



# PERTH CONVENTION BUREAU



## Where the bloody hell are we heading?

By Christine McLean, Managing Director

Business events generate an estimated \$1.6 billion per year for Western Australia and are largely synonymous with tourism, but the broader benefits to the State and the wider community often go unrecognised.

The term business events encompasses conferences, corporate meetings, exhibitions and incentive travel groups and the Perth Convention Bureau is the peak industry organisation responsible for securing this business for Western Australia on behalf of its major stakeholders - the State Government, the City of Perth and around 220 industry members, including the Perth Convention Exhibition Centre and all of the major hotels and venues in the State.

As the Managing Director of the Perth Convention Bureau I'm both optimistic and apprehensive about the next 12 months and beyond.

I'm optimistic because opportunities abound to reap the benefits from business events that are not only lucrative in terms of the economic impact, they also showcase Western Australia's expertise to the world across a range of disciplines that align with the State Government's priorities such as mining and resources, medical research, marine sciences and technology.

I'm apprehensive because without significant investment in hotel infrastructure and destination development Western Australia is likely to lose out on around \$435 million worth of potential business over the next 10 years, according to a recent study undertaken by Access Economics. The report indicates that Western Australia requires an additional 300 hotel rooms every year just to keep up with demand so even if the first sod was turned tomorrow, we are still at least three years away from our minimum basic requirement in terms of hotel rooms.

The Perth Convention Bureau's five year target is to secure \$395 million worth of business events. Focusing on our strengths, we promote Western Australia as the State that prides itself on underpinning Australia's economy, that leads the world with our cutting edge research and technology and as a destination that delivers a world class convention.

Australian convention bureau research confirms that an international delegate spends up to six times more than a leisure tourist and that more than 40 percent of delegates will undertake pre and post touring, and around 30 percent will be accompanied by at least one other person. So little wonder that our competitors all over the world are investing billions of dollars to develop the infrastructure required to attract these high yielding delegates.

Which begs the question: Is Western Australia open for business and if not, where the bloody hell are we heading?

[www.pcb.com.au](http://www.pcb.com.au)