

AUSTRALIAN MICE SECTOR FACES A FIERCE COMPETITION FROM ASIANS



Australia tries hard to lure more business tourists. The MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events) sector is naturally very lucrative and many Asian states are now posing a fierce competition in this field of tourism. Australian tourism minister Fran Bailey claims that there is an increase in the number of business tourists coming to the country.

Ms. Bailey said: "Business, convention and conference travel is big business and the Australia sector is making the most of this lucrative market segment." According to the minister, Australia offers business travelers exactly what they are looking for from a conference destination - world-class service and facilities coupled with a travel experience that lives with them long after they have taken care of business.

All governments are always interested in the MICE sector because it has been proved that the delegates spend some six times more than leisure tourists do. Last year, 787,000 business and conference tourists visited Australia spending an average of \$554 a day. A leisure tourist, on the other hand, spends only some \$94 a day. It is also the best promotion if they spread the information about the quality services offered here. Some business people even visit the country afterwards with their family or they send their children to study here.

Nevertheless, there are some industry experts who claim that the industry is in fact declining as there is growing competition from Asian states. The experts from the Business Events Council of Australia which represents convention and business sectors in Australia, wants the Federal Government to spend \$25 million a year through Tourism Australia to promote the country as a business events destination. The fact is that some Asian countries like e.g. Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong see the number of delegates increasing and their governments support the development of the MICE tourism.

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