

Edgar Hirt: A Director's Vision for AIPC

Edgar Hirt, who was elected to the AIPC Board at last year's General Assembly and currently serves as Treasurer, started his career 20 years ago as an assistant of the Director of the Congress Centre in Baden-Baden. From 1987 – 1990 he worked for the VDI in Düsseldorf, still Europe's largest Association of Engineers.



During this time he organized more than 120 congresses, meetings & exhibitions both in Germany and other European countries. All this experience gave him a very useful insight into convention centres, particularly in Germany – so in 1990, he went back to Baden-Baden where he became the Director of the Congress Centre. The Centre was subsequently rebuilt, renovated and re-launched to the market under his leadership. He also served on the planning team of the ICM – International Congress Center Munich when the Munich

Edgar Hirt – Head of International Congress Centre München; Treasurer, AIPC

Trade Fair Company moved the fair grounds to the old airport in Munich-Riem in 1994.

With its state-of-the-art Congress Centre, Munich plays an important role in the national and international meeting and exhibition business. From the opening ceremony in Oct. 1998 to the present, the convention and event calendar has consisted of a "who's who" of the meeting world.

Edgar believes that being an AIPC Board Member is a very responsible task that "goes far beyond the role of counting money and gathering membership fees" that he fulfills as Treasurer. In particular, he is interested in the area of industry research and analysis which serves both the membership and AIPC as a whole. He also sees an important role for AIPC in communication and networking amongst international colleagues in the facility business. "The problems my competitors are facing today could be my problems in the future, and by sharing experiences and information, we can all help each other", he says.

Edgar feels that in a global alliance such as AIPC, all suppliers should stand together in supporting quality standards. "As client services become more visible, then the kind of quality standards represented by AIPC become more important to both our facilities and our customers. At the same time, they help raise the overall standards of the industry. This is an area I'll be working hard to promote during my term on the Board". ■

ECS Success Supports New Educational Efforts

The Excellence in Customer Service (ECS) course just completed at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre has again justified the high rating placed upon the program by its graduates. And with another ECS course scheduled for October 5 – 12, 2002, the AIPC Board of Directors has set now set out plans for a further expanded educational program offering to begin this year.

The first step will be an exploration of other geographic locations where the existing ECS course can be offered in order to expand the proven success of the course into new regions and languages and make the content more readily available to students from other countries. At the same time, plans are being made for the addition of a new sales training course (based on one now offered by NEC Birmingham), which would be delivered in a similar format to that used for the ECS course.

In addition, a detailed examination is being made of opportunities for joint educational programming with other industry organizations. This will involve a review and analysis of existing industry education programs and their applicability to the needs of AIPC members, and a determination of whether or not similar programs could be adapted to meet the needs of multiple organizations.

The Board is also supporting an "AIPC Seminar Series" to address topics of industry concern and interest in conjunction with major industry trade shows. The next in the AIPC seminar series will be delivered at EIBTM May 22, from 8:30 to 9:30 AM on the subject of "Government and Community Relations:

Repositioning the Meetings Industry". The presentation will be made by Rod Cameron, President of Criterion Communications in Vancouver, Canada and focus on the opportunities that the industry has to emerge from a year of conflict with a much stronger global positioning and recognition.

"The Board sees all these actions as reaffirming the primary importance of education activities in meeting AIPC's commitment to the

pursuit of high standards and the recognition of excellence in facility management", says AIPC President Barbara Maple. "Education is one of the most important tools we have for advancing excellence in facility operation and management, and at the same time, it is a great vehicle for sharing the expertise available in our membership." ■



ECS Graduates at the EICC: Anna Maria Wilkinson, Edinburgh International Conference Centre; Pasi Urjo, Finlandia Hall Congress and Concert Centre (Helsinki); Madalina Ududoiu, Bucharest International Conference Centre; Nicoleta Teodor, Bucharest International Conference Centre; Gemma Irazzo, Palau de Congressos de Catalunya – Barcelona; Dorle Grunwald, Congress Centrum Hamburg; Sylke Schoenian, Congress Centrum Hamburg; Susanne Brust, Messe Frankfurt GmbH; Daniela Ruckriegel, Congress Center Mannheim; Ulrica Cramby, Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre; Katharina Klitten, Bella Center / Copenhagen Congress Center; Paulina Karpinen, Finlandia Hall Congress and Concert Centre (Helsinki); Ian Patterson, Edinburgh International Conference Centre.

AIPC Partner

CAT Celebrates 15 Years In The International Events Industry!

Conference And Travel Publications (CAT) – Europe's leading specialist in the international events industry – celebrates its' 15th birthday in 2002.

Established in March 1987 with the first issue of Meetings & Incentive Travel magazine, CAT then launched the Meetings & Incentive Travel Industry Awards the following year. Association Meetings International was next, together with the Worldwide Convention Centres Directory in 1991. 1993 saw the expansion from publishing into exhibitions with the launch of The Meetings & Incentive Travel Show – 10 years old in 2002 – and then into Internet publishing with the launch of the CAT web site, now meetpie.com.

