



## DREAMTIME WOWS INCENTIVE BUYERS

Tourism Australia and key partners showcased the very best of the country's incentive offerings to 100 international buyers and media in late 2013 at its signature biennial Dreamtime event.



The Dreamtime program commenced in Melbourne with business sessions, money can't buy experiences, quality food and wine events, and plenty of surprises rounding out the five days that had delegates all agreeing that "There's Nothing Like Australia" for a business event.

### WHY DREAMTIME?

Over the past 20 years Dreamtime has played an integral role in Tourism Australia's strategy of building the country's business events reputation amongst its international markets. Despite its long history it never ceases to reinvent itself to provide new immersive experiences that give the high-profile participants a true taste of Australia's incentive offerings.

"The idea behind Dreamtime is very simple: giving buyers an exceptional experience to show why 'There's Nothing Like Australia' for business events," explains Head of Business Events Australia, Penny Lion.

A major focus of the 2013 program was on Australia's exceptional food and wine which aligns itself with Tourism Australia's broader tourism strategy.

"Our research found when asked about Australia's national dish, or what food represents Australia, most people draw a blank." But it also found that when people do travel to Australia and experience our food and wine offering, we rank highly as one of the world's best," Ms Lion explains.

"What we've done is begun to share with the world how outstanding Australia's offering is. I believe we successfully did this at Dreamtime because food and wine is an integral part of any business event program."

### THE PROGRAM

Delegates were treated to some spectacular food in Melbourne with the assistance of leading celebrity chefs including Guy Grossi, Shannon Bennett, and Luke Mangan. Those who later experienced Sydney as part of their Dreamtime program enjoyed, among other dining experiences, a cooking demonstration by Kylie Kwong and Clarence Slocock who joined forces to share with the group their passion for combining indigenous, native and sustainable ingredients with Australian and Chinese food.

Refreshed after their business class flights courtesy of Platinum Airline Partner, Virgin Australia and Gold Airline Partner, Singapore Airlines, a dedicated business session in Melbourne allowed buyers to interact with the 69 Australian sellers who were participating in the program. And, in true Dreamtime style, the setting for this was anything but ordinary. The room was designed by Dreamtime event production partner Peter Jones Special Events to resemble a bustling Melbourne streetscape.

"The setting of the business session really broke up what can be a very sterile and formal environment," said one seller.

Buyers engaged in pre-scheduled meetings with sellers of Australian incentive product from around the country.

With the work component over, delegates then had the opportunity to experience some of Melbourne and surrounds best incentive-style products. A hot rod car rally around the Melbourne Formula 1 Grand Prix track, coffee culture and a Melbourne laneway tour, a helicopter ride to view the Twelve Apostles along the Great Ocean Road, a behind the scenes tour of the Melbourne Cricket Ground and a cricket net session with Australian cricket legend, Merv Hughes, wine tasting, and even a hat making (millenary) class had all delegates engaging with Melbourne's best.

*"Congratulations to the Dreamtime 2013 team on their delivery of an exceptional event. The setup of the business session area meant the sellers were all on the same playing field ...couple this with what I think was the best buyer list at a trade event to date, I have left feeling confident we will generate business and maintain excellent contacts."* – Australian seller



## GREATER ENGAGEMENT

This year's Dreamtime program was all about engagement with international hosted buyers and media which Tourism Australia initiated eight weeks prior to the event to help build excitement.

And the engagement continued on arrival. From the rare opportunity to hold the Melbourne Cup – presented to the winner of Australia's greatest horse race each year – to singing and performing at the Dreamtime Dinner in the stunning Regent Theatre Plaza Ballroom, Dreamtime 2013 was an immersive experience.

*“Refreshing for a destination I thought I knew so well! From the VA welcome to the delightful dining throughout the week and meeting some fantastic charters along the way. Thanks TA for putting on a great show of your country”. – Dreamtime buyer*

As event production partner Peter Jones of Peter Jones Special Events explains of the Dreamtime Dinner, the event had to be about the buyers.

“It had to be interactive and it had to be about them; it had to be something that they engaged in rather than just sitting there and watching. And it worked!”

Sitting down at the stylish tables on the final night in Melbourne, delegates were surprised to find framed photographs of themselves superimposed in front of some of Australia's greatest icons – Uluru, Sydney Harbour, the Opera House, and others. Between appointments the previous day they had had their photographs taken which were then used for this special touch at the final night party.

And the fun didn't stop there. Throughout the evening delegates were called on stage and participated in what appeared to be an impromptu performance with the help of professional entertainers. The South Korean group, for example, performed Gangnam Style with a Psy impersonator; a trio of English hosted buyers strapped on kilts and joined 24 pipers from the City of Melbourne Pipe Band, playing ACDC's Long Way To The Top; and Chinese delegates clinked their glasses to the tune of Blue Danube and enjoyed a glass of Australia's world famous Penfolds Grange.



## GREATER COLLABORATION

The Melbourne Convention Bureau had significant input for the first two days of Dreamtime, calling on key creative suppliers to deliver what was one of the best Dreamtime host city programs to date. With the assistance of key bureaux in Adelaide, Cairns, Gold Coast, Sydney and the Northern Territory, the experiences for delegates didn't stop for five days.

To satisfy the Indian delegation's passion for cricket, for example, hosted buyers visited Adelaide prior to the official Melbourne welcome, giving them the opportunity to sample the second Ashes Test between Australia and England while exploring the region. In Australia's tropical north, North American delegates experienced the reef and rainforest; while in Uluru, the English and New Zealand group of hosted buyers were immersed in Australia's indigenous culture and outback. Japanese and Korean buyers discovered a variety of incentive offerings from the coast to the hinterland on the Gold Coast and in Sydney, Asian buyers were wowed by a secret Sydney program including a private cooking class with renowned chef, Kylie Kwong.

Dreamtime's Platinum Airline Partner, Virgin Australia, surprised and delighted delegates through implementing an activation program to ensure delegates were made to feel like true VIPs. Access to airline lounges and special announcements onboard welcoming Dreamtime delegates to Australia were followed by each buyer receiving a Samsung Tablet loaded with entertainment and Australia specific content to showcase Virgin's new inflight Wi-Fi and entertainment capabilities.

*“Dreamtime Australia is the best trip of its kind I have experienced. It is the perfect mix of networking and showcasing what this incredible country has to offer. It gave delegates a really well rounded picture of the destination and the multitude of different offerings it has for MICE groups”. – Dreamtime buyer*

Virgin Airlines also created special lounge spaces within delegate hotels where delegates could refresh and relax on arrival.

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

And it appears as if the program worked to the satisfaction of buyers and sellers. Hosted buyer surveys following the event have revealed participants said their perception of Australia as a business event destination had changed after attending Dreamtime, and that 100 per cent of buyers were either very satisfied or satisfied with the Dreamtime program.

Eighty seven per cent of sellers were either satisfied or very satisfied with the event, with one seller summing up their observations by noting it was “the best buyer list at a trade event to date, [and] I have left feeling confident we will generate business and maintain excellent contacts.”

*“Like England in the Ashes you can't help be bowled over by what Australia offers. Every visit offers a new experience.”*  
– Dreamtime buyer

