



Media Release

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PCB secures healthy dose of convention tourism for WA

The Perth Convention Bureau has secured 88 new business events for Western Australia worth an estimated \$66.6 million to the local economy.

Achieved against the backdrop of the global economic crisis, the \$66.6 million end of financial year result saw the Bureau exceed its 2008/09 delegate expenditure target by \$2 million.

The events, which consist of national and international conferences, corporate meetings and incentive groups, are expected to attract an estimated 35,500 delegates to Western Australia over the next four years.

Bureau managing director Christine McLean described the result as a "fantastic achievement" in what has been an extremely difficult global economic environment.

"This result demonstrates the resilience of the business events sector and why the State Government has committed increased funding to attract high yield visitors," Ms Mc Lean said.

"In the short term, the global economic crisis is impacting on our business with reduced delegate numbers at conferences and fewer corporate reward programs being booked, but the long term prospects for the business events sector look extremely buoyant.

"In spite of all the global communication options available these days, people still prefer to meet face to face."

A string of significant medical conferences contributed to this year's healthy scorecard of conference bid wins.

Among these include the Royal Australian College of Surgeons Annual Scientific Conference in May 2010 (2,800 delegates); the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists Annual Scientific Meeting in May 2012 (2,000 delegates); National Alcoholics Anonymous Convention in April 2011 (1,550 delegates); and the 11th National Rural Health Conference in March 2011 (1,200 delegates).

Ms McLean said that the events will further Perth's reputation as a leading centre of medical research excellence.

"Perth's reputation for, and expertise in hosting major medical and science meetings is growing internationally and will help to position Perth over rival international destinations in the future."

Given that the Bureau's new business events target has increased to \$81 million this year it will be critical to position Perth and Western Australia front and centre in the minds of event decision makers around the world.

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The expansion of the PCB's Convention Scholarship Program and the creation of the new Business Events Brand for Western Australia are expected to lead to both an increase in opportunities and exposure for the destination.

"The scholarship program, which has already been hugely successful in unearthing local conference hosts and bidding opportunities through partnerships with Perth universities and the City of Perth, will be expanded to run in conjunction with Perth hospitals."

"Since the program's inception an estimated \$46.33 million worth of meetings has been generated on disciplines ranging from environment and education to engineering and resources. By including Perth's top hospitals in the initiative we aim to further profile the State's expertise in the areas of medical research and health sciences."

"Add to this the launch of the business events brand for Perth and Western Australia, which we expect will attract unprecedented international and national exposure as a business events destination, and we are in a strong position to achieve our 2009/10 target."

The Bureau has been responsible for marketing Western Australia as a destination for business events since 1972. The Business Events industry is the highest yielding sector of the tourism industry, with international delegates spending six times that of the leisure tourist.

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