



B story

YOU may not be aware but things are abuzz at the Shangri-La Hotel Sydney and it goes beyond their popular restaurants and conference spaces because it's all happening on the hotel's rooftop.

Bees! Seven hives of them and what's more 14 kg of honey have been produced for hotel guests to enjoy in the past year.

And if you are wondering where are the flowers and gardens for the bees to gather the nectar you only have to look to the surrounding residential rooftop gardens and the Botanic Gardens with its exotic collection of flora for the answer.

Passionate about sustainability and being environmentally responsible, the hotel's premier restaurant Altitude, headed up by chef de cuisine Nathan Griffin sources local and organic produce where possible, laying on a spectacular menu on Tuesday for the Australian Society of Travel Writer's lunch, which featured his signature dish – West Australian swordfish loin and a melt in the mouth Riverina lamb braised shoulder.

Continuing on the sustainability theme, the Shangri-La has significant amounts of electricity since 2011, after participating in the Green Building Fund Project.

Take-away coffee cups sold in the Lobby Lounge are 100% compostable, chicken is RSPCA Certified and executive sommelier, John Mackinnon, features locally sourced and organic wines on his award-winning menu.

How b-utiful is that? *Jill*



BCD combines groups, M&I

BCD M&I and BCD Travel Groups have integrated their organisations to create a new "global operating unit" which will be branded as BCD Meetings & Events.

Scott Graf, who was formerly global president for BCD M&I, will head the combined organisation which has over 700 employees and operations in 40 countries.

Graf (**pictured**) said that while BCD's group travel and meetings units had already closely collaborated, the combination eliminates duplication in some areas that had been offered separately by each organisation.

"The new configuration positions us better for future growth and scalability," he said.

"The meetings and events business is booming around the world, and our shareholder is committed to seeking out investment opportunities in the meetings and events space.

In operation for almost 30 years, BCD M&I provided meeting and event management solutions across the globe, with support for single meeting and event opportunities, incentive travel and full Strategic Meetings Management Programs (SNMPs).

Ancillary services provided included attendee management, onsite staffing and reporting.

BCD Travel Groups provided in-country services for meetings, incentives, events and group travel including management of air, rail, hotel and local ground transportation, with a strong presence in Europe and Latin



America.

"The time was right to integrate these two operational groups," Graf said, with the new combined brand positioning the business for further growth.



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has 3 pages of news plus full pages from (**click**)

- Novotel Northbeach Wollongong special
- Travel Industry Exhibition

ACTE HKG regos up

REGISTRATIONS for the upcoming Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) global conference in Hong Kong next month are tracking 25% ahead of this time last year.

Key topics of the education program include case studies on strategic meetings management, the impact of 'sharing economy disruptors' such as Uber and Airbnb on corporate travel, travel program compliance and the development of high-performance virtual teams.

The conference is taking place at the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong from 26-27 Aug, with discounted ACTE block rates available for accommodation - **CLICK HERE**.

Best Western Qatar

BEST Western has debuted its first ever hotel in Qatar, with the 227 room four-star Best Western Plus Doha becoming the ninth Best Western in the Middle East. It's about 13km from Hamad International Airport.

YMEA Xmas in July

YOUTH MEA will host a "Christmas in July" event showcasing a range of unique and engaging suppliers.

Taking place on Wed 22 Jul 2015 from 6pm at L'Aqua in Sydney, tickets cost \$40 for AFMEA/ AIMM/AMM members.

Discover tropical treasures for your next event

Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef invite you to discover tropical treasures for your next event at our annual roadshow, 21-24 July 2015.

This cocktail event will provide you with the opportunity to meet with 18 business event suppliers from the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef region and discover all that our destination has to offer event planners.

That's not all! At each event one lucky guest will win a holiday for 2 to Cairns & Great Barrier Reef.

BRISBANE Tuesday 21 July 2015 | 12:00 - 14:00
SYDNEY Wednesday 22 July 2015 | 17:30 - 19:30
MELBOURNE Friday 24 July 2015 | 12:00 - 14:00

RSVP by Friday 10 July

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business events news

3rd July 2015

Gray's Say

Peter Gray, an independent Motivation Consultant, presents a regular *Business Events News* feature on current issues in the Conference and Incentive industries.



WAY TO GO

MEA has recently announced that it is to run its own meetings industry trade show, ostensibly to replace Inspire Ex which was cancelled earlier this year. We really do need another trade show like a hole in the head! Hotels, perhaps airlines, maybe NTOs will be asked to support the show but they don't have bottomless pockets and the number of trade shows has escalated in recent years. So why is MEA doing it? It seems to me that MEA has many other issues it needs to tackle before launching into the trade show arena. Or is this purely another revenue stream?

