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## Six degrees

THE power of social networking and the six-degrees-of-separation theory that claims we are only all only six-degrees away from each other was tested earlier this year, when Accor's Mercure brand launched "The Six Friends Theory."



The lucky winner of this worldwide digital promotion was a 21 year-old Italian, Ludovica Loda, who won a round-the-world trip via the Mercure hotel network - a journey which saw her travel 31,599 kms in 46 days. With no idea where she was going, along the way she enjoyed stays in the Mercure hotels in Paris, Berlin, London, Rio, Nelspruit in South Africa and Bali - finishing her incredible voyage in Byron Bay, via the Mercure Brisbane.

At every stage the Mercure hotel teams made every effort to ensure she enjoyed a warm and humanly enriching adventure, meeting a new "friend of a friend" who revealed her next destination.

It was a journey that started in Rome with an itinerary that took her to the home countries of the five friends linking her to Nigel, an Aboriginal from the Bundjalung tribe in Australia.

Her excitement packed adventures and discoveries included an initiation to graffiti in Paris, wild nights in Berlin, samba lessons in Rio, bivouac classes in South Africa and much more.

Starting today, images of Ludovica's incredible human adventure will be unveiled in a web series at the Mercure page at [facebook.com/MercureHotels](https://www.facebook.com/MercureHotels).

The "Six Friends" community will be able to follow a new episode of Ludovica's adventures (below) every two days. Jill



## Timmins resigns from AIME

JACQUI Timmins, who has been the exhibition director of Melbourne's AIME and CIBTM in China for 2014 and 2015, has stepped down.

Timmins became event director almost exactly two years ago (*BEN* 08 May 13), taking over from Sally de Swart who had managed AIME since 2011.

She told *BEN* that she actually resigned from the role in January, but was committed to seeing AIME 2015 through.



"As much as I adored my awesome staff and working for Reed Travel Exhibitions, it was simply time for a break," she said.

"It has been quite an intense two years overseeing both the Australian and China events for the ibtm events portfolio."

Melisa Zenicanin from Reed Travel Exhibitions confirmed Timmins had left the business on 24 Apr.

"The search for her replacement is already under way...in the meantime the AIME team are very much focused on business as usual," she said.

Zenicanin said the 2016 strategy was currently under development in response to post-show feedback and in consultation with a wide group of stakeholders.

Reed also plans to conduct a customer roadshow and solicit input from focus groups and an AIME customer advisory board.

Timmins said she had enjoyed her time with AIME, establishing a new network of colleagues in the exhibition industry and the business events sector.

"But after much deliberation it's time to find something different... after having a break with my family," she said.

## Budget boost for business events

LAST night's Federal Budget lifted funding for Tourism Australia to \$137.3 million, which will enable a small increase in staffing and a continuation of the 'There's Nothing Like Australia' campaign in all major markets.

The government is also devoting \$53 million to attract "vital job-creating investment" via a range of promotional activities such as the Australia Week events in key markets such as China and India.

Australia Week will also run in the USA, replacing the existing trade, investment and tourism aspects of G'day USA.

The budget statements for Tourism Australia detail an "increased focus on business events and major events" to drive yield from incoming visitors, with priority markets including China, North America and the UK.

There will also be a strong business events focus on marketing in New Zealand.

A new approach concentrating on associations and incentives will be undertaken from this year, "including a differentiated marketing approach for each of these streams," the papers said..

## Today's issue of *BEN*

*Business Events News* today has three pages of news, a cover page from *jito* and a page promoting the upcoming **Travel Industry Exhibition**.

## Events firms finalists in NTIA 2015

SEVERAL events organisers are among the finalists for this year's National Travel Industry Awards, which are run by the Australian Federation of Travel Agents.

Among the 37 categories in this year's awards is the "Best Business Events Travel Agency" category, with the five finalists comprising American Express Meetings & Events, cievents (which won in 2014), CPE travel, Event Travel Management and Platinum Event Solutions.

The winners will be announced at the NTIA gala dinner taking place on Sat 18 July at Dockside's new Pavilion at Darling Harbour.

To view the full list of NTIA 2015 finalists **CLICK HERE**.

## Australia at IMEX

VISITORS to the Australia stand at the upcoming IMEX show in Frankfurt, Germany, will be able to experience the "relaxed coastal feel of an Australian beach house" via a brand new stand.

A 15-strong Aussie delegation will join the Business Events Australia team on the stand which will include a hospitality space on an elevated private second level.

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# business events news

13th May 2015

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## Pacific World, JTB form Japan alliance

**GLOBAL** destination management company Pacific World has confirmed a new strategic alliance with Japanese DMC JTB Global Marketing & Travel, with the combined businesses to “provide leading meetings & events services in Japan”.

The move will see Pacific World showcase Japan as a meetings and incentive destination to its network of corporate and agency meeting planners worldwide, leveraging the strength of JTB’s inbound operations to offer a ‘new Japan’ value proposition.

“Japan is known as an inspiring traditional destination, but the country is recently being rediscovered by corporates and associations based in the Americas and Europe as a key strategic destination for conferences and events,” said Herve Joseph-Antoine, global md of Pacific World.

