

MEDIA RELEASE

Global Travel Fraternity Heads to Sydney For Skål 2010 World Congress

Global travel association Skål International has chosen Sydney to host its 2010 World Congress, bringing 1000 tourism leaders from around the world to the harbour city.

The congress is one of 14 events secured with the help of Business Events Sydney (BESydney) since July 1, bringing an extra 13,000 visitors to Sydney and an economic benefit of \$47 million.

Skål International chose Sydney after a bid by the organisation's Sydney Chapter, backed by BESydney (formerly the Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau).

Its success, over a rival bid from Galilee in Israel, was announced at the 2008 Skål World Congress in Taipei and means an estimated economic benefit of \$4 million for Sydney.

BESydney CEO Jon Hutchison said the announcement was timely, coming just days after Sydney was again named "World's Best City" in the respected Conde Nast Traveler Awards in New York.

"Skål International is a worldwide fraternity of travel professionals, so it's only fitting that such an important travel organisation should come together in one of the world's most desirable tourism destinations," Mr Hutchison said. "We're delighted to be able to showcase our city before such an important contingent of decision makers from travel companies around the world."

Mr Hutchison said BESydney had first identified the Skål World Congress as an opportunity for Sydney in 2001. With Skål's Sydney Chapter, BESydney joined a lobbying process that began at the 2005 World Congress in Zagreb, Croatia, and continued through subsequent congresses in Pattaya in Thailand and Antalya in Turkey.

Skål members from clubs across Australia were enlisted to join the lobbying process, donning matching Sydney t-shirts and handing out marketing materials supporting the Sydney bid. A formal bid was prepared and lodged with the Skål International secretariat in January 2008 before further lobbying and a presentation at this month's World Congress in Taipei.

Since July 1 BESydney has helped secure several other large-scale events for 1000 delegates or more, including an unnamed medical congress for 3500 delegates worth \$13.2 million, the World Congress on Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynecology for 1500 delegates worth \$5.7 million, and the International Grassland Congress for 1200 delegates worth \$5 million, all to be held in 2013.

In the past financial year BESydney secured events worth \$145 million for Sydney, achieving a success rate of 71 per cent in bidding for business events.

Founded by travel managers in Paris 75 years ago, Skål International today consists of more than 22,000 members in 500 clubs and more than 90 nations worldwide. The Skål Club of Sydney was established in 1960 and will celebrate its 50th anniversary at the 2010 World Congress.

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