AIME this year was a disaster and both Reed and the Melbourne Convention Bureau really only have themselves to blame if others feel they can do a better job. AIME promised much at the show but delivered not a lot. Most people I spoke to formed the impression that the show this year was less about the meetings and incentives industries and more about making money for the stakeholders. After all AIME has two masters and both Reed and the Melbourne Convention Bureau take their cut which, in recent years, has also made it one of the most expensive trade shows at which to exhibit.

I recently attended Meetings 2015 in Auckland and, although I've said it many times before in this column, Conventions and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) certainly know how to run a successful trade show. Yes, it is only promoting New Zealand product, but the organisation is flawless. Hosted buyers are not treated as a necessary evil and they're kept informed about their travel and hotel arrangements. Bag tags are provided so there's no doubt about which hotels the buyers are staying at. Arrangements are not changed

at the last minute as was the case at AIME this year with the cancellation of the welcome reception and the addition of a (very expensive) gala dinner with the pretence that the location had to be kept secret until the last minute.

At Meetings free - yes free - coffee, tea or whatever is constantly available to refresh the weary buyers (and exhibitors) who may walk many kilometres each day. There are morning and afternoon breaks (with snacks)... and, wait for it, lunch is provided! I can't remember the last time there was even a lunch break let alone lunch provided at AIME. There's a welcome reception and a gala dinner and they are both meticulously planned and very enjoyable. Above all buyers have a sense that the show is first and foremost about what the show can offer them, not about how much money the organisers are going to make.

Of course, trade shows have to make a profit if they're going to continue each year but Meetings has been running for 19 years and doesn't look like stopping any year soon. AIME is bigger and more diverse but it's certainly not better and the organisers, who were at Meetings again this year, would do well to take note of just how it's done.

Although I'm critical of AIME it's not because I take a pleasure in being so but because, as a Melbournian and a member of two very large industries I feel we deserve better.

Peter Gray is an independent Incentive Consultant and Motivational Strategist. He can be contacted on peter.gray@motivatingpeople.net



Mantra takes Outrigger



MANTRA Group yesterday officially took over the management of four Outrigger Resorts in Queensland, with the properties all rebranding as Peppers and Mantra hotels effective from 01 Jul 2015.

The Outrigger Little Hastings Street Resort & Spa Noosa is now **Peppers Noosa Resort & Villas**; Outrigger Surfers Paradise has rebranded as **Mantra on View Hotel Surfers Paradise**; Outrigger Twin Towns has become **Mantra Twin Towns**; and Boathouse Apartments by Outrigger at Airlie Beach is **Mantra Boathouse Apartments**.

Mantra ceo Bob East said the acquisition was a natural fit for the group, adding more

than 1100 rooms in key leisure destinations.

"They are all exceptional properties which I'm sure our guests will enjoy," he said.

The Mantra team are pictured above at the formal handover are, from left: Steve Becker, cfo; Damian Clowes, vp corporate services; ceo Bob East; Avery Aoki, vp finance; and Michael Lalli, director of acquisitions.

Busy Darwin season

THE Darwin Convention Centre, NT Convention Bureau and Tourism Top End have combined to introduce a new 'Darwin Welcomes Delegates' program as part of a busy upcoming conference season for the NT capital.

The program aims to showcase Darwin's local businesses as "knowledgeable and friendly hosts" with a special card provided on arrival giving a range of privileges and special offers at shops, restaurants, hotels and tourist attractions.

Between Jul and Nov the Darwin Convention Centre will welcome more than 7,000 delegates at a series of meetings covering a wide variety of sectors.

These include the 27th Aeromedical Society of Australasia and Flight Nurses Association conference as well as the 7th Annual NT Resources Week which incorporates the Mining the Territory and South East Asia Australia Offshore and Onshore Conference.

A unique window into the NT will be seen at the Fenestration Australia 2015 Conference in Sep, followed by the Australian Society of Anaesthetists National Scientific Conference, the 19th Annual Chronic Diseases Network Conference; and the 20th Medical Education and Training Forum.

Hilton limited offer

HILTON Worldwide Meetings & Events is offering one of three complimentary extras for meetings or events confirmed before 31 Aug 2015.

The offers include free wifi for all delegates; 1 in 10 go free; or triple event HHonors loyalty points - for more details see hiltonworldwidemeetingsapac.com.

Luxperience regos

LUXPERIENCE has extended registrations for both exhibitors and buyers for its upcoming event due to a "last minute rush".

