

Organisers rate AIPC 2008 in Singapore as one of the best yet

By **Gerardine Donough-Tan**

SINGAPORE Delegates at the AIPC Conference 2008 left the Lion City claiming it was one of the organisation's best annual meetings yet.

Held from June 30 to July 2 at Suntec Singapore, it featured 163 delegates and speakers. This year marked the 50th anniversary of AIPC, the International Association of Congress Centres.

With the majority of its members based in Europe, AIPC said the ability to draw senior management showed Singapore's attractiveness as a destination and also an interest to learn more about developments in the Asian meetings industry.

Delegates rated the quality of the programme highly. They gained insights from keynote speakers on the new 'Asian hemisphere', managing an 'experience product' and authenticity in the 'experience economy'.



AIPC delegates were impressed with Suntec Singapore

Panels discussed business in Asia, sustainability and the challenges of branding.

The AIPC Apex Award again went to Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre.

AIPC president, Edgar Hirt, said: "A successful conference needs to combine a strong

educational experience, meaningful interaction among delegates and a destination experience.

"Our 2008 Conference delivered all that, along with quality facilities and services that truly represents the best our industry has to offer."

MICE ASIA Congress a huge success

By **Gerardine Donough-Tan**

KUALA LUMPUR Approximately 100 participants attended the MICE Asia Congress 2008 at the Westin Kuala Lumpur on July 14 and 15 – the second year the event has been held in Malaysia.

Going 'niche' in its fourth edition, the event matched corporate buyers – mainly from the pharmaceutical and financial industries – and travel agents with a good mix of suppliers.

Discussion topics ranged from strategic meetings and events management to education and environmental practices.

Delegates, who were mostly from Malaysia, Singapore, India and Hong Kong, appreciated the in-depth information and useful tips. A mini-display outside the

ballroom also enabled more detailed discussions.

Organiser Naseba's event producer, Wissam Ezzeddine, said: "The breakdown of the agenda as well as the quality of delegates, travel agencies and corporate buyers resulted in a diverse amount of requests that directly led to an outstanding number of deals closed."



Venue...Westin Kuala Lumpur

TCEB launches new initiative

By **Kate Nicholson**

BANGKOK Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) plans to launch a specific financial support campaign for the meetings and incentives segment in its strategy for 2009.

The campaign will join TCEB's two recent initiatives – Thanks a Million campaign for conventions, and Support Policy and Approved Event for exhibitions.

TCEB president, Natwut Amornvivat, said handing out financial support was not a new policy at the bureau, but having a dedicated campaign for each MICE sector would help to stimulate responses better.

IN BRIEF

The US\$11 million **EMPRESS CONVENTION CENTRE** (ECC) in Chiang Mai has been unveiled for full-scale conventions, exhibitions, trade fairs and product launches. Its capacities range from small-sized meeting spaces for ten delegates to a convention hall for up to 1,500 delegates.

The Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau (SCVB) has updated its constitution and changed its name to **BUSINESS EVENTS SYDNEY**.

The Taiwan Railways Administration has launched a series of **CRUISE TRAIN** excursions with lengthy stops at selected stations. The cruise trains will travel at speeds as low as 35km/h, enabling passengers to fully appreciate the beauty of the region through which they are travelling.

The **SECOND WORLD ECOTOURISM & ADVENTURE CONFERENCE** will be held in Vientiane, Laos PDR from July 15 to 17, 2009. More than 800 delegates will gather to discuss solutions for ecotourism, world heritage tourism of cultural and 'natural' significance, the impact of climate change and environment degradation, and responsible and sustainable tourism.

SINGAPORE TOURISM BOARD chief executive, Lim Neo Chian, will be stepping down on December 31. He will be replaced by Aw Kah Peng, who will assume her new role with effect from January 1, 2009.