

# NEW HOTEL ADDS VITALITY TO WEST END

BY SUMITHRA THANGAVELU





The dynamic north-west hub of Adelaide's central business district has received a significant boost with the opening of the 245-room Holiday Inn Express Adelaide City Centre.

The new hotel is perfectly positioned to tap into both the business and leisure markets in the local area, with the opening of the new Royal Adelaide Hospital, the extension of the Adelaide Convention Centre and the success of Adelaide Oval.

Director of Sales, Chelsea Hopper, said the nine-storey hotel is Adelaide's first hotel opening since the Mayfair in January 2015.

"So far the excitement that has been generated from a new hotel opening has been encouraging for us to see," she said.

"We haven't developed an existing hotel or done a cosmetic face lift - we've actually built from ground up and that has been quite rare for Adelaide to see."

Guests enter off Blyth Street and take an elevator to the first floor, the Great Room. This is a space that includes the reception, breakfast area and relaxation area that includes plug-and-play tables.

Internationally acclaimed architect Joseph Pang has created a vibrant feel with colourful shades that flow through the area and its settings, including the modern chairs, tables and decor.

Developer, Pro-invest Group has used Joseph's designs for all three of its Holiday Inn Express projects to date in Australia. The designer is well known for his deft touch on the refurbished Grand Hyatt Melbourne and Sydney's Four Seasons, among a host of others in Australia.

Hotel SA

Art finds a voice through the work of Australian mural pop artist Azzurro in the hotel's ground and first floor around the busy elevator area.

The artist hand-painted 43 boards over six weeks and hopes "the piece will form the backdrop in memories of thousands of visitors to the city centre". The ground floor designs represent water, lightning, leaves and an underground urban art scene. Azzurro says he channelled experiences from his recent European tour through Amsterdam, Paris, Berlin and London for this work. On the first floor, the art is designed "to interact with visitors as they interact with it".

Guest rooms come as Queen Standard, Twin Standard, King Superior and the wheel-chair friendly Accessible. Facilities include complimentary internet access, black-out blinds with curtain overlay, 40" LCD TV and an in-room safe.

Chelsea said a Holiday Inn Express stay includes free wi-fi, quality bedding with a choice of soft and firm pillows, a well-equipped shower, self-service laundry, a business centre and a fitness room. There is also a free Express Start Breakfast or a Grab & Go option for the busy traveller,

#### DEMOGRAPHIC

The hotel caters to a mixed demographic depending on the time of week and year.

Like many accommodation hotels, the focus is on the corporate market throughout the working week and shifts to the leisure traveller on weekends.

"We recognise that people are generally in a hurry, especially corporate travellers, so we have the Grab & Go breakfast section where people can grab takeaway coffee, Danishes, fruit or something off the buffet," said Hotel manager, Kirra Stott.

"Thursday to Sunday the focus is on the leisure guest who is here perhaps for football, a show or someone's wedding. When they come in they want niceties such as a drink in the bar or easy access to the football stadium - we are only 400 metres away from the Oval - so we change our focus on the weekend."

The timing of the opening was fortuitous, with both of Adelaide's AFL teams hosting finals on the second weekend in September, and the

Adelaide Crows also hosting a Preliminary Final with a record crowd in attendance.

With so much happening in the city, Kirra is upbeat.

"The Adelaide market is certainly growing - not at an insane rate but steadily - which really supports the growth of new hotels and new suppliers entering the market," she said.

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### THE TEAM

The development stems from a master development agreement between international investment firm Pro-invest Group and InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) in 2013 to develop 15 Holiday Inn Express hotels across Australia by 2025.

The world's fastest growing hotel brand is the city's first and the third for Australia after Sydney and Perth.

Kirra Stott said opening day for any new hotel can "almost seem a little anti-climactic" after going through the elaborate pre-opening period which, for the three-member management team, was four months. However, it was a very successful day.

She works closely with Assistant Hotel Manager Kate Pooley and with Chelsea. The three executives went full throttle in developing their front desk teams and setting up the right processes to deliver for guests on opening day on August 28.

Each of them bring a different experience to their role. Kate has strong credentials in the luxury market with InterContinental, while Kirra has worked across Holiday Inn, Crowne Plaza, Intercontinental and boutique companies such as Morgans Hotel Group in London. Chelsea has worked in service style apartments and select service hotels.

"We are exposed to different hotels as well, with different branding and different service styles as well, which really helps us build on what we have got now," Kate said.



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