

AUSTRALIA: BUSINESS EVENTS INDUSTRY IN RECOVERY



A recent Business Events Council of Australia study has shown that the business events industry in the country has shown signs of recovery following the previous global economic downturn which saw delegate numbers decrease. Over the past year, it has been noted that the number of conference delegates visiting Australia has increased both in absolute numbers and in comparison to global numbers.

The report indicates that the number of people who visited Australia because of some conference last year was 190,000, which represents an 11% increase from the 2011 numbers. **As has been the trend in the past, majority of the conference attendees originated from New Zealand.** The number of business conference visitors from the USA, China and Japan rose by 26%, 23% and 16% respectively.

The report also showed that the ranking of Australia as the preferred destination for international association meetings improved, rising from 16th globally in 2011 to 13th in 2012. This shows increased confidence in the country as the prime destination for such activities. The report also demonstrated a reduction in the ratio between inbound and outbound business travel. This was due to a 10% rise in inbound travel and a 3% decrease in outbound travel in the year.

The BECA report is an annual publication that seeks to gauge the progress of the MICE industry by assessing key indicators. The BECA Executive Manager, Inge Garofani, said that most of the performance indicators were encouraging, which shows that the industry is finally recovering from the effects of the global financial crisis.

Garofani expressed confidence in the progress of the industry, and said that the outlook was positive. **The data currently shows that the industry is ahead of its 2020 target for inbound travel and its aims of being a more than \$31 billion industry by that time.** The fact that the current government is focusing on tourism can only serve to spur further growth in the industry, and we can expect more impressive results in the short and medium term.

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