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Business events boom in WA

A strong economy, world-class facilities and increasing air access are proving a powerful stimulus for business events tourism in Western Australia.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S TOURISM minister, Kim Hames, said the Perth Convention Bureau was on track to exceed the \$100 million target set for business events secured for the 2010-2011 financial year, illustrating the importance of business tourism to the state's economy.

Hames said that at the halfway stage of the year, the bureau had secured conventions and incentive travel groups expected to pump more than \$52 million – in direct delegate expenditure alone – into the local economy over the next five years.

"The growth of this sector is particularly welcomed at a time when other areas of the country's tourism are facing significant challenges such as the very strong Australian dollar and intense competition from low-cost airfares driving business to overseas destinations."

In the first six months, the bureau has secured 51 national and international conventions and 24 incentive travel groups which collectively are expected to attract more than 27,600 delegates to the state.

The minister said the recent successful bid to secure the international gas conference, LNG18, for Perth in 2016 – where over 5000 delegates are expected to attend – had provided a substantial boost to the bureau's half-year sales results.

"This conference alone is expected to deliver a \$10 million plus boost for the economy," he said.

"The business events' sector has been performing very well for the past four years, which can be attributed to the bureau's success in focusing on securing conferences that match the state's areas of excellence in the medical, mining and resources,

education, technology and marine industries," said Hames.



Dr Kim Hames

Regional centres are also being targeted to host mid-sized conferences and incentive events, with new world-class facilities now established in Albany, Mandurah and Bunbury. The regional profile has also been enhanced, with several major resorts developing small to mid-sized conferencing facilities within their properties.

Tourism Western Australia is also supporting the regional program, with funding for 11 new events, including a country music festival, game fishing tournament, a three-kilometre swim around one of Western Australia's most historic jetties, and a number of food and wine festivals.

The events are regarded as opportunities to attract visitors to the state, and to encourage regional dispersal.

*Images: Burswood Entertainment Complex
 Inset: Margaret River Convention Centre*



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