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Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre Celebrates 15 Years Of Achievement

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The Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre this month celebrates 15 years of consistently strong financial and operational performance, achieving widespread international acclaim and providing the catalyst for Queensland's growing share of the lucrative business events market.

Officially ranked among the top three convention centres world-wide by the Association Internationale des Palais de Congress (AIPC), BCEC is acknowledged for its leadership and innovation in a fiercely competitive industry environment.

BCEC's record over its 15 years of 12,000 events, eight million visitors, 10.8 million hours of staff employment and \$2.2 billion in economic benefit to the local community, highlights the Centre's significant contribution to the economic fabric of Queensland.

This is further evidenced by the Centre's outstanding track record of success and its many benchmark initiatives.

The Centre has been the recipient of 107 industry awards including its most recent – the first international 'green' award - the IMEX 2010 Green Supplier Silver Award for environmental excellence and innovation.

With 47 catering awards to its credit, two of the Centre's chefs have been selected to represent Australia at the famous Bocuse d'Or International Cooking Competition in Lyon in France next year.

In its role as the major driver of business tourism to Brisbane, BCEC continues its efforts to increase the share of the international and national meetings business, partnering with Brisbane Marketing and the city's business, scientific, academic and cultural communities in promoting Brisbane as the destination of choice.

The Centre recently established the BCEC Convention Advocates Partnership, bringing together a high powered group of Australia's most eminent leaders in the areas of science, research, academia and business to promote Brisbane's world changing science and innovation and its growing appeal as an outstanding international meetings destination.

BCEC has several other industry innovations to its credit including:

- the first convention centre in Australia to establish a permanent, dedicated Speakers' Presentation Centre
- the first convention centre in Australia to develop a customised and accredited carbon calculator for events
- the first to create a permanent art gallery space in an Australian convention centre to

house the Centre's own very significant collection of traditional Indigenous art as well as providing a unique event space

As it marks 15 years of continuous successful operation, BCEC is embarking on an exciting expansionary phase with the development of its five level boutique extension of its convention facilities, BCEC on Grey Street.

Opening in mid 2011, BCEC on Grey Street will be the ultimate confirmation of the Centre as Australia's most flexible meetings and events venue. Specifically designed in response to an increasing market demand for smaller and medium sized meetings, the expanded facility offers the unique capability of accommodating meetings of 200 to 8,000 people.

BCEC on Grey Street will change the landscape and the dynamics of the South Bank Precinct while creating 4,000 new full time jobs in its first 15 years of operation and providing the opportunity to host an additional 250 events each year.

BCEC General Manager, Bob O'Keeffe said the advent of BCEC on Grey Street would add impetus to the market, providing an even more powerful proposition for Brisbane and its growing popularity as a leading international meetings destination.

"Our expansionary phase will have a very positive effect on business development growth for the Centre and for Brisbane.

Mr O'Keeffe said the response to the development's unique boutique concept had exceeded forecasts with very encouraging early high demand for the new facilities, with 33 conventions already confirmed for Grey Street and a further 31 awaiting confirmation.

Mr O'Keeffe said the Centre countered the recent GFC by tailoring its business direction and responding to market trends with the result that the Centre is forecast to record a strong financial year ahead with 10 more conventions than in the current financial year and with the number of larger conventions more than doubling in number from 8 to 17.