



gold coast convention and exhibition centre

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Prepared by: Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre

Client: Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games

Event: *DestinationQ* Forum 2013

Project Managed By: MCI Australia (Brisbane Office)

Attendees: 380

Days: 2 Days

No. On organising Team: 13 in total (including 9 government committee members)

Date: 27 - 28 August 2013

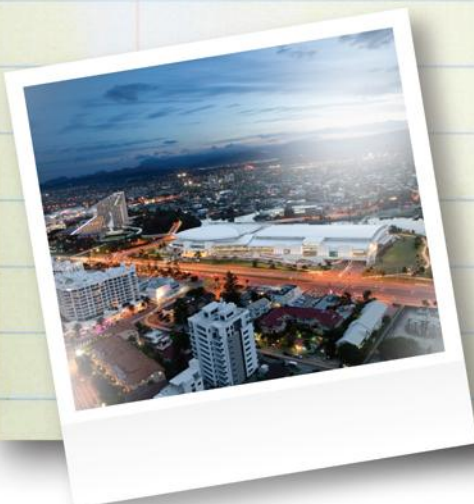
Budget: Not available

THE EVENT

The annual *DestinationQ* Forum is Queensland's most important gathering for the tourism industry and government. This year's event was held on 27-28 August 2013 at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC).

The future of Queensland's tourism industry was decided in late August when 380 delegates from the tourism sector and all levels of government converged on the GCCEC to work on a 20 year strategic plan for the industry. Tourism operators from across the state, Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) and Local Government Authorities (LGAs) were joined by seven ministers including the Queensland Premier Campbell Newman and Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games Jann Stuckey who opened the conference.

DestinationQ, hosted by the State Government and the Queensland Tourism industry Council, is incredibly only the second time in more than a quarter of a century that the tourism sector has gathered in conjunction with a whole-of-government approach to coordinate a vision for the





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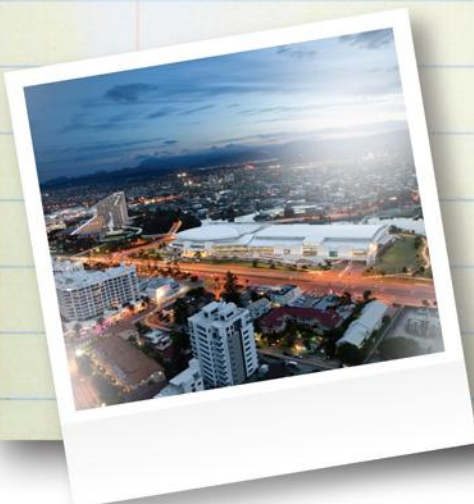
industry, including coming up with new ideas, attractions and target markets since the landmark event held in Cairns last year. *DestinationQ* represents an industry-government partnership to grow tourism in Queensland.

Building on the highly successful *DestinationQ* Forum in 2012, the 2013 forum's purpose was to report on the progress over the past 12 months and develop a 20 year strategic plan for the tourism industry. The 2012 Key Action Plan developed at the inaugural forum included a 25-point short-term plan for tourism including red tape reduction, encouraging private sector investment, marketing and eco-tourism opportunities. All commitments included in the plan were successfully delivered under the industry-government partnership.

The Queensland Government identified tourism as one of the four pillars of the state's economy and as part of delivering on a key election commitment to return Queensland to Australia's number one tourism destination. The 20-year journey is underpinned by a main goal to increase annual overnight expenditure to \$30 billion by 2020.

This event called for visionary participants who collectively contributed to groundbreaking ideas in a working forum. Delegates spent two days workshopping, discussing and voting on strategic directions to attract visitors to the state. The directions that received strongest support at the forum were included in a formal partnership agreement signed by the Premier, Minister Stuckey and the Chairman of the Queensland Tourism Industry Council. This agreement has now been taken forward as the basis for the 20 year plan for tourism, due for release in early 2014.

Next steps include finalisation of the 20 Year Tourism Plan, managed by a post-forum working group and driven by the Tourism Cabinet Committee. Delivery of the plan will be shared across industry and government, and will include an annual state-wide action plan linked directly to destination tourism plans being developed by the 13 regional tourism organisations throughout the state. Destination tourism plans will be completed by March 2014 in time for budgeting and government funding for the 2014-15 financial year, so some of the work and projects to emerge from this year's forum will be tangible by the next financial year.





