught this year in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Singapore.

ACEM director Dr Rob Harris said bookings were now open for all 2015 locations, including for the first time, Adelaide.

For further information visit www.acem.uts.edu.au.

New Tjapukai ceo

TJAPUKAI Aboriginal Cultural Park has a new ceo in Greg Erwin.

Board chairman Bruce Glanville said Erwin would start from 02 Mar, replacing Geoff Olson.

Tourism Australia PR tender update

TOURISM Australia has answered queries regarding its tender for public relations services in several markets, including business events services in international markets (**BEN** 19 Jan).

The organisation said it was happy for agencies to tender across multiple markets, with the Request for Tender stating Tourism Australia was looking for services in markets including the USA, Canada, China and India.

However, agencies would be required to have a footprint in the market for which they were tendering, it said.

The ability to obtain and prepare market research in regards to tourism to and in Australia without seeking Tourism Australia to furnish it would be a key skill sought, it said.

CLICK HERE to read more.

MEA Young Prof scholarship

APPLICATIONS are closing soon for the Meetings and Events Australia (MEA)/Ungerboeck Young Professionals Scholarship, which sponsors eight young professionals working in the meetings and events industry in Australia to attend the MEA National Conference on Hamilton Island, from 24 to 26 May.

Entries close 31 Jan.

CLICK HERE to find out more information.



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30th January 2015

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IF THE Yeti wandering the streets of Boston during the recent blizzard was some kind of corporate hijinks, we still say well played.

Any veterans of the business events sector will have their own tales of surprise guests on famils or venue launches - **BEN**, for instance, heard of an actress being hired to play an eccentric hotel guest and an intrusive medium at one such event.

But we can't really see the point in the Yeti gig, so likely it's just some awesome soul who decided to dress as the Abominable Snowman and take to the streets of Somerville.

The becostumed individual has, of course, become a star on Twitter and in an interview with *ABC News*, claimed that he had been "raised and educated by the woods".

Of course, keen Bigfoot watchers know the majestic beast would never be so foolish as to actually engage with humanity on social media.

NEXT time you host an event in Singapore make sure you educate the smokers properly.

Smoking is not a problem in the island state - however where the butts go can be.

A man has been fined about \$600 for each of 34 cigarette butts he tossed out of the window of a high rise building over a four day period - a total of about A\$19,000.

The offence was captured on 600 anti-littering surveillance cameras deployed in the city.

PARKROYAL \$25m boost

PARKROYAL

Parramatta in Sydney's west is set for a \$25m extension which will see the hotel add four meeting rooms to its repertoire.

Slated to start in March, the development would also add 90 new rooms to the hotel, making it the largest in Parramatta at a total of 286 rooms, Pan Pacific Hotels Group said.

The work was set to finish in June 2016, and would see a new seven storey tower with a Club Lounge built, as well as the new meeting spaces that would bring the hotel's total offering to 12 rooms, the company said.

This would make the PARKROYAL Parramatta the largest meetings and events hotel in Parramatta.

Pan Pacific Hotels Group Oceania area gm Craig Bond said the development was in line with



the company's strategy to grow brands in key destinations across Asia Pacific.

A spokesperson told **BEN** the works would help meet demand due to ongoing development in Parramatta which was set to be "dramatically reshaped" over the next five years, with 32 new residential and commercial projects added to the skyline - potentially seeing the city overtake Adelaide as Australia's fifth largest CBD.

During the eight month construction period, some of the existing meeting facilities won't be available, however evening dinner functions will continue at the hotel's TABLE:30 restaurant.

TNZ Diamond Partner with Luxperience

TOURISM New Zealand (TNZ) is a Diamond Partner of Luxperience for a fourth year.

Set to be held at Australian Technology Park from 06 to 09 Sep, the partnership would see TNZ increase its presence at the exhibition, Luxperience said.

In 2014, 25 NZ operators attended the trade show, TNZ Australia gm Tony Saunders said.

TNZ would host the buyers and media lounge, organisers said, following its stint as major sponsor of the lounge last year.

Exhibition season kicks off

THE exhibition season is set to kick off next month, the Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA) has said.

EEAA ceo Joyce DiMascio has said the year would start with shows where thousands of exhibitors would present their products to market, with a diverse program including aerospace, retail and health events.

CLICK HERE for a list of events.

Singapore Tourism Board director

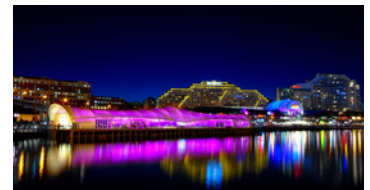
THE Singapore Tourism Board has a new Oceania regional director in John Conceicao.

Conceicao replaced Kenneth Lim and would oversee operations and in-market activities carried out by the Oceania team, the Board said.

He started as of 01 Jan and had previously been regional director Europe, the Board said.

Conceicao said the Oceania team had been making great strides in recent years to showcase the new experiences Singapore had to offer to both Australians and New Zealanders, and it would be an exciting year.

Floating your boat

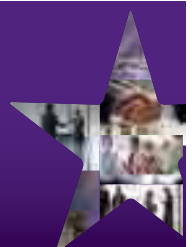


MORE than 800 Sydneysiders with love in their hearts and a \$99 entrance fee are to gather in Sydney's largest floating event venue, Dockside Pavilion in Darling Harbour on Valentine's Day.