Today, the CAT portfolio includes; **Meetings & Incentive Travel (M&IT)** is the UK's leading meetings industry magazine for UK organizers of international events, circulated ten times a year to 16,000 plus buyers and audited by the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC).

The Meetings & Incentive Travel Industry Awards (M&IT Awards) are presented annually at a gala presentation dinner, benefiting Save the Children. There are now 25 award categories (voted for by the readership of Meetings & Incentive Travel magazine), sponsorship opportunities and an audience of 900 industry professionals. The event has now raised more than £385,000 for Save the Children. The next event will be held on 24th February 2003 in London.

Association Meetings International (AMI) is the only magazine to target secretaries of international organisations worldwide as well as organisers of large congresses and conventions.

Worldwide Convention Centres Directory (WCCD) is a unique, independent annual guide dedicated to the world's purpose-built convention centres. It is available both in print and electronically via the internet. Each centre's facilities are compared by a specially designed grid, enabling organisers to identify the venue best suited to their requirements.

The Meetings & Incentive Travel Show (The M&IT Show) is the annual exhibition for all sectors of the meetings industry, with more than 600



exhibitors and 3,000 visitors expected on 19–20 June 2002 at ExCeL London.

www.meetpie.com is the CAT web site – the hub site for the international events industry. Check it out for information on all the CAT products. Highlights include the interactive search pages for WCCD and Supplier Finder – and the scrolling News UpData (for the latest news and views), Jobs UpData (for listing of current career opportunities) and MailBag (the debate forum for industry issues).

In 2001, CAT launched **National Meetings Week** – running this year from 17–21 June – to raise the profile of the meetings industry through the support of the leading industry associations. CAT also launched (on behalf of the meetings industry) the charity, Meeting Needs – something that the whole industry can contribute to and share in the management of through the industry associations.

This year, CAT has launched the Meetings Industry Marketing Awards (MIMA) with 10 award categories from Best Print Advertising Campaign and Best Brochure to Best Web Site and Best Electronic Marketing Campaign. The first-ever event will be held on 17 June 2002 at The Landmark London.

Who's who at CAT;

Editorial:

Martin Lewis – Managing Editor, M&IT

John Keenan – Editor, M&IT

Rob Spalding – Editor, AMI and WCCD

Advertising:

Steve Lewis – Sales Director (all products)

Regional Managers:

Matthew Freeman

Stuart Hales

Belinda Marston

Nicola President

Nicola Spalding

Steve Voller

Marketing:

Gillian Luis-Ravelo – Marketing Director (all products)

Maria Cameron – Data Manager

Accounts:

Janet Butler – Accounts Manager

Jane Oxlade – Credit Controller

To keep in touch with AIPC, visit www.aipc.org

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: **Barbara Maple**, Vancouver • bmaple@bcpcavco.com

Past President: **Laure Mouton**, Paris • lmouton@palais-congres-paris.fr

Vice President: **Juan Garaiyurrebaso**, Bilbao • dirgeneral@feriadebilbao.com

Treasurer: **Edgar Hirt**, München • hirt@messe-muenchen.de

Warren Buckley, Singapore • warren@siccc.com

Hugo de França, Curacao • wtccur@atglobal.net

Pierre Gilliot, Genève • p.gilliot@ipoi.ch

Christina Nicholson, Birmingham • tina.nicholson@mail.necgroup.co.uk

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Marianne de Raay • marianne.de.raay@skynet.be

Rue de l'Amazone 55, 1060 Brussels, Belgium

Tel.: +32 (0)2 534 59 53 • Fax: +32 (0) 2 534 63 38

Mobile +32 (0) 496 23 53 27

EDITORIAL

Criterion Communications Inc., **Rod Cameron** • Vancouver, BC Canada

Tel.: +1-604-836-2123 • Fax: +1-604-263-2173

Communiqué

ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES PALAIS DE CONGRÈS
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGRESS CENTRES
INTERNATIONALER VERBAND DER KONGRESSZENTREN

■ President's Message:

Look Out For The Side-effects!

Now that things are getting back to normal in the meetings industry, we're all feeling better about the future. Attendance is rebuilding, events are rebooking and there are only a few side-effects to worry about. But every once in a while, you find yourself wondering if those so-called side-effects may not be the most important factors in the future of the industry.

Let's take the airlines. We all know that the airlines were facing some big issues well before 9/11, and that there had already been casualties amongst their members. But it was certainly the terrorist effect that pushed a number of them over the edge, and while the immediate impacts on air travel are starting to subside, it appears that their new operating format may be rapidly becoming its own problem.

A lot of renewed travel is probably a product of the "defiance" effect, where people refuse to be intimidated by events and carry on with their lives as a demonstration of their determination. This is a great gesture, and one that has probably had a very positive effect on getting people back into a more normal travel pattern. But the fact is, the whole travel experience has become less attractive – and that, combined with a reluctance by many companies to have employees participating in any non-essential business travel, could be the long term factor that keeps the lid on meetings growth.

To some extent, the decline in the quality of the travel experience was inevitable in the face of renewed concerns for security. Extra security measures are certainly welcome, but they do constitute a new intrusion into our already busy schedules. In some countries, they have also resulted in new charges being levied on travelers, on top of all sorts of airport fees and other taxes, both visible and disguised. Non of these measures can be ignored, but all represent an extra burden – and unfortunately, they are all easily avoided by simply not traveling!

