

MEDIA RELEASE

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“MACKAY SET TO TOP ONE OF ITS BEST YEARS”

The *Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre* (MECC) in North Queensland continues to enjoy strong support from event planners, with 2017 looking to be another bumper year.

Business events held at the MECC in 2016 included many of specific relevance to the region, reflecting the nature-based location and Mackay's local business and industry base. These events included the *Australian Society of Sugar Cane Technologists'* national conference, the *2016 Queensland Mining & Engineering Exhibition & Conference* and also the *North Queensland Law Association Conference*, all of which were repeat events for the region.

The *2016 Heavy Haul Rail Conference* highlighted Mackay's strategic location on Australia's freight rail network while *The Northern Avian Conference* and Queensland's premier tourism forum, *DestinationQ* showcased other assets of the destination. Mackay also impressed in 2016 when it hosted the annual staff conference of leading Australasian PCO company, *ICMSA*, wowing delegates with a range of spectacular off-site locations.

From a broader event perspective, the MECC was chosen from only 23 venues nationwide to host the highly successful *Spirit of Anzac Centenary Experience*, an exhibition which travelled around Australia in 2016.

For 2017, the *Mackay Regional Council* will continue to conduct its popular *Invest Mackay Events and Conference Attraction Program* which provides financial support to qualified events held in the destination. This funding only recently assisted an international conference which was held on the *Central Queensland University's* Mackay Campus. The conference held by the Australian and New Zealand branch of the *International Association for the Study of Popular Music* attracted delegates from Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada, the United Kingdom, America and Jamaica.

2017 kicks off to a very positive start with events such as the *“Next Gen StepUP! 2017” Conference* which will see young cane-farmers from around the country descend on Mackay to discuss the future of their industry sector. Other topical issues are sure to be discussed at the *Taxi Council Queensland Conference* which will attract up to 300 delegates and the *Australian Water Association North Queensland Conference* which is expected to draw 100 participants.

From a business events venue perspective, a \$2.2 million Olympic-standard equestrian precinct is to be developed in Mackay and will be due for completion by late 2017. It will include a covered arena, event spaces and tiered seating and is expected to provide an excellent undercover off-site option for conferences, functions and equestrian-sector related business events.

For more information on the MECC and Mackay, visit www.mackayecc.com.au

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Further information on the *Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre*:

The purpose-built *Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre* incorporates a 1090-seat auditorium and two plenary halls, with capacity to seat 1500 delegates theatre-style or 800 guests banquet style. Four meeting rooms, a 100-seat studio space, two foyers, and a selection of break-out rooms complete the picture.

The centre sits within a precinct which includes the contemporary *Artspace* regional art gallery, expansive *Civic Lawns* and the *Mackay City Library*, all of which contribute to the attraction of a diverse array of events.

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