



MEDIA RELEASE

Mackay hosts key tourism events

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The northern Queensland city of Mackay continues to show its flair by not only staging spectacular events like nowhere else in Australia but also attracting prestigious tourism industry conferences.

The *Mackay Airport Beach Horse Racing Festival* was recently held on the flat sands of beautiful Mackay Harbour Beach. The event comprised a series of 350 metre races, live music entertainment, fashions-on-the-field competitions and extensive food and beverage options.

Over five thousand keen race-goers made their way to Mackay Harbour to enjoy a day of sun, sand and racing. A number of corporate clients enjoyed access to the exclusive *VIP Quarter Deck Marquee* where they enjoyed a superior view of all beach activities, from the large deck. It is anticipated that when the event is held again in 2015, Business Event planners may consider incorporating this exciting and unique event into their event social programmes.

Following on closely to the very successful *Queensland Mining Expo* held in Mackay in July, comes news that several prestigious tourism industry conferences will also be held in Mackay this year.

From 6-8 October, the *Queensland Information Centres Association (QICA)* will be staging its annual conference at the *Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre (MECC)*, with regional familiarisations also being offered to delegates prior to the conference. QICA is the key industry body for more than 100 Visitor and Tourist Information Centres throughout Queensland.

In early November, more than 200 tourism industry professionals from across Queensland will then head to Mackay to attend the *Tourism and Events Queensland Regional Events Conference*. It will also be held at the MECC with the attending event organiser, regional tourism organisation and local council delegates seeking to further develop their event management and marketing skills, as well as network with industry colleagues.

Mark Fawcett, Manager *Mackay Entertainment & Convention Centre* is delighted the Centre and Mackay has secured two of Queensland's largest event conferences for this year. "Our Centre is perfectly positioned to host these conferences. Delegates will also get to see the commencement of the \$18 million redevelopment of Mackay's CBD, which will provide a contemporary landscape that compliments new accommodation stock." Mark clarified how this redevelopment would assist event planners. "With the mantra '*Mackay is events ready*', the CBD redevelopment includes new iconic public art, three phase power in streetscapes, and pop up bollards at the end of city streets, so events can be undertaken with ease in a magnificent new setting."

Mackay Tourism General Manager Stephen Schwer indicated that the destination was extremely pleased to have the opportunity to host these two tourism and event sector conferences for the very first time. "These events coming to Mackay confirm that we have the venues and infrastructure to host large conferences. But they also highlight how our central location and excellent aviation access has strong appeal for conferences which aim to attract delegates from around the State and beyond", he said. "These two conferences will showcase our excellent convention centre, quality accommodation and also the range of attractions and activities in the region for Business Events."

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