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Sydney's popularity propels Australia into top 14 global event destinations

Sydney has once again been confirmed as Australia's number one destination for business events, according to the latest annual *International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) Country and City Rankings*.

The report, released today, sees the harbour city retain its top spot within Australia and climb from 10th to seventh place in the Asia Pacific. In total, Sydney hosted 76 international meetings in 2017, a 25 per cent increase on the 61 reported for 2016.

Sydney's global ranking has also jumped from number 41 to 26, resulting in a rise in Australia's overall position. It climbed two places to number 14.

"This outstanding result shows Sydney's enduring global appeal as a destination for major international events," New South Wales (NSW) Minister for Tourism and Major Events, The Hon. Adam Marshall, said. "Having topped the list for Australia in 2016, when the city didn't have a convention centre, Sydney has built on that success in 2017.

"As well as being one of the world's most iconic cities, Sydney is Australia's business and innovation capital. These events fuel the country's global business and innovation brand by bringing the world's leaders to our country to meet, exchange knowledge and ideas, and create future best practice."

Business Events Sydney (BESydney) is the specialist bidding organisation responsible for securing international business events for the city and state. The organisation works closely with a range of stakeholders across the private and public sector, including the NSW government, to secure these strategically-important international events.

BESydney CEO, Lyn Lewis-Smith, said the ICCA results were testament to the strength of those partnerships.

"This is a fantastic result and Sydney has held onto its status as Australia's premier destination for international business events," said Ms Lewis-Smith. "These kind of results are not the result of complacency – our continued success on the world stage is the outcome of invaluable cross-sector collaborations that show the world that Sydney understands the value of bringing global leaders together to shape agendas and solve some of the world's most important challenges."

These stellar results reflect the fact that Sydney again had a world-class convention centre in 2017, after three years without one, and was able to host some of the world's biggest international events. In its first full year of operation, the award-winning International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney) hosted, among others, the ICC WCF World Chambers Congress 2017, OpenStack Summit 2017, the International Bar Association Annual Conference and the International Conference of the Institute of Internal Auditors 2017, all secured by BESydney.

In addition to the association events tracked by ICCA, BESydney also delivered a record-breaking 59 Asian incentive events such as the Amway China Leadership Seminar 2017, Prudential Hong Kong Convention 2017 and the Nu Skin Korea Success Trip 2017. These record results continued the 20 per cent year-on-year growth for BESydney's incentive business over the past decade.

Looking forward, BESydney has secured over 130 events with an estimated direct expenditure of A\$520m for NSW for 2018 and beyond. And this will continue to grow.

"We should all be very proud of what we achieved in 2017," added Ms Lewis-Smith. "And, with a strong line up of events in the pipeline, I'm looking forward to showcasing Sydney and Australia to the world."

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