

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre Expands to Meet Continued Growth

The announcement of a \$130 million expansion of the convention facilities of the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre will enable the Centre to meet continuing and increasing international and national demand.

Queensland Premier Anna Bligh has confirmed plans for the new convention centre development to be located on vacant land adjacent to the existing Convention Centre in Grey Street at South Bank.

The Centre's strong performance, with record forward bookings and sustained growth underpins the timing of the expansion project.

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre has achieved record profits over each year of the past three years and generates in excess of \$200 million in economic benefit for Brisbane and Queensland each year.

"The expansion will strengthen the Centre's leadership position in a very competitive market and will continue to enhance Brisbane's reputation as a leading destination for meetings and business events," Ms Bligh said.

The Grey Street Development is designed to meet an urgent need to accommodate conventions of up to 600 delegates and will provide greater flexibility in accommodating events of different sizes at the one time.

The expansion design incorporates five levels of boutique convention and event space with an additional 19 meeting rooms including two state-of-the-art tiered auditoriums.

South Bank Corporation Chairman, Steve Wilson said the expansion of the Centre was a great boost for the Precinct. "The new facilities will face the South Bank Cultural Forecourt and will add to the activation of Grey Street as a retail and restaurant hub and provide a direct link to the South Bank Precinct," he said.

Michael Rayner from specialist convention centre architects Cox Rayner, said the planned expansion both integrates functionality with the existing centre and creates its own destination: "It will have a very 'fluid' expression, activating Grey Street as well as connecting the centre through vertical landscaping with the parklands. "

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre General Manager, Robert O'Keeffe said confirmation of expansion was not only timely but also very welcome. "Brisbane is experiencing a period of record growth with a 28% increase in business tourism visitor nights according to the most recent national visitors survey. The Centre's forward booking levels are at an all time high and as such, the need to expand our facilities has become critical to our future business plans."

Mr O’Keeffe said the Centre’s sales team has recently confirmed an unprecedented number of new convention bid wins for Brisbane and the Centre and there is every indication that the trend will continue.

“The expansion will further enhance the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre as one of Australia’s best performing venues and will accommodate an increasing demand for concurrent conventions for 400 to 600 delegates. “The new development will provide us with the infrastructure to host more than 250 additional new events each year,” Mr O’Keeffe said.

With a yearly average of hosting 900 events, the Centre recorded its busiest year ever last financial year and with 1000 forward bookings and 50 new enquiries being received each week, the Centre’s future is secure.

Construction of the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre redevelopment is expected to commence in mid 2008 and is scheduled for completion in mid 2010.

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