

MEDIA RELEASE

DARWIN A WINNER FOR RESOURCE INDUSTRY EVENTS

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Mining and exploration is one of the Northern Territory's largest industries and with the recent news that Darwin had been chosen as the onshore site for the Inpex gas plant, part of the Ichthys development, worth more than AUD23 billion and the single largest private sector investment in Australia's history, interest in hosting events in Australia's newest convention destination continues to grow.

Darwin has been chosen as the preferred venue to host several events relating to the resources industry including the 8th International Alumina Quality Workshop, the 2008 Sustainable Development Conference, the Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA) Conference & Exhibition, the AusIMM International Uranium Conference, the South East Asia Australia Offshore Conference (SEAAOC) 2009 and the Australian Pipeline Industry Association (APIA) Convention to be held in 2010.

Recently held at the Darwin Convention Centre, the International Alumina Quality Workshop gained strong industry support attracting 450 attendees from 25 countries including 44 exhibitors. The technical tour to the latest USD2billion expansion at the Rio Tinto Alcan Gove refinery, mine and rehabilitation areas in Nhulunbuy was a sell out.

AQW Workshop Chair and General Manager of Rio Tinto Research and Development, Bauxite and Alumina, Mr Steve Healy said he was 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, to international attendees, of being so close to Asia.

"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 and participants commented on the quality of the food," he added.

The location for the Minerals Council of Australia's 2008 Sustainable Development Conference was a natural choice.

Event Coordinator for the Minerals Council of Australia, Ms Sarah Leavitt said she was impressed with the quality of entertainment and suppliers on offer in Darwin. There were a variety of unique venues to hold our offsite social events which showcased Darwin and its surrounds.

"I would highly recommend Darwin and its Convention Centre for future events. The atmosphere in the city has a real buzz to it and the pre & post touring offers plenty of options for both international and national delegates," stated Ms Leavitt.

Taking advantage of Darwin's enviable tropical climate, conference attendees were enthralled with the locations chosen for the social events. The beachfront setting of Pee Wee's on the Point for the gala dinner was an outstanding success, with an informal dinner held on the manicured lawns of SkyCity overlooking the stunning waters of the Arafura Sea.

Participants took time-out after both conferences to explore the region's natural beauty with their families. Visiting the local attractions such as the Territory Wildlife Park, the Jumping Crocodile Cruise and travelled to the National Parks of Litchfield, Nitmiluk, Katherine George and the World Heritage listed, Kakadu.

Northern Territory Chief Minister, Mr Paul Henderson, said "the opening of the new jewel in the Territory's crown marks a new era in Darwin's and the Northern Territory's economy and it's already delivering beyond expectations."

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