

AIPC shortlists best centres

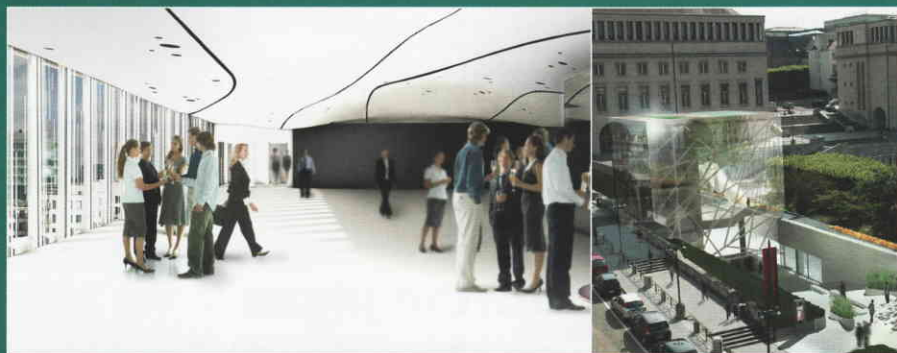
WORLD - The short-list of 18 finalists for the 2008 AIPC Apex Award for World's Best Congress Centre included three Australian, two Scottish and one Japanese entry in a mixed bag of contenders.

Judging is based on clients evaluating factors including congress facilities, project management, catering and technical capabilities.

The 18 finalists for 2008 are:

- PALEXCO Palacio de Exposiciones y Congresos A Coruna
- Aberdeen Exhibition & Conference Centre
- Adelaide Convention Centre
- Congress Center Basel
- CCIB Centre Convencions Internacional Barcelona
- Belfast Waterfront
- Bournemouth International Centre
- Bregenz Festspiel- und Kongresshaus
- Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre
- Cairns Convention Centre
- International Convention Center Durban
- Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre
- Kyoto International Conference Center
- Manchester Central Convention Complex
- Nantes International Convention Centre
- Toronto Congress Centre
- Valencia Conference Centre
- Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre

The winner was due to be announced 1 July at the AIPC Annual Conference in Singapore.



Brussels to get designer SQUARE

BELGIUM - The SQUARE-Brussels Meeting Centre has already booked more than 30 international conferences and business meetings prior to its opening on 20-09-2009 at 20:09.

To be built in Albertina Park in the Mont des Arts area, the SQUARE is set to become Brussels' most ambitious international meetings centre and will boast panoramic views. There will be three auditoria, with capacities for 1,200, 500 and 300. There will be 20 meeting rooms and 4,000 square metres of exhibition halls.

Belgian designer Arne Quinze is behind the project and there will be a brasserie with open air terrace and a banquet hall. A 30m long synthetic sculpture in the brasserie will serve as a bar, as well as providing changing ambient lighting and sound.

The steps to the entrance of SQUARE – a glass cube in the Albertina Park – will also provide an open air auditorium for concerts and film screenings.

With financing from Palais des Congrès SA and GL events, the commercial activities of the centre will be run by new daughter company GL events Brussels. The company believes the venue will be much sought-after for product launches, conferences, exhibitions and awards.

New ICCA UK chair

UK - Excel London's head of sales, associations and public sector James Rees is the new chair of ICCA's UK and Ireland Chapter, replacing Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre's acting MD Brian Horsburgh, who steps down after three years.

Kerrin MacPhie of the BT Convention Centre Liverpool and Sue Etherington of the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre London are new additions to the Chapter committee.

MacPhie says she is "thrilled to have the opportunity to work within ICCA to raise awareness of UK and Ireland issues at an international level. The meetings industry is played on a global stage; it is essential that we work in an international context to improve standards and really understand what drives the international buyers' market".

Jumeirah branding

SINGAPORE - Tony Cousens has joined Jumeirah Group as senior vice-president, Asia Pacific. He will oversee brand development and operations of all new properties in the region. He was previously GM at the Marina Mandarin in Singapore. New projects are planned for Shanghai and Phuket.

Informa is fund target

UK - After a brief merger flirtation with one of the UK's largest exhibition companies, UBM, conference and publishing specialist Informa last month became a target for private equity groups, including a consortium led by Providence group. A cash takeover was not ruled out by the company.

MPI appoints new market monitor to oversee sales

WORLD - Meeting Professionals International (MPI) has appointed Joan England as vice-president of marketplace performance.

Dallas-based England will be responsible for MPI's global sales efforts overseeing all revenue streams for advertising and strategic partnerships, total

account management, as well as fundraising for the MPI Foundation.

England has vast experience in travel management and has most recently provided sales and marketing consulting services to a diverse set of travel and technology clients across the US.