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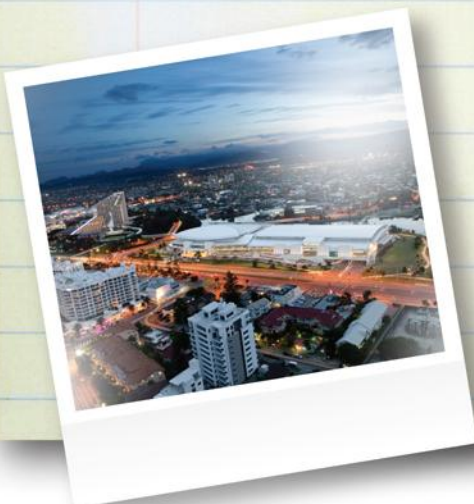
This year's forum provided industry with the opportunity to shape its future by considering seven "Megatrends" identified by the CSIRO and how they could partake in influencing people's travel choices. This was merged with delivering and integrated tourism and events strategy, attracting further aviation route development and investment in tourism products throughout the state.

Over the next decade tourist visitation and expenditure in Queensland is expected to rise with the resilient and diverse sector showing strong growth in both domestic and international visitor numbers and expenditure over the past year. The Premier attributed the rebound at least in part to the first forum and collaboration developed by industry and the government.

Queensland's tourism sector represents one quarter of the national tourism industry with the sector making the second largest contribution to total direct tourism Gross Value Added for Australia (\$9.6 billion; 26 per cent) behind NSW (TRA, 2013b). From a state perspective, the sector injected \$10.6m billion into the state's economy in 2011-12, equivalent to 3.7 per cent of Gross State Product (OESR, 2013; TRA, 2013b).

Domestic visitors account for the majority of all visitors to Queensland but strong income growth in developing economies such as China and India is expected to drive the international increase in visitors and also contribute to the ongoing future and success of business events in general. The 2012-13 financial year saw a six per cent increase in international visitor numbers to Queensland to more than two million, visitor nights increased by 12 per cent to 46 million and international visitors' spend increased by four per cent to around \$4 billion.

Furthermore, the Queensland Government is working hard to free up processes to encourage investment, create jobs and generate opportunities for tourism, one of the four pillars of the economy set to drive the state forward. A report handed down from the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment urged the importance of basic language skills, particularly Chinese and cultural sensitivity training, as part of schooling and tourism mapping for the 20 year Plan. It's estimated over 30 thousand workers will need to be trained on top of the 130 thousand already employed to meet projected demands. \$40 million dollars has already been invested in tourism and hospitality training that benefitted 18 thousand students over the 2011-12 financial year.





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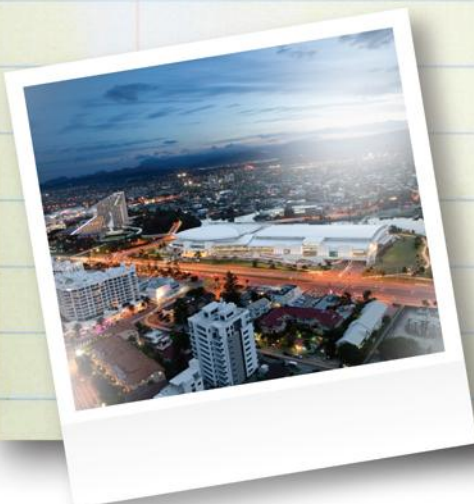
The two days of *DestinationQ* saw a successful formula of mixing ministerial speakers, workshops and break-outs and leading keynote speakers with networking functions including an onsite cocktail function.

VENUE AND CLIENT

On selecting the GCCEC as the venue of choice, MCI Australia (Brisbane) said the decision came down to cost competitiveness and the ability to cater for an event of this size that involved plenary and workshop sessions. The GCCEC provided smooth transitions into break-out sessions, high quality audio-visual facilities, established connections for media organisations covering the event and solid business infrastructure to support a voting system brought onsite and infused into the Centre's IT offering to count votes and showcase the results on screen in real-time. Features such as Centre's free Wi-Fi proved attractive to technology savvy delegates who were required to stay in close communication with their various places of employment, answer emails on behalf of their own businesses and interests throughout the forum. It also enabled delegates and organisers to engage with their social media networks during the forum.

Tourism Minister and Currumbin MP Jann Stuckey, said it was a coup for the event to be held on the Gold Coast. "The fact that it's here is a chance for us to show off what we believe to be Queensland's premier tourist destination," she said. "Undoubtedly there will be an economic boost from having several hundred people here," Stuckey commented, in the lead up to the forum.

