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AUSTRALIA RETURNS TO IMEX FOR 2010 WITH STRONGER FOCUS ON ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Tourism Australia returns to IMEX this year to market Australia's business events capabilities, including a stronger presence in the association meetings market.

The new \$1.8 million three year partnership, between Tourism Australia and the Australian Association of Convention Bureaux (AACB Inc) and major convention centres across the country, aims to raise Australia's profile as a destination for international association meetings.

Tourism Australia Managing Director, Andrew McEvoy said the new partnership would diversify Tourism Australia's existing portfolio of business events marketing activities aimed at capitalising on the more positive outlook for 2010 and beyond.

"The focus for our business events marketing program this year is to partner with industry to reverse the declines that Australia's business events sector experienced last year, and get our industry back on track towards positive growth and profits," Mr McEvoy said.

"This includes working with our industry partners to grow Associations meetings business for Australia, which provided to be a very resilient sector last year despite the global downturn.

"Australia continued to vigorously market itself as a destination for corporate meetings and incentives in its key source markets during 2009, in an effort to speed up our recovery effort this year. This approach, and the expanded role in the Associations market, is about securing solid business for Australia now and into the future." Mr McEvoy said.

Speaking at the press conference at IMEX today, Tourism Australia's Head of Business Events Joyce DiMascio said Australia's message for IMEX this year is for meeting planners and organisers, and associations to discover what they don't know about Australia.

"For IMEX this year we have 13 stand partners joining us under the Business Events Australia brand, helping to sell the message of Australia's capabilities to deliver bespoke events," Ms DiMascio said.

"This includes representation from our key partners in the Association meetings project to share more details on how Australia has much to offer as a business events destination with world-class infrastructure, a solid track record, strong CSR credentials, a safe and appealing destination and world leadership in technological, medical and scientific achievements," Ms DiMascio said.

"Tourism Australia and its convention bureaux and centre partners today launched a new marketing toolkit," Ms DiMascio said. "The new toolkit has been designed especially for associations and includes a brochure, fact sheets and expanded website with specific information for associations at www.businessevents.australia.com/associations.

In addition to the new Association partnership, Tourism Australia's comprehensive program of activities in the UK/Europe, USA, NZ, Japan and the 11 major markets across Asia for 2010 also includes:

- A print advertising campaign - "*Take your thinking to a whole new place*" - to be featured in key trade publications in UK, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and USA, present a dramatic representation of the innovation that takes place in Australia.
- Phase two of Tourism Australia's Corporate Social Responsibility Audit for the Business Events sector launched last week
- A comprehensive public relations campaign to generate more content about Australia's offering
- An enhanced Business Events Australia website
- A year round buyer and agent famil program
- Participation at key international trade events.

Visit the Australia Stand (number B320) at IMEX 2010

Ends

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