## Dubai business events focus

**BUSINESS** events form a key pillar of Dubai’s ambitious tourism plans, with the Middle Eastern destination aiming to boost visitation to 20 million arrivals annually by 2020.

Speaking to **BEN** last week at Arabian Travel Market, Dubai Business Events Director Steen Jakobsen (pictured), said business events visitors were a “very lucrative part of the market,” with a high daily spend and a strong propensity for repeat visitation.

In 2014 business events visitor numbers into Dubai rose 10%, with Dubai Business Events undertaking a three-pronged strategy to boost its figures.

Firstly the destination wants to increase its global market share of congresses and association meetings.

There’s also aspirations to develop regional events and trade shows which will take place on a



regular basis in Dubai - such as Arabian Travel Market but also focusing on sectors such as food, golf and other niche areas.

And finally a focus on major events within Dubai will help to boost delegate numbers as well as create further international awareness of the destination.

Dubai is firmly focused on 2020 when it will host the World Expo, with this major event expected to provide a long-term legacy of infrastructure for the destination’s business events sector.

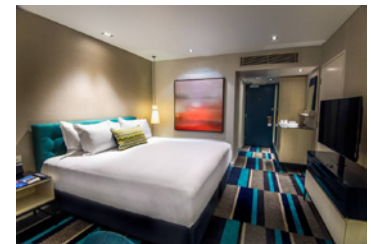
## Crown swans in CUSTOM-MADE beds

(below) and artwork in the form of the Swan, the Western Australian state symbol, will feature in a refurbishment and modernisations being undertaken by Crown Promenade Perth to all its 291 guest rooms.

The hotel’s lobby is also being refurbished with tiled feature walls and a central skylight as well as a new business centre.

Due for completion on 01 Jun, Peter Crinis, ceo Crown Hotels said the refurb “will provide corporate and leisure travellers with a stylish and modern product offering which is both luxurious and affordable”.

The upgrade comes a decade after the hotel debuted in 2005.



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# business events news

13th May 2015

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## Noosa conferencing

**OUTRIGGER** Little Hastings Street Resort & Spa at Noosa Heads on the Sunshine Coast is offering a conference special from \$319 per night.

The deal includes a one bedroom apartment, full buffet breakfast, and a full day delegate package including morning and afternoon tea plus a buffet lunch.

For events booked by 31 Aug and held prior to 15 Dec a free half hour welcome reception will also be provided, including beer/wine and soft drinks - for details call 07 5455 2231.

## A truly stellar win for AOG

**AFTER** an intense international tender process, Adelaide based professional conference and event organiser, All Occasions Group (AOG), has won the right to manage the upcoming 68th International Astronautical Congress.

To be held in Adelaide in Sep 2017 with an expected 3000 delegates from around the world, including a number of astronauts, it is said to be the largest business event to ever be held in Adelaide.

The Congress is anticipated to contribute \$20m to the state's visitor economy, provide 22,000 hotel bed nights and create more than 170 jobs.

AOG director Anne-Marie Quinn (pictured) said, "As the largest



event managed by AOG in its 17 year history, it is timely we are about to move into larger premises and will be hiring 3-5 new staff to enable us to deliver this substantial 2.5 year project to the exceptional standard we strive for on all campaigns".

AOG will be intimately involved in all aspects of the massive business event, working with the organising committee on budgeting, marketing and communications, venue, event and exhibition management, delegate travel arrangements, the social program and sponsorship management.

## Starwood appoints

**AMY** Bunting has been named as Pacific region director of human resources for Starwood.

Bunting's role will encompass human resource management at Sydney's Sheraton on the Park hotel, as well as overseeing HR at 18 operating properties and a further six under development.

She joins Starwood after two years at the Westin Sydney, and prior to that was at the Sydney Shangri-La Hotel.



**AUSTRIA** is celebrating diversity in the lead-up to hosting the Eurovision Song Contest this month by installing "gay-friendly" traffic lights across Vienna.

Authorities in the nation's capital have replaced scores of its "gender-neutral" crossing signs with same-sex couples (below) with the aim of boosting road safety as well as tolerance.

Austria is hosting Eurovision 2015 after its entry in last year's contest, the cross-dressing Conchita Wurst, came out on top.

Thousands of visitors are expected to flood Vienna for the event which takes place 19-23 May and for the first time ever will feature an Australian entry, in the form of Australian Idol winner and superstar Guy Sebastian.

## Stand builder wanted

**AUSTRALIAN** Minerals, a grouping of state and territory geological organisations from across Australia, has issued a tender for the construction of a booth at the upcoming annual China Mining expo which will take place 20-23 Oct 2015.

The event is at the Tianjin Meijiang Convention Centre, with Australian Minerals taking space in order to promote Australia as a preferred destination for investment in mineral exploration.

The free-standing booth is required to suit the available floor space, and Australian Minerals may elect to use the same booth design for a further two to three years with small adjustments to the design in subsequent use.

China Mining typically hosts about 5,000 delegates and around 400 exhibitors.

**CLICK HERE** for more info on the tender opportunity.



**Business Events News** is Australia's newest online publication dedicated to the vibrant meetings, incentives, conferences and events sector.

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