



SUBMISSION

TO

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES'

INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO

AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION

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Submitted by:

Elizabeth Rich | Chief Executive
Business Events Council of Australia

Tel 61 2 9969 1400 | Mob 0414 969 140
Email erich@businesseventscouncil.org.au
Web www.businesseventscouncil.org.au

Business Events: delivering innovation, knowledge and performance for Australia

International Conferences: their role in fostering international research collaboration in Australia

International conferences and exhibitions are important enablers of research collaboration and incubators for innovation.

The hosting of international conferences and exhibitions **in Australia** provides unique opportunities to:

- promote Australia's research results to a global market on Australian soil;
- encourage networking with international counterparts for a wider number of Australian researchers who are able to attend a local event;
- identify research needs through workshop discussions;
- innovate through new linkages;
- transfer knowledge;
- offer research outcomes a commercial platform through trade exhibitions;
- build long term work relationships through shared experiences and social interaction at face-to-face events;
- offer a forum for profile and leadership role to Australia for specific research areas;
- showcase Australia's capacities in specific fields of endeavour; and
- explain key research issues to the broader Australian community.

Recommendations

- 1. That the Inquiry consider the role of hosting international conferences in Australia to boost Australia's international research collaboration**
- 2. That a government strategy be developed with the help of the business events industry which would see more Australia hosting more key international scientific, academic, professional and trade events in areas of specific interest to the Australian government.**

The bidding for international conferences is a fiercely competitive global business. Many countries aggressively pursue the rights to host prestigious international association conferences which move around the globe. The Australian business events industry, principally through the various state-based convention bureaus and convention and exhibition centres, work on international databases and local associations to identify and attract relevant international meetings, conferences and exhibitions. There is considerable knowledge within the industry on the history of various events and the feasibility of bringing these to Australia. The industry also considers opportunities to expand existing Australian-based conferences, or to establish new conferences to meet emerging needs or gaps existing in the market.

The benefits of hosting such international events in Australia lie well beyond the obvious high-yield visitors to broader legacies, many of which are linked to innovation and collaboration as mentioned above. These legacies are expanded upon in the attached paper - *Delivering Innovation, Knowledge and Performance: The Role of Business Events* (Profs L Jago and M Deery).

Increasingly, cities and countries are recognizing the benefits which flow from hosting prestigious international conferences. They help to build the brand image of the destination: for example, as a knowledge or creative global centre.

The business events industry is keen to work more closely with relevant government agencies and departments to see more international conferences deliver research and development outcomes for the Australian community. There is a strong mutual benefit opportunity which has yet to be fully explored and captured.

The Business Events Council of Australia believes its sector can help strengthen Australia's innovative capabilities through the staging of high quality conferences designed to strengthen collaborative links, improve coordination and promote new ideas in a wide range of industries, professions and scientific fields of endeavour.

At present the potential role of business events is not perceived to be well understood by the federal government outside the traditional portfolio of tourism appreciation of the "tourism" value of visiting delegates.

The following illustration overleaf provides a basic example of the connections between government and the business events industry which could be further developed.

The recommended next steps involve establishing a working group of relevant business events and government representatives to explore areas of mutual interest, including priority industries and sectors of the Australian Government.

This would lead to the identification of international conferences which have the potential to bring a specific target audience to Australia which would aid international research collaboration.

The business events industry could then work on feasibility aspects associated with a possible bid to win the conference – such as the backing of local host organisation, likely corporate and government support, potential economic benefits, chances of securing the event, estimate costs involved in a bid.