The Gold Coast has long been the nation's top leisure destination and over the years, the GCCEC has also proved to be a favoured business destination. The GCCEC plays a major part in the leisure tourism sector hosting a plethora of business, lifestyle, entertainment and sporting events that attract thousands of domestic and international visitors. During 2011-12 alone, the Centre contributed to a strong injection into the Queensland economy of \$284 million – a 17 per cent jump on the previous financial year, proving just how instrumental the venue is to not only contributing to the state's bottom line but also to the wider tourism sector as the nation's largest regional convention centre.





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The close proximity of the Centre to more than 3,000 accommodation rooms (many within walking distance) and the entertainment precinct of Broadbeach provided a relaxing and picturesque backdrop to discussions on the future of the industry. As a leisure centric destination, the GCCEC was also under added pressure to showcase the destination in a favourable light and to deliver on its reputable word-class experience that the venue is renowned for.

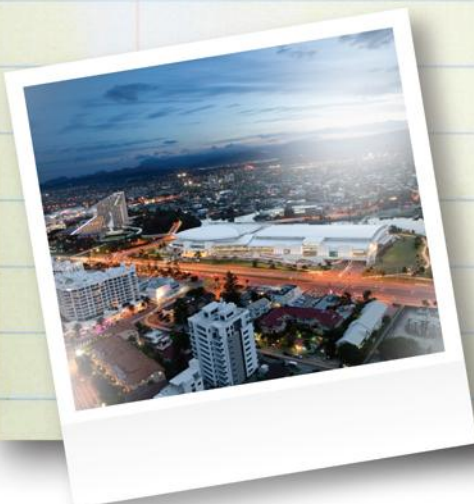
Grant Bowie affectionately referred to as the pioneer of the Gold Coast tourism industry and former Jupiters Hotel and Casino boss, who now heads MGM China Holdings Limited, was instrumental in the building of the GCCEC. As a keynote speaker at the *DestinationQ* forum, Bowie acknowledged the venue's importance to the region saying that "one of the best decisions I was ever involved in was appointing Adrienne Readings as general manager of the Centre. To see what [Adrienne Readings] and the team have done to take an idea and turn it into something of a successful reality is the most important thing," Bowie added.

Premier Newman also acknowledged the success of the forum and the GCCEC by saying "to all the staff of a variety of organisations and the convention centre staff, thank you for your efforts in putting this together and looking after us so very well. I think the drink and food along the way has been terrific as well". Minister Jann Stuckey echoed the Premier's comments adding that the team at GCCEC had put in an amazing effort to host the forum. "If this is what we have to look forward to in the lead-up to the Commonwealth Games [in 2018] then bring it on," she said.

LOGISTICS AND CHALLENGES

The collaborative effort and transparent nature of the forum required planning across many government departments and a variety of organisations including meticulous event planning between the project manager MCI Australia, forum director Tony Charters and the event manager at GCCEC.

Main challenges included close communication with various ministerial offices, departments and tourism organisations to collate data for various reports including the 12 month partnership report and Queensland Ecotourism Plan for 2013-2020. Management of dairies and itineraries to bring





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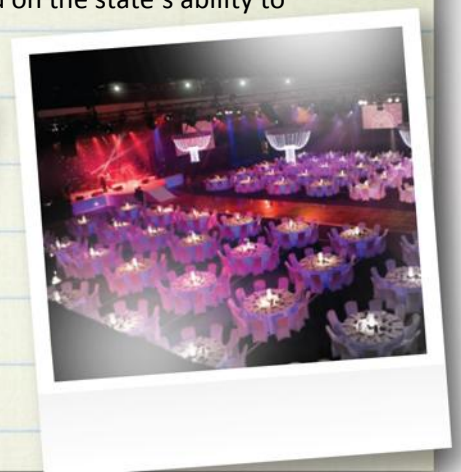
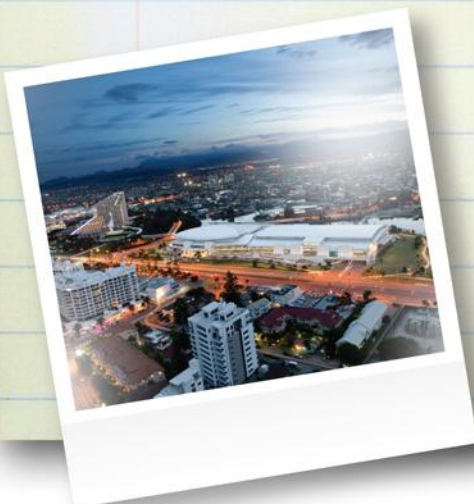
together key government and tourism heavyweights required precision logistical planning and easy accessibility to the destination and venue was a must.

