

EVENT NAME: International Alumina Quality Workshop 2008 (AQW)

DATE: 7-12 September 2008

TOTAL ATTENDANCE: 460 participants including 44 exhibitors

ORGANISING COMMITTEE:

Steve Healy, AQW Workshop Chair and General Manager, Rio Tinto Research and Development, Bauxite and Alumina

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE ORGANISER: Susan Blake, Project Manager, Event Planners Australia

OBJECTIVE OF CONFERENCE:

Hosted by Alumina Quality Workshop (AQW) Inc, these triennial alumina quality workshops are the most prestigious and comprehensive education forums of their kind in the world.

AQW provides a valuable forum to discuss issues relevant to the production and use of smelter grade alumina and the sustainability of their industry.

The theme of the AQW 2008 workshop was “Alumina for the 21st Century” with topics covering exploration, mining and mine rehabilitation, refining, smelter impacts, residue management and rehabilitation, health and safety, as well as environmental and sustainability issues.

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY EXPERIENCE:

The Northern Territory’s capital city is the regional supply and logistics base for Australia’s mining and energy industry and has become the destination of choice for influential resource industry events.

As the International Alumina Quality Workshop (AQW) is the only one of its kind in Australia, it is pivotal to raising the profile of the alumina industry to the world. Due to these factors, the location was a drawcard for international delegates with direct flights access from Asia and connections through all major cities in Australia.

Darwin was chosen not only for its close proximity to the Territory mine sites, but due to its tropical, relaxed environment which provided the perfect setting for all international and national delegates to network in casual surroundings, totally removed from the hustle and bustle of major city centres that many of the delegates reside.

The field trip to the USD2billion expansion at the Rio Tinto Alcan Gove refinery, mine and rehabilitation areas in Nhulunbuy was an appealing activity a definite drawcard to international participants and an outstanding sell out and success.



THE DARWIN CONVENTION CENTRE EXPERIENCE:

AQW 2008 was one of the first international conventions to be held at the Darwin Convention Centre (DCC), the jewel in the crown of the new Darwin Waterfront Precinct, a 25-hectare lifestyle precinct of parklands, hotels, apartments, alfresco restaurants and retail shopping.

The Centre was selected as the venue due its ability to accommodate delegate numbers and the industry exhibition.

The event was held over a six day duration and attracted 44 exhibitors, a 40% increase on the previous meeting. The organiser, Event Planners Australia had not planned for such an increase, but that is why the venue worked so well, as The DCC offered the flexibility to expand into another hall if required.

No exhibitors were Darwin-based, therefore all equipment had to be shipped either interstate or from overseas. There were exhibitors from Germany, China, Canada and Australia including Rio Tinto Alcan, BOKELA, FLSmidth, Sefar, Albany International, Hatch, Hydro, KMPT, Tyco Flow Control, Madison Filter, Bechtel, Precision Light and Air, Honeywell, Clear Edge Filtration and Alumina Australia to name a few.

The welcome reception and industry exhibition opening, coffee breaks and luncheons were all catered events held at the Darwin Convention Centre.



TRIUMPHS:

One of the success stories was the fully subscribed technical tour with 141 participants to Gove presented a major logistical challenge regarding how to transport delegates to this remote area en masse.

Scheduled mid-event, it offered delegates the opportunity to visit the latest USD2 billion expansion at the Rio Tinto Alcan Gove refinery, mine and rehabilitation areas in Nhulunbuy, some 646 kilometres from Darwin.

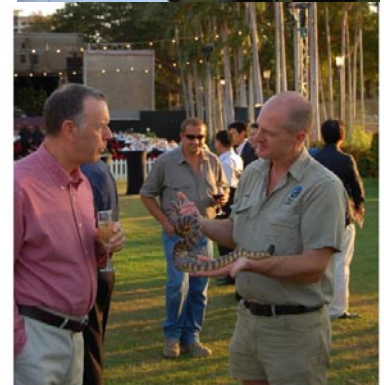
Event Planners Australia organised a group booking on the scheduled Qantas flight to Gove that day and due to demand they also coordinated two additional charter flights between Darwin and Gove. It was important to ensure that the two additional flights arrived and departed at the same time as the Qantas flight.

Transfers commenced at 4.30am, so delegates were thoroughly briefed in the lead-up to the event to ensure awareness of the designated transfer departure times and to enable the tour to run smoothly and on time.

One of the goals for AQW 2008 was to put together an innovative social program to create memorable Darwin experiences for the delegates. Two outdoor venues were chosen for the social events - Pee Wee's on the Point (cocktail function) and SKYCITY Darwin (gala dinner). Both venues were chosen for their beautiful location overlooking the Arafura Sea, with Pee Wee's at the Point also selected for its historical significance.

MEET DARWIN

CONVENTION CASE STUDY – DARWIN, AUSTRALIA'S NORTHERN TERRITORY



THE VERDICT:

The new Darwin Convention Centre was judged by the conference organisers to be a most successful venue for the 2008 Workshop. Positive comments were received remarking upon its versatility particularly as another international conference (International Association of Women Police Annual Training Conference with 540 delegates in attendance) was being held in the venue at the same time.

EPA's Susan Blake stated that the Centre had marked designated areas for each of the conventions to ensure that delegates to each convention knew where their respective sessions were and commented on how superb the acoustics in the main auditorium were.

"The new Darwin Convention Centre is a wonderful facility - modern, sophisticated lines, clean uncluttered layout, well appointed, and what a view. The natural light and water views are a selling point on their own. Versatile for our needs, it fitted the size of our event really well, even with sharing the venue with another conference at the same time.

"The Convention Centre staff were extremely friendly and went above and beyond to ensure our requirements and expectations were met," Blake remarked.

AQW 2008 succeeded in attracting greater than expected delegate numbers and exceeded sponsorship and industry exhibition targets, demonstrating strong support for the alumina industry.

Delegate attendance: attendance by 450 delegates from every Australian state and territory in addition to 25 countries around the world demonstrated the strong international flavour of the event.

Industry exhibition: held in conjunction with the workshop, the industry exhibition consisted of 44 booths, more exhibitors than had ever participated at any previous workshop.

Social program: designed to maximise networking opportunities for all delegates, the social activities formed a major component of the program. All expectations were surpassed, with the venues providing excellent service and fantastic quality food and wine.

CLIENT QUOTES:

"We were delighted attendance was above projections and exceeded sponsorship budgets, both in terms of numbers and revenue.

"Many delegates remarked that Darwin had all the services and facilities of a major city but in a relaxed tropical environment. The city has its own special character with the added bonus of being so close to Asia for international participants and provided a relaxed tropical atmosphere to encourage stronger networking opportunities.

"The staff at the Darwin Convention Centre have the right attitude and make everyone feel so welcome. The catering was top class, as good as any conference I can remember attending. Many delegates remarked on the quality of the food."

Steve Healy,

AQW Workshop Chair and General Manager, Rio Tinto Research and Development, Bauxite and Alumina

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"Darwin was an ideal choice of location for the AQW as it provided a gateway to South East Asia and a unique experience for delegates who had a genuine interest in the city.

"From a project management perspective, Darwin offered the right mix of venue, facilities and extra-curricular attractions for outdoor evening functions, natural and man-made attractions and local culture.

"The Northern Territory provided a desirable experience and 'retreat' from the norm which overcame any initial perceptions of the remoteness of the location for conference delegates who were considering attending."

Susan Blake, Project Manager - Events, Event Planners Australia

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