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## **AITTC Newsletter**

### **Issue No -1 January/February 2013**

We welcome you into 2013 with the first issue of our bi-monthly newsletter.

Established last year, the principal focus of our organization is to facilitate growth of bilateral travel between Australia and India by providing a suitable platform for interested individuals and organizations to informally interact, share information, identify issues and solutions and learn from each other on two great destinations of the world.

It has been an eventful beginning for us. We started the organization with seven founder members and have now been able to increase the total membership number to around twenty five which includes four corporate members – Taj Hotels, Insight Vacations, Grace Hotel and Blue Line Cruises. We have our website functional, and have on board Five Star PR as PR Director and i-Databits Technology as IT Manager. The media release issued in November received wide coverage in various Australian travel trade publications such as Travel Daily, Travel Mole, E- Global Travel Media, Travel Monitor and E-Travel Blackboard.

While taking it as a good start, we look forward to seeing some significant increase in our membership this year, so as to achieve the required strength to deliver beneficial outcomes for our members and stakeholders.

A major task for us in 2013 will be preparing our Strategic Plan. If any of you have suggestions on what we need to strategically achieve in the next five years and how it can be done, then please do not hesitate to contact us via email to [info@aittc.net](mailto:info@aittc.net). We look forward to have your views and ideas.

We are also planning a launch function to be held on 20 March in Sydney where we intend to introduce the organization to a host of dignitaries that includes our key industry stakeholders, associates and supporters.

Provided below is some industry news that may be of interest to you:

### **Australia based StayWell Hospitality Group expanding in India**

StayWell Hospitality Group is forging ahead with its Indian expansion plans, with the addition of three properties on the subcontinent to its growing portfolio. The Australia-based firm will debut its four-star Park Regis brand in India with the opening of a 94-room property in Goa in late 2013. In addition, a 122-room hotel on the outskirts of Mumbai and a 52-room property in Jaipur will come on board under the Leisure Inn name in the middle of the year. The firm is targeting 25 hotels in India by the end of 2014 and 50 hotels by 2016.

### **Taj Hotels and Resorts hope to double its sales from the Australian market over the next five years**

Indian hospitality group Taj Hotels and Resorts is hopeful its sales from the Australian market will double over the next five years as business ties between the two countries strengthen. Director public relations, Raakhee Lalvani, said Australian volumes are "sufficient", but insisted the market has "tremendous potential" for the expanding hotel firm. She revealed Australia has replaced Italy as its fifth most significant market, although it remains some way behind top source countries the US and the UK. Lalvani predicted growing trade relations between Australia and India would boost business. In addition, she highlighted growing interest in India as both a leisure and business destination from around the world.

## **Portfolio of Swissotel in India growing**

With the opening of a resort hotel in the popular Indian coastal state of Goa, Swissôtel Hotels & Resorts will complement its global portfolio with an additional deluxe hotel. First guests are anticipated to be welcomed in the first quarter 2013. "With the already-opened Swissôtel Kolkata and the three Swissôtels under development in Mumbai, Noida and Bangalore, our portfolio on the Indian Subcontinent is growing continuously," says Meinhard Huck, President of Swissôtel Hotels & Resorts.

## **Opening of the Crowne Plaza Kochi in Kerala**

InterContinental Hotels Group announced the opening of the Crowne Plaza Kochi in Kerala. Inaugurated by the Ministers of the State and other dignitaries, the Kochi hotel is the sixth Crowne Plaza to open in the South West Asia region. The 269-room hotel offers guests 14 suites with a spectacular view of the backwaters and the city, a health centre, outdoor swimming pool and spa. Located on the banks of the river at Kundannoor and along the National Highway bypass, the hotel boasts the largest meetings and conference space in the city, covering 24,000 sq ft with 14 meeting rooms.

## **Purna Kumbh Mela, largest religious gathering on earth**

This year the widely venerated Purna Kumbh Mela, believed to be the largest religious gathering on earth occurring every 12 years, is being held from 27 January till 25 February in Allahabad in the state of Uttar Pradesh , located 238 km away from state capital Lucknow.

## **Air India grounds Dreamliner fleet indefinitely**

The entire Air India fleet of six Boeing 787 Dreamliners has been grounded indefinitely, following an order from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and the US Federal Aviation Administration. Indian Aviation Minister Ajit Singh said that it is unclear when the issue will be resolved, and that Air India would likely seek compensation from Boeing at the appropriate time. Despite the grounding, a spokesperson stated that Air India routes will not be affected, as they will be covered by alternative aircraft.

## **Proposed Emirates and Qantas alliance likely to go ahead**

The proposed alliance between Emirates and Qantas took another step forward last week, with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), granting both airlines interim authorisation to begin implementation of their plans. The agreement announced late last year will be implemented from April 2013

## **The latest trends amongst Australian travellers**

A recent survey by guest loyalty program Hilton Honours provided an insight into the travel tastes, desires and preferences of Australians. Cultural activities proved more popular than a beach getaway, and the Egyptian Pyramids were ranked number one as the most appealing tourist attraction. The top three countries were the United States, England and New Zealand. Australians' love of travel continues unabated, with more than three quarters of respondents holidaying at least once per year, and nearly half enjoying at least two annual breaks.

## **New Australian High Commissioner in India**

Australian High Commission in New Delhi has a new High Commissioner. Career diplomat Patrick Suckling who has a post-graduate diploma in Hindi from the University of Sydney, recently replaced Peter Varghese as Australia's High Commissioner to India. While announcing the appointment, Foreign

Minister Bob Carr said the role is important because India is Australia's fourth largest export market, with two-way trade presently exceeding \$18 billion a year.

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News items has been sourced from various media releases

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