

MEDIA RELEASE

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WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

As the economic environment gets tough, TTNQ business tourism marketing specialist Cairns & Region Convention Bureau (CRCB) is ramping up its marketing initiatives.

Statistics show that convention delegates spend more in a destination than any sector of the visitation industry, i.e. around 5.7 times the daily spend of a tourist on holiday. Meetings and Corporate Events earn \$90m for Tropical North Queensland each year and a further \$210m indirectly.

According to Mike Cannon, Executive Director of the Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) "The net worth to Cairns and region goes way beyond the dollar value. Business Events provide a destination with the opportunity to promote and showcase the business expertise of the city and region, and allows further opportunities to attract global and national business leaders and investment decision-makers who would otherwise not have come to the destination."

The latest push from the CRCB is its signature event "Sell TNQ" staged last weekend. The event brings 40 of Australia's leading conference organisers to TNQ to show and sell the meeting facilities, accommodation, dining and tour activities available here.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland Chief Executive Officer Rob Giason said this year's Sell TNQ was the largest ever. "Almost 150 buyers applied for the 40 places available" Mr Giason told us. "The event is highly respected as delegates get to meet local operators one on one and participate in product workshops. They also get to see accommodation first hand, experience day tours and be part of themed events showcasing Tropical North Queensland" he said.

Sell TNQ's theme for 2008 was Immerse, Explore Educate. The event immersed the meeting and event buyers in TNQ, took them exploring in Palm Cove and Port Douglas and held workshops in Cairns to educate them about the facilities, experiences and creativity available in our region.

'In past years," Mr Giason said "the bookings from buyers who attend Sell TNQ have more than justified the staging of the event."

This year almost half the buyers have elected to stay on for post event touring, demonstrating a curiosity about the region and its attractions that is a positive sign for the continuing buoyancy of the business tourism sector.

It is also becoming apparent that the exchange rate and the global economic downturn is motivating some Australian companies to consider Tropical North Queensland and other Australian destinations as for their conferences, rather than venues overseas.

"The best way to sell a destination, especially one for the business of Business Events, is to show it off to key buyers", says Mike Cannon. "In this sense, one really has to admire what Tourism Tropical North Queensland is doing with its 'Sell TNQ 2008' initiative".

To add gloss to the success of "Sell TNQ 2008" it has been confirmed that the 2009 Conference of Australian Convention Bureaux will be held in Tropical North Queensland.

The AACB holds an annual Conference designed to motivate and educate the staff of Australia's fourteen key Convention Bureaus. "The Directors of AACB chose Tropical North Queensland for their 2009 conference not only because the destination has excellent products and services, but also because the Bureau is proactive with its marketing initiatives." Mr. Cannon said. "Our Conference will show off Tropical North Queensland as a pre-and post-convention destination to around seventy Convention Bureau staff from around Australia. It will also showcase the region as a destination that is well able to cater for the satellite meetings associated with the conventions won by the Australian Bureaux."

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