The new closing date for registrations for the "by-invitation event" will be Fri 10 Jul.

Luxperience will take place in Sydney 06-09 Sep, with director of marketing Michelle Papas saying there had been an "eleventh hour dash to register."

"We know it's such a busy time for everyone that we thought it sensible to give those interested in attending a little more time to join us," she said.



business events news

3rd July 2015

Hats off to Four Points



EVENT managers, pcos and planners were among the key industry decision makers to get a sneak preview of the \$200 million redevelopment of Four Points by Sheraton Sydney, Darling Harbour.

Conducted by director of sales, Jo Naumovski, the hardhat tour included a preview of the 4,800 square metre conference, meeting and event space currently under development.

General manager David Fraser said the visitors were impressed by the size of the convention spaces and surprised at how quickly and seamlessly the development, which commenced in 2013 is progressing.

"With less than a year to go until the new conference space will be open and be ready for use, focus groups like these are really important to help ensure the new facilities are first-rate and the guest experience is truly unique,"

he said.

On track for completion next May, the new facilities will offer a total of 23 flexible spaces, including two pillar-free ballrooms with natural light and views over Sydney's Darling Harbour. The northern ballroom will have a capacity for 1,000 theatre-style and 1,100 in the southern ballroom.

Also in the pipeline, the new hotel tower is slated for completion in August 2016.

It will add 222 new guestrooms to the hotel's portfolio, bringing the total number of rooms to 905.

Cricket hits a six

A NEW report analysing the economic impact of this year's ICC Cricket World Cup has shown "the value and importance of Australian tourism backing large scale events," says Tourism Australia md John O'Sullivan.

The 'blue ribbon sporting tournament' attracted 100,000 foreign visitors and \$325m in international visitor spending, as well as 1.5 million bed nights.

O'Sullivan said the organisation would continue to work to identify and promote events which appeal strongly to consumers in target inbound markets.



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AIME appoints Zadro

IBTM events Portfolio Director Sallie Coventry has announced the appointment of Zadro Communications to manage all public and media relations for next year's Asia-Pacific Meetings and Incentives Expo (AIME).

The appointment sees Zadro take over PR for the Melbourne Convention Bureau-owned show from Ogilvy PR which has managed the communications side of AIME for the last two years; prior to that GTI Tourism held the account.

AIME 2016 takes place in Melbourne 23-24 Feb, with Zadro md Felicity Zadro saying she's delighted to be working on a show that she has been attending for the last decade.

"The new communications and PR strategy that is being implemented in the lead-up to the 2016 show is crucial to the ongoing strength of the industry, and opens the door for inspiration to abound all year round," she enthused.

Surfers Marriott turning Japanese

SURFERS Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa will tonight create a new identity for its famous Japanese steakhouse, which will be "officially celebrated" under its new identity as Misono tonight.

Signature teppanyaki dining with a unique atmosphere and a "liberal dose of theatre" is part of an initiative which sees the restaurant move away from its former American branding to a "distinctively Gold Coast" identity.

Hotel gm Neeraj Chadha said the launch of Misono would create "a dining experience that Gold Coasters will be proud to call their own".

Lewis-Smith on Sky

BUSINESS Events Sydney ceo Lyn Lewis-Smith had the opportunity to highlight the importance of business events to a national audience earlier this week, when she appeared on the Sky News *Switzer* program.

Lewis-Smith spoke about the recently released BESydney report into Asian Incentives (**BEN** 22 May) - to view the segment see www.skynews.com.au.



THERE'S been circus instruction at roughly half of Club Med's locations since 1983.

Stepping it up a notch, the French based company have now teamed-up with Quebec's groundbreaking circus arts entertainment company troupe Cirque du Soleil to launch a new kind of playground at their Punta Cana location in the Dominican Republic called 'Creative.'

Its a concept that offers guests the opportunity to learn more than 25 acrobatic and artistic activities ranging from flying trapeze, acrobatic bungee, tightrope, aerial silks and trampoline to mask painting, make-up and juggling lessons - all under the supervision of Cirque du Soleil trained staff.

The goal of the Cirque staff is to uncover and develop athletic and creative abilities in an atmosphere of genuine fun, no matter what the participant's age.

The possibilities are endless. Imagine? Hold your event at this Club Med resort and you could become proficient enough to provide the entertainment at your own gala dinner!

And since Club Med villages are always inclusive, there is no extra charge for you with your newfound skills to run off and join this circus.

AlliedPRA appoints

ALLIEDPRA has appointed Margrete Chadwick as the new director of sales and marketing for the DMC and event company in Los Angeles, Orange County and Palm Springs.

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