

Incentive travel key to \$40m in new biz

Tourism Australia expects this year's Dreamtime to generate more than \$40 million in new tourism business, writes Jenny Burns.

Around 140 buyers from 22 countries and 70 sellers attended the two-day trade show held at Sydney's Olympic Park. The buyers then attended a two day familiarisation program around Sydney.

Tourism Australia acting managing director Ken Boundy said Dreamtime was an important event for raising awareness of Australia and generating new business in the high yielding incentive travel sector, which is estimated to be worth \$600 million.

"Australia is currently the only country in the Asia Pacific to be ranked in the top eight incentive destinations in the world and Tourism Australia is looking to continue this success at Dreamtime to build future incentive business for Australia," he said.

"Dreamtime 2002 delivered more than \$40 million in incentive business for Australia, with companies including Citibank, Pfizer, Nokia and Prudential choosing to travel to Australia as a result of meetings held at Dreamtime.

Mr Boundy said Dreamtime was the only opportunity for Australian tourism products to meet face to face with international businesses from all key markets, including the US, Europe, Japan and Asia at a single event.

"This year there has been increased interest in Australia from international incentive buyers with a record number attending Dreamtime 2004," Mr Boundy said.

"There are strong indications that companies in North America and the UK and Europe are looking to Australia as a destination for incentives in 2005 and early 2006.

"A number of key markets across Asia also offer strong potential for Australia to grow its share of the incentive travel market, particularly from countries like Thailand,



At the buyers' welcome dinner guests were greeted by entertainment from a didgeridoo player and indigenous dance troupe.

Taiwan and China."

Reaction from sellers attending the two-day show was mixed. Most agreed the quality of the buyers were excellent, however buyers not turning up to meetings was a problem, especially on the second afternoon of the show.

While some sellers wrote business during the event for others it is a waiting game. However most expect the business will come.

Two of the most enthusiastic sellers were James Graham from Gold Coast Tourism and Jacqui Taylor from Conrad Jupiters. Both said the quality of the buyers were excellent and Taylor expected to write business as a result of her attendance.

East Sail's Trent Wilson was equally as enthusiastic, having already taken one booking during the event for a group from Japan.

No shows were of concern to Karen Wares from Manly Tourism and Kelsie Johnston from the Esplanade Hotel Fremantle. How-

ever both were pleased with the quality of the buyers they met.

For the buyers the two-day familiarisation tour plus events organised around the trade show at Sydney Olympic Park gave them the chance to see what Sydney and the park had to offer.

Events included:

The buyers' welcome dinner where guests were greeted by entertainment from a didgeridoo player and indigenous dance troupe. Other entertainment included a display from stock horsemen, whip cracking, sheep dog trials, wood choppers and Holden cars, with the night concluding with dessert delivered on the back of utes.

The buyers and sellers welcome dinner had a side show alley theme with circus strong men, thumb wrestling championships, a two-up competition facilitated by two lifesavers, vegemite painting and gum boot tossing providing the entertainment together with an excellent bush band. A

caravan of food stations served food aimed at reflecting Australia's multi-cultural influences. Mini-pies, curries, fish and chips, king prawns, oysters, Peking duck pancakes and noodles were on the menu.

The gala farewell dinner was held at the Overseas Passenger Terminal. Fireworks greeted both buyers and sellers while a performance choir also provided the pre dinner entertainment. Delegates were then given the choice to 'buy' one of the many acts on offer during the night which ranged from 'pass the parcel' to Saturday Night Fever.

On the first day of their Sydney familiarisation buyers were taken to brunch at Woolloomooloo's Finger Wharf on the back of Harley Davidsons. Brunch was followed by a brief tour with Sydney by Diva (sight-seeing tours led by Sydney's best drag queens). Following the tour, a couple of hours 'team building'— sailing on Sydney Harbour with East Sail was offered. The evening was entertainment free but all buyers received vouchers to restaurants in Sydney's Rocks area.

On their second and last day in Sydney buyers spent the morning at Luna Park again 'team building' by creating several paintings. The afternoon was spent on a Manly beach where delegates could participate in such activities as Tug-O-War, frisbee throwing, volleyball competitions, sand castle building and bucket races or just sit under umbrellas and enjoy back massages and an array of food including fish and chips.

The farewell event at Doltone House featured the lights and sounds of the Australian bush with the aim of emphasising that life in Australia can be seen in many different lights. The meal included kangaroo and quail while entertainment ranged from huge 'insects' to a junior choir.

The Sydney by Diva tour seemed the most popular activity with many of the buyers, followed closely by the afternoon on the beach. Many also enjoyed the Harley Davidson rides, although almost all thought the rides too short. The evening entertainment was also very well received with the act on the first night where a donkey blew up a balloon being one of the most discussed events!



Butlers in the Buff

Let's get this clear right from the start: the only thing that's stiff about the butt-naked butlers offered by a specialist British company are their upper lips.....in true butler style, writes Kelvin King.

They might be showing a large expanse of naked bod — well, actually there's no "might" about it because that's their unique selling point — but co-founder Pete Trainor stressed it was "pure tongue-in-cheek fun".

And please, no double entendres about cheeks, although it would be fair to say that the butlers are delightfully cheeky.

Trainor and business partner Jason Didcott set up the service after seeing a similar operation in Florida. They supply naked and semi-naked butlers for corporate functions, meetings and just about any MICE happening.

It's not just for show, either — the guys will serve drinks and food with professional aplomb, and even clean the place up later.

They'll also do hen nights and even, er, home service for women who want some help with the cleaning, presumably while they and their friends enjoy a leisurely drink.

But there's definitely no hanky panky, thanks; that's in the contract.

The butlers come from a wide variety of backgrounds, many with some hospitality industry training. That's not essential, however: Butlers in the Buff are constantly on the lookout for young men who are fit, outgoing and have "a fantastic personality".

ON THE WEB: www.butlersinthebuff.co.uk

Dedicated MICE web site for Accor

ACCOR Asia Pacific has launched a web site, designed specifically for the travel trade, including tour operators and conference organisers. The web site provides detailed information about Accor properties in the Asia Pacific region including a location map, information on each hotel's leisure, MICE facilities and contact details for regional sales personnel. Future enhancements will include translating the site into other languages — starting with Chinese and a facility enabling key distribution partners to download images direct from the site.