

## ***Melbourne Convention Bureau Recognised as Driver of City Economic Development***

At the Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Expo (AIME) today, Karen Bolinger, Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) CEO, highlighted how the state is evolving its business events offering thanks to its deeper engagement with Government.

Melbourne boasts a sophisticated business events offering. It's knowledge capacity, infrastructure, prosperity, accessibility and citywide collaboration create the ideal ecosystem for business events.

"In Melbourne we are fortunate that we tick all the boxes because of our academic, economic and industry sector strengths. But as a progressive destination in such a competitive landscape we have needed to identify what's next."

Business events in Melbourne have been identified as drivers of economic growth, beyond the direct dollar impact. The Victorian State Government recognise that the sector is a gateway to trade and investment, an opportunity to evolve priority industry sectors through research and development and a platform to harness and expose local talent.

"Ultimately business events accelerate innovation, and this is why Melbourne is seeing unprecedented Government support."

Ms Bolinger announced that business events in Melbourne are written into two government portfolio strategies across seven industries.

"Only two years ago we were written into one government portfolio strategy and today we are a core strategy pillar in the department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources and the Department of Health and Human Services.

"This is an important statement by government of the value of business events. They are not just talking the talk, they are walking the walk."

Ms Bolinger shared some of MCB's most recent international association wins in the medical and association sector including Spine Week 2020, the Annual Meeting of the International Continence Society 2021 and the General Assembly and Congress of the International Union of Crystallography 2023, which combined will deliver over 6,400 delegates and \$48 million in economic contribution.

Ms Bolinger claimed that business events are heavy on the State Government agenda and this is good news for clients.

"Our clients can be confident of government support for their events, get access into the relevant government department, rely on government for advocacy and bid support and hold a reasonable expectation for government participation at their event."

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