Event challenges included putting together a program and structure to support the six themes that delegates would work around for the two days. Delegates provided direct input to two themes but were able to vote on the final priorities across all six themes. Instructions to delegates included parameters for ideas to be bold, achievable, focus on what needs to be changed or built-on and ultimately required support by industry and government across medium to long term periods. In efforts to workshop specific strategies, the 380 delegates were separated into groups of 65, each group dealing with a different theme, to propose and workshop the most important strategic directions needed to achieve the industry vision for that theme. Each theme group then refined their list of 20 directions down to a top six that progressed to through to the plenary session for consideration by all delegates.

In the plenary sessions an industry advocate presented a 90 second pitch summarising their direction. Delegates were then able to vote, in order of preference, for their preferred strategic directions using an electronic real-time voting technology system. Each delegate was provided with a personal voting device and ushers were positioned across the Centre's Arena floor to replace any faulty voting devices in a very quick and timely manner. The top three directions under each theme as voted in the plenary sessions were carried forward and included in a formal partnership agreement signed by industry and government at the conclusion of the event. This agreement is now forming the basis of a 20 year plan for tourism, due for release in early 2014.

Industry and government challenges include coordination and collaboration on a huge scale. This was evident at the onsite cocktail networking function where delegates were encouraged to approach and engage with government and industry representatives in person. Challenges including how the sector can respond and work together are vital in this bold partnership as is creating an industry-wide collaborative culture that puts the customer experience first.

On a domestic scale, the state is challenged with how to attract domestic travellers to holiday in the state as opposed to overseas. Internationally, one of the biggest challenges identified for the Queensland tourism market is tapping in into new opportunities hinged on the state's ability to





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compete with international destinations and capture a share of new high growth markets, specifically China and of other developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Keynote speaker Grant Bowie, who now lives in China, said that inbound numbers to Australia were “pathetic” and that the state needs to think global and increase its product offering if it was going to win over sections of the Asian market. Key learning’s also included carefully fostering the emerging Chinese market and not taking students and tourists for granted.

In response to some of these challenges, one of the areas identified as the next “big thing” for Queensland tourism was better promotion of its agricultural and food and wine industry to allow the state to compete with “foodie” states like Tasmania, Victoria and South Australia.

Finally, one of the biggest challenges that Queensland tourism faces is being self-sufficient as an industry. Premier Newman shared his desire that in time the industry would organise and run the forum with the support of the state government.

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

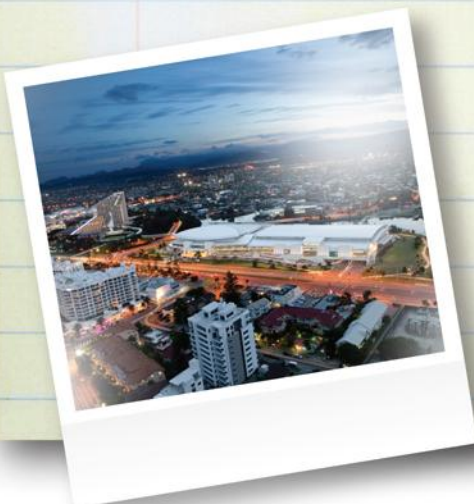
The GCCEC provided excellent service from the early days of the proposal to the completion of the forum. Onsite the staff was extremely personable, attentive and well briefed about the event and its purpose. The food was outstanding and provided a culinary taste of South East Queensland for all the attendees.

- Rhonda Hendicott, Guest and Presenter Services Director, MCI Australia

Image Captions:

130815_0480: Tourism Cabinet Committee and Queensland Tourism Industry Council Report to Industry. Pictures speaking John-Paul Langbroek, Minister for Education, Training and Employment. Far right: Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games.

130815_0778: Honourable Campbell Newman MP, Premier of Queensland – keynote address.





130815_0823: *DestinationQ* partnership agreement signed between the Queensland Government and the state's tourism industry (represented by Queensland Tourism Industry Council) which renews their commitment to work together for the long term development of the Queensland tourism industry.

ENDS

