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**Perth Convention Bureau boosts WA economy**

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The Perth Convention Bureau (PCB) has delivered a \$93.03 million business events bonanza for the Western Australian economy.

Reporting on the Bureau's sales results for the 2009-2010 financial year, West Australian Tourism Minister Liz Constable said the State's convention marketing organisation had exceeded its annual target by more than 14 per cent.

"This is an outstanding performance against a background of global economic instability and provides a wonderful return on the State Government's increased investment in marketing funding to secure business events," she said.

"The business events sector, which embraces conventions, exhibitions and incentive travel groups, represents the lucrative high end of the tourism industry and we are committed to ensuring that Western Australia maximises its opportunities."

Dr Constable said the opening of the Perth Convention Exhibition Centre in 2004 had been a key factor in underpinning Perth's growth as a convention destination.

"The State's ability to target the larger conventions that previously we couldn't adequately accommodate is enhancing Perth's appeal as a business events destination," the Minister added.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in October next year was a good example of this.

The Bureau's Managing Director Christine McLean said the PCB had secured a total of 134 conventions and incentive travel groups in 2009-10, representing an estimated 50,624 delegates and a \$93,033,036 delegate spend over the next three years.

She said the estimated delegate spend represented a 39.6 per cent jump of \$26.42 million on the previous year's sales result of \$66,608,627.

"We performed very strongly in both the national and international association convention sectors, which demonstrates the resilience of this market in a volatile economic environment," Ms McLean added.

"There are three key reasons for the Bureau's marketing success – profiling WA's areas of expertise and excellence; the destination's ability to deliver a world class conference; and our ability to offer financial incentives."

Ms McLean said the bottom had fallen out of the high yield corporate meetings and incentive business in the last financial year.

"This can be attributed to the impact of the global financial crisis and the lack of new tourism product in Perth and elsewhere in the State," she added.

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