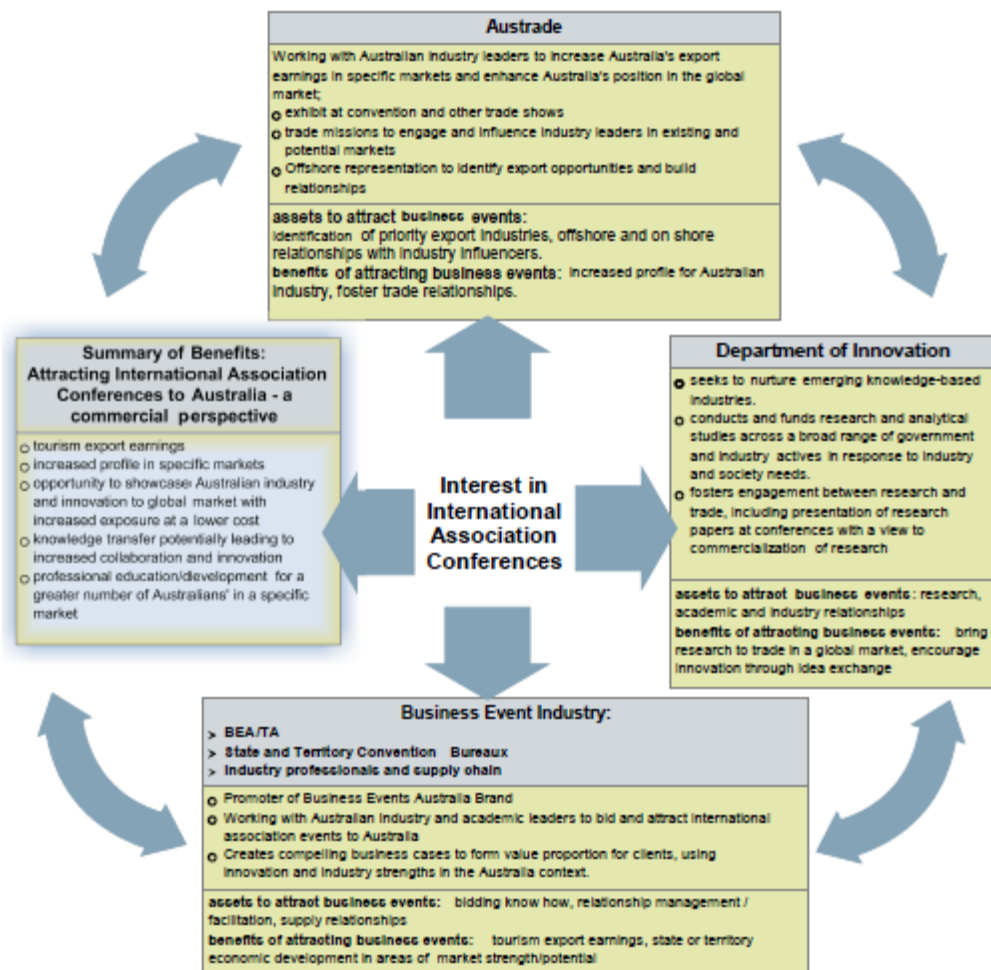
Decisions could then be made by relevant stakeholders as to whether to proceed with a bid and the business events industry would supply the expertise required to proceed with the bidding process.

Attached is a snapshot of the types of international events which Australia is already hosting over the coming years. The potential is there to build upon the list through strong united efforts by all stakeholders who stand to gain from the outcomes.

BECA extends an offer to work with the Department of Industry Science and Innovation on its proposed recommendations, or other possible opportunities which are identified as a result of this Inquiry.

*Australia's 11th Nobel laureate,
Professor Elizabeth Blackburn, met
one of her research collaborators at a
conference.*

BUSINESS EVENT MUTUAL INTEREST MAP – AUSTRADE, INNOVATION, BE INDUSTRY



Produced by Association of Australian Convention Bureaux Inc. for the Business Events Council of Australia.

Attachments:

1. ***Delivering Innovation, Knowledge and Performance: The Role of Business Events***, Professor Leo Jago, University of Nottingham, UK and Professor Margaret Deery, Victoria University, Australia
2. List of forthcoming international conferences in Australia, as at April 2010. Source: Association of Australian Convention Bureaux, Tourism Australia website.
3. What is BECA? (see overleaf)

BUSINESS EVENTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS AND DESCRIPTION



Membership: peak body of 5 business events related associations.

Activities: lobbying and representation on issues and areas common to all member associations on a national level to government, Tourism Australia, media; information exchange; research coordination, discussion forums.



Association of Australian Convention Bureaux Inc. (AACB)

Membership: 14 convention bureaux around Australia representing approx 2,600 members.

Activities: representing the bureaux that market Australia as a destination for business events, marketing policy development; bureaux education, lobbying, bureaux related research.



Exhibition & Events Association of Australia (EEAA)

Membership: 200 companies around Australia.

Activities: education, annual conference, research, forums.



International Congress and Convention Association (Australian Chapter) (ICCA)

Membership: 24 meetings industry companies around Australia involved in international meetings, part of a worldwide organization of 800 companies.

Activities: international database, research, education, news, directory, representation.



Meeting & Events Australia (MEA)

Membership: 1600 individual members representing approx 940 organizations around Australia.

Activities: professional development, awards, accreditation, annual industry conference, lobbying and industry updates.

Australian Convention Centres Group (ACCG)

Membership: 8 large convention centres around Australia including those located in Adelaide, Brisbane, Cairns, Darwin, Gold Coast, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney.

Activities: marketing Australia and individual destinations internationally for business events.