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## BECA welcomes support for business events sector

An election policy announcement by the Opposition supporting the business events sector has been welcomed by BECA, which has been briefing both the Federal Government and Opposition on how seriously competitor countries have been investing in attracting major conventions and business events. "The establishment of a National Business Events Fund would be a major boost to supporting industry bidding and bringing more international events to Australia," says BECA chairman Geoff Donaghy. "The business events industry in Australia is worth more than \$17.3 billion, according to a 2005 report, but our international ranking has slipped from fourth to 16th over the past decade."



## Perth bureau launching events show

Perth Convention Bureau has launched an events show for next year. PCEV (Perth Event Show), at Perth Convention Exhibition Centre on May 6 and 7, will be managed by CMS Events. Space is already being booked for the show, says CMS director Richard Campbell, with bureau members being offered early-bird deals. Sales to the rest of industry open on August 31. There will be multiple seminar stages, food tastings, lounge areas, entertainment and a VIP trade networking event.

## Turning conferencing into a whole new ball game

Corporate and C&I groups are being targeted for "rugby legends" cruising based around the Rugby World Cup in New Zealand from September 9 to October 23 – announced at an event hosted in Sydney last night by Adventure World Travel, a subsidiary of the NRMA Group. Attending were rugby commentator Gordon Bray, 1991 RWC winning Wallaby coach Bob Dwyer, 1984 Grand Slam team member Mark Ella and 1991 RWC winning Wallaby captain Nick Farr-Jones, who will be aboard MS Volendam for the cruises (pictured are Farr-Jones, left, and Ella).



Chartered from Holland America Line, the five-star ship has meeting rooms, a boardroom, rugby-themed bars and restaurants, plus private dining.

## Best practices lead to savings, says reports

Companies can save an average 10 to 25 per cent on meetings and events when applying best practices to policy and compliance, sourcing and processes, according to an in-depth study by CWT Travel Management

Institute, the research arm of business travel management company Carlson Wagonlit Travel. "Companies with a high-performing meeting and events program do not seek savings at any price," says CWT vice-president Christophe Renard. "Instead, they look for a real return on their investment. Their decisions are based on business objectives and tend to involve stakeholders across the organisation to ensure they are taking a balanced approach." The report notes a 43.5 per cent increase in business travel in Asia Pacific.

## 2000 sign up to be hosted buyers

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Already, the new AIBTM show, in Baltimore from June 21 to 23 next year, has registered 2000 hosted buyers. Project manager Steve Knight says the buyers are predominantly US-based meeting planners with domestic and international business, as well as being from Asia, Europe, Canada, Latin America and Mexico. Exhibitors signed up so far include Atlantic City, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Fort Worth, Houston, Las Vegas, Miami, New York City, Orlando/Orange County and Visit Florida. These will be joined by the Canadian Tourism Commission, Mexico Tourism Board and destinations further afield including Abu Dhabi, Austria, Dubai, Hong Kong, Ireland and The Netherlands.

## Taiwan expo to include Asia forum

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Following the success of the initial EXCO Taiwan exhibition and convention industry show last year, it is being held again at Taipei World Trade Center from October 6 to 8. For the first time, one-on-one meetings are being arranged between suppliers and buyers, and an Asia MICE Forum will be held at the nearby Taipei Convention & Exhibition Center. EXCO Taiwan's program will include international meetings hosting as well as training and certification projects. Taiwan's Bureau of Foreign Trade of the Ministry of Economic Affairs commissioned the Taiwan External Trade Development Council to organise the show.

## Centre hosts more than one million visitors

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Record crowds have flocked to Suntec Singapore, which welcomed more than one million visitors at 102 events in June alone – an average of five events a day. Reaching an occupancy rate of 98 per cent, it was the busiest month in the centre's 15-year history. Business events have had the highest occupancy so far this year at 84 per cent. "The buzz is expected to continue as the venue gears up to host and welcome athletes and team officials for the first-ever Youth Olympic Games in Singapore," says CEO Pieter Idenburg. Notable events have included the Singapore International Water Week and World Cities Summit (14,000 delegates from 85 countries), Asian Investment conference and exhibition and APS Global Education Conference. The annual PC show (pictured) attracted 950,000 people who spent S\$52.1 million.



## Choice of five famils for PCOs

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Business Events Tasmania is offering delegates to the PCO Association's conference, at Wrest Point in Hobart from December 5 to 7, the choice of five associated famils – Launceston, Tamar and the north (December 2-4); Cradle Mountain and Launceston (December 2-4); Hobart and surrounds, including Port Arthur (December 8-9); the east coast (December 8-10); and the west coast and Strahan (December 8-10).

## 900 lining up for Bangkok show

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More than 900 international registrations have been received for IT&CMA in Bangkok from October 5 to 7. "With the overwhelming number of registrations this year, the continued enforcement of our stringent validation measures will serve to heighten the quality of the buyers," says organising company TTG Asia Media managing director Darren Ng. Delegates will include representatives of such companies as Hewlett Packard, IBM, Mazda, Microsoft, Symantec and The Body Shop. ICCA and the Asian Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus are co-locating their meetings in conjunction with IT&CMA. Registrations for hosting programs close on August 13

## VMA founder Bob Carr dies

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Venue Management Association founder Bob Carr has died aged 69 years. Originally at the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne, he moved to Brisbane to become general manager of the Brisbane Cricket Ground. He was involved in founding the Public Venue Management School.

## Memories of chef showcase in Sydney

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Participants in the ABEE dinner for hosted buyers and special guests, at Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, have been sent the menu and a recipe. The chef showcase has been caught on video.

## Convention centre opening nearly bogged down

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September's opening of The Convention Centre Dublin (pictured) nearly found itself turning to mush because developers of the Spencer Dock where it is situated have dragged the chain on building a sewage pumping station. However, the convention centre has been granted an extended temporary licence to use the city's drainage system in the lead-up to the September 7 opening and until the end of that month, reports The Irish Times. The €380 million convention centre is a public/private partnership project and already has many advance bookings, including conferences of the EU Geriatric Medicine Society and the European Dialysis Transplant Nurses Association in September.



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