Dockside said the Lock and Key cocktail party, which would prompt singles to interact with the playful element of finding the key to their lock, would include a three hour beverage package, a lock or key for each person, prizes and dancing.

Dockside Group md Christopher Drivas, said the company wanted people to understand that the venue was a "blank canvas" in the centre of the city.

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business events news

30th January 2015

Copenhagen coup

DENMARK'S capital Copenhagen is hailing yet another record breaking year for business events bookings, with the city adding 72 international conventions and 341 corporate meetings to its future roster - amounting to 367,000 bed nights.

It's the fourth consecutive record year in terms of bid and lead wins, with key events including the Women Deliver 2016 conference with 5,000 delegates expected, the 1,500-delegate World Hydrogen Energy Congress 2020 and the International Society of Blood Transfusion in 2017.

The strong result was attributed to close cooperation between VisitDenmark and Meetingplace Wonderful Copenhagen.

LaSalle buys Westin San Fran for \$350m



LASALLE Hotel Properties has bought the Westin Market Street in San Francisco for US\$350m (A\$443m).

The hotel had been renamed Park Central San Francisco with Highgate Hotels continuing to manage it on behalf of LaSalle, the company said.

The hotel would undergo renovation in the fourth quarter of 2016, LaSalle said.

The 681-room hotel has 23,000 sqm of meeting and event space including a ballroom with capacity for up to 1,200 people.

Aviation event idea?

THE NSW South Coast is set to add a key new attraction, in the form of the very first Qantas Boeing 747-400, which the airline is donating to the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS) at Shellharbour's Illawarra Regional Airport near Wollongong.

It will be the first ever 747-400 in the world to be preserved for public display, and joins the HARS collection of heritage aircraft, which also features a Lockheed Super Constellation.

VH-OJA will arrive in early March on what will be one of the shortest ever delivery flights, with an expected flying time of about 10 minutes from Mascot.

See www.hars.org.au.

1.14b international tourists

THE UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has said international tourist arrivals reached 1.138m last year, up 4.7% over 2013.

It was forecast to grow by 3% to 4% this year, according to the UNWTO's World Tourism Barometer.

Arrivals in the Asia and the Pacific region grew by 5% or 13m to 263m, just behind the region with the strongest growth, the Americas, at 7%, it found.

Arrivals in Oceania grew by 6%, the Barometer found.

Total trips abroad from China increased by 11m to 109m last year, with expenditure up 17% in the first three quarters of the year, which was a strong result, but slower than in previous years.

China was the largest outbound market since 2012 with a total expenditure of US\$129b in 2013, it said.

CLICK HERE to read more.

ibtm director Fast Forwards

IBTM events portfolio director Sallie Coventry will be a mentor for the Fast Forward 15 initiative.

The project would see 13 event and hospitality professionals mentor rising females in the industry, ibtm events said.

Those selected from an application process to participate in the initiative would be announced on 20 Mar at a launch event, the organisation said.

Coventry said as a woman who had been given opportunities to succeed in the industry, she hoped she could bring some benefit as a mentor.

Dalai Lama heads to Uluru

THE Dalai Lama is set to travel to Uluru for the first time in June.

Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia said as part of the Dalai Lama's Australia visit, he will pay his respects to the traditional owners of the land, the Anangu people, and will give a talk at the Ayers Rock Resort Oval on 13 Jun.

Those staying at the Ayers Rock Resort will be able to attend the talk, with packages on sale from 03 Feb, starting from \$343 per person twin share, following a period of exclusive sales to followers of the Dalai Lama.

CLICK HERE to find out more.



SHEER INSPIRATION

Oliver Sheer, managing director of BeChallenged Team Building, gives insight into the team building industry in a regular feature in *BEN*.

When last to you visit the zoo?

If you haven't been to the zoo in a while then you are missing out! Not only is Taronga Zoo the best seat in the house to view magical Sydney Harbour but BeChallenged has just created the ultimate scavenger hunt around the zoo using iPads and the new GPS app taking the world by storm called- Go Team.

If you are looking for the latest, interactive, hot off the press idea then Go Team is the product for you. With the flexibility to design and create trails anywhere around the world, Go Team has been a breath of fresh air to the BeChallenged creative team and a welcome new option to clients.

Go Team is a new take on the Amazing Race style of program which relies on iPads to guide teams around a certain locale or area. It is extremely interactive, flexible and can be tailored for companies or sponsors to include challenges specific to them.

Installed on iPads, the Go Team app features a unique follow arrow that helps guide teams to their checkpoints. Once members arrive at their destination, GPS-triggered challenges are issued to the teams in the form of questions, clues, and pictures that they will work together to complete. Updates, feedback and scores are kept in real-time as teams progress and the online messenger lets teams communicate with the Game's controller throughout the entire experience. Back at home base, each team is monitored and can receive bonus missions at key points in their adventure.

The Go Team app can accommodate any number of teams from six to 6,000, and is perfect for a location like Taronga Zoo. The new and improved Sydney Safari program using the Go Team app will guide teams around the hot spots and popular enclosures while letting the team strategise about which challenges to attempt and of course trying to earn the most points possible to be crowned Sydney Safari champions. For a new, hi tech, interactive team building experience at the zoo you need to call BeChallenged.

For more information about Oliver and BeChallenged's team building offerings, see www.bechallenged.com.au.



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