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## Cities Unite to Launch Conventions Australia

Australia's top convention cities have united to create a new body, Conventions Australia, in a strategy to grow the country's share of the world conference market.

As Australia's first national industry-led entity, Conventions Australia will target the international association market primarily in the key regions of Europe and North America, aiming to increase the number of future confirmed conventions by 10 per cent by 2010.

The new organisation is a partnership between 12 venues and convention bureaux, representing the entire country and its eight international convention destinations – Cairns, Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and the Northern Territory.

Its goal is to reinforce Australia's track record in hosting memorable and successful conferences and increase its standing as one of the world's top ten conference destinations.

Conventions Australia chairman Martin Winter said the new organisation had overcome the traditional rivalry between Australian cities to present a united face for the country's conference sector.

"Despite the success of individual cities and our ranking as the world's number eight conference destination, Australia has never before promoted itself as a whole to the international association market," Mr Winter said. "In creating Conventions Australia, we draw on our collective strengths to show that Australia not only offers a remarkable experience for the leisure traveller, it also provides a sophisticated business environment with a thriving economy and a highly professional conference industry."

Launched today in Frankfurt at the IMEX exhibition for the international meeting and incentive industry, Conventions Australia will mount an initial three-year marketing campaign involving advertising, direct mail, an integrated website, public relations and the development of collateral including fact sheets, case studies, DVD presentations and an image library.

Mr Winter said the campaign would complement the work of Tourism Australia, which had recently launched successful initiatives aimed at the corporate and incentive markets, and is supported by Qantas Airways.

"The strategic plan we've developed for Conventions Australia is the first to specifically target the association market and will aim to reach several key audiences including industry organisations, professional conference organisers, association management companies, decision-makers and media," Mr Winter said. "We aim to increase the number of international association conventions in Australia by 10 per cent in the next three years and to take Australia's international ranking into the world's top five convention destinations by 2012."

Conventions Australia is a partnership of the Adelaide Convention Tourism Authority, the Adelaide Convention Centre, the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, the Cairns Convention Centre, the Darwin Convention Centre, the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre, the Melbourne Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, the Northern Territory Convention Bureau, the Perth Convention Bureau, the Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre.

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