



**Press Release - 26 February 2009**

**AIME 2008 WINS EXHIBITION OF THE YEAR**

The Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau (MCVB), and its exhibition partners Reed Travel Exhibitions, has been awarded Exhibition of the Year for the Asia Pacific Incentives & Meeting Expo (AIME) 2008 for the second year running at the State level of the prestigious Meetings & Events Australia Industry Awards.

An annual event established and owned by the MCVB and organised by Reed Travel Exhibitions (RTE), AIME showcases the Asia Pacific region's meetings and incentive product to the international and national buyers of Business Events.

AIME 2008 - the largest event of its kind in Australia, and arguably the most significant in the region - was judged on a host of criteria, including: project planning; financial performance; challenges and responses; exhibition significance, and; outcomes and evidence.

In support of its submission for Exhibition of the Year, highlights of AIME 2008 include:

- Business valued at more than US\$551 million was expected to be booked as a result of AIME 2008, resulting in more than 2 million room nights in convention and incentive business for the Asia Pacific region.
- 92% of hosted buyer respondents had placed or were likely to place business as a result of attending AIME 2008
- 96% of respondents were satisfied with AIME in terms of meeting their objectives
- 96% of exhibitors surveyed said it was beneficial to exhibit at AIME
- Visitor attendance at AIME 2008 was up 25% (to 3,260 visitors) compared with 2007.

Ms Sandra Chipchase, MCVB's CEO, said that receiving such recognition by industry and independent judges testified to the event's significance and success.

'AIME generates enormous revenue for Melbourne, regional Victoria and Australia. It also attracts buyers and media from around the world, allowing us to showcase Victoria as a world-leading Business Events destination. This generates business and international publicity for Melbourne and Victoria, which in turn creates jobs for Victorians in our important industry.'

Mr Paul Kennedy MBE, Group Exhibition Director RTE, said:

'AIME contributes significantly to the growth and development of the meetings industry throughout Australia, attracting new products and services to Australia, generating new events, incentives and conventions in the region, and facilitating the exchange of information and new ideas.'

'The fact that AIME continues to grow in size and significance, despite the challenging global economic climate, attests to the event's results in generating real returns for all who attend – buyers, exhibitors and visitors alike.'

Ms Chipchase said she was delighted that AIME was again recognised at the MEA Awards.

'To win this prestigious Award two years running attests to the event's significance, superior management and business delivery. MCVB is delighted to have achieved this outcome with Reed Travel Exhibitions.'

Ms Chipchase said that, having won at a State level, she looked forward to the event now being in the running for a national award at next month's National MEA Awards.

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