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AUSTRALIA TO TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT EIBTM

Australia will have its biggest presence ever at EIBTM 2008, the annual global meetings and incentive exhibition held in Barcelona, Spain, helping to showcase its credentials as a destination for staging world-class business events.

Tourism Australia will be joined by 15 Australian business events operators at the Australia stand at EIBTM, from 2 to 4 December 2008.

Tourism Australia Managing Director Geoff Buckley said the timing of EIBTM provided a terrific opportunity to showcase its new global campaign around Baz Luhrmann's epic new film *Australia* as well as other major developments in the business events sector this year.

"*Australia* the movie has provided a unique opportunity to create new excitement about our country around the world," Mr Buckley said.

"It's not every day that you have a movie that shares the same name as your brand and the new destination campaign around the movie aims to capture some of the excitement about Australia and turn this into new business.

"Australia is a place that can deliver unique and transformational experiences for the corporate meetings and incentives sector. At EIBTM we want to share some of the magic of our country with a special screening of Baz Luhrmann's new film for buyers," Mr Buckley said.

A special screening of *Australia* the movie is available to all buyers attending EIBTM, giving them the opportunity to see the movie prior to public screenings in Spain. Buyers need to pre-register for the movie screening via the EIBTM website www.eibtm.com.

Mr Buckley said that in addition to Baz Luhrmann's *Australia* there had been a number of other significant developments during 2008 which would assist the business events sector, including increased investment in new infrastructure and an increased focus on corporate social responsibility.

"There has been a record \$4.8 billion dollar investment in business events infrastructure around the country to provide new state-of-the-art facilities for our customers from around the world," Mr Buckley said.

"This investment in facilities across the country includes everything from convention centres to hotels, resorts and unique attractions, to meet the needs of this market.

"We have also been working closely with the industry to identify and promote venues and facilities within Australia which have a strong corporate social responsibility focus," Mr Buckley said.

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Tourism Australia

Head of Business Events Australia, Tourism Australia's dedicated business events unit, Joyce DiMascio said there was a strong need to make its customers more aware of the venues and services in Australia that can assist businesses in staging more sustainable events.

"We have been listening to our customers around the world and what they are telling us is that there is a need to deliver events that have a stronger social or environmental focus," Ms DiMascio said.

"A greater emphasis on CSR makes good business sense. And we want to show that Australia is at the forefront as one of the first national tourist offices to conduct an audit to identify businesses with solid CSR credentials.

"As a result of our research we can better inform our customers about Australia's green and socially responsible operators - from convention centres, conference and incentive hotels to staging companies.

"The national audit provides a comprehensive inventory of product and operators that already have some form of green accreditation. It also identifies operators that are planning to become accredited in the future," Ms DiMascio said.

Ms DiMascio said the interest from Australian suppliers in attending EIBTM had been overwhelming and the event is looking very strong for 2008.

"We were committed to having a greater presence at EIBTM this year and we had record levels of interest from Australian suppliers," Ms DiMascio said.

"This kind of enthusiasm demonstrates how passionate our industry is about taking our message to the world about how Australia can deliver on corporate meetings and incentives.

"We have a great product and the experiences to match and we want to tell the world what we have to offer at EIBTM."

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For more information please contact:

Alissia Galbraith

Tourism Australia, Sydney

+61 2 9361 1306

agalbraith@tourism.australia.com