But some of the worst effects are those which have been brought on by carriers themselves. Airline economics have resulted in reduced

schedules and higher fares in many areas, with the consequence that many flights are both more expensive and more crowded than ever before. Upgrade opportunities – the "lifeline" of many business travelers hoping for the occasional perk – have become all but hopeless on many routes which habitually carry heavy loads and offer little opportunity for use. Even the quality of things like in-flight service seems to be declining as airlines tighten their belts in every way possible.

Understandable, certainly, but you have to wonder if they're not ultimately self defeating.

None of these should be fatal in themselves – until you remember that many of our best customers – the delegates we hope will attend

meetings and events in our facilities – don't actually have to come at all! A big part of what attracts many delegates is the pleasure and diversion of the travel experience – and as that declines, so does their enthusiasm. Such an impact will grow if it drives organizations to more seriously consider alternatives such as remote meetings technology for non-essential meetings, and that's not what we need as we try to rebuild participation.

What's to be done? For one thing, there's more need than ever to ensure that security and economic measures are balanced against the overall impact they have on the travel experience. While security concerns remain paramount, people will put up with more intrusion – but eventually, there is a need to restore some kind of perspective so that travel can again be enjoyed rather than endured. This is a point we all have to reinforce with our respective governments in the months ahead.

Secondly, we need to reinforce the notion that face-to-face meetings accomplish things that videoconferencing or webcasting cannot. This is an old message for many of us, but it may be time to take it out, dust it off, and give it some new life.

And, finally, we need to recognize that if meetings are to be the kind of attractive and fulfilling experience that makes the new challenges of travel all worthwhile, we all need to play a role in making that happen. Facilities need to be more in the way of partners with their clients, and assist them to create truly great events instead of ones that leave delegates wondering if it was worth the bother of attending.

More hard work. But that's what usually makes the difference in times that remain challenging for the industry. ■



“A big part of what attracts many delegates is the pleasure and diversion of the travel experience – and as that declines, so does their enthusiasm.”

Barbara Maple, President, AIPC

Member Survey Probes PCO Relations

AIPC's most recent member survey revealed that the majority of member facilities have a formal relationship with one or more PCO's but only about a quarter actually perform this function in-house. The

survey, which generated a response rate of over 50%, posed the following questions:

- Does your centre have an in-house PCO?
- If yes, is this a service that is outsourced (staffed by an independent PCO acting on behalf of the centre) or directly managed by your centre?
- If no, do you have a formal relationship with one or more local PCO's?

- Please describe the nature of this relationship (financial, referral, joint marketing, other).
- Do you refer business to local PCO's as part of your marketing process? 27% of respondents indicated that they have in-house PCO's with 88% of these directly managed by the centre itself and the balance being outsourced. Of the centres that

...Cont'd on page 2

WTTC's Baumgarten to Headline AIPC Conference in Tenerife

Jean-Claude Baumgarten, President of the World Travel & Tourism Council will be the keynote speaker for AIPC's Annual Conference and 44th General Assembly in Tenerife from June 30 - July 3, 2002. Mr. Baumgarten's presentation will set the tone for a conference that will utilize a variety of approaches to analyze and respond to the impacts that global events over the past year have had on congress centres worldwide.



Jean-Claude Baumgarten

Under the theme "*Lessons Learned / Moving Forward*", the conference will follow up on the keynote with a series of sessions that analyze both specific implications for the industry and how key issues can be addressed. Amongst these will be:

- An industry panel dealing with how new global conditions have translated into issues and opportunities of particular interest to AIPC member facilities;
- Sessions on new strategies for technology, security, crisis management, communications and human resources;
- A facilitated workshop on developing a coordinated response to key issues facing the industry and the role that AIPC should play in addressing them, and
- The presentation of a consolidated AIPC business plan as prepared by the Board in response to the need for affirming the key missions and activities of the Association.

Conference Chair Warren Buckley says that the theme of this year's conference is a response to the need for stocktaking and moving on after a challenging year. "Everyone in the industry is now coming to terms with new political, economic and transportation realities, and it helps to be able to review these as a group, particularly with the help of the leading industry expertise we'll have on hand. What we want to do at the conference is to translate these issues into tactics for the future, and set a course that will respond successfully to a new set of circumstances for all of us. I believe that Mr. Baumgarten is the ideal person to put our discussions into the broadest possible context, and we are delighted that he is able to join us."

Baumgarten had a diverse career in the international business and travel community prior to his appointment as President of the World Travel & Tourism Council in 1999. He joined Air France in 1970 and rapidly moved through a series of responsibilities including Regional Manager for Japan, Thailand and Burma, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. As General Manager for Japan in 1982, he was also Chairman of the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Continued from page 1

indicated they do not have an in-house PCO, 50% indicated that they maintain an ongoing relationship with an outside PCO.

More than half of respondents reported that they regularly refer business to a PCO, either in or out of house, as an ongoing part of the marketing process, with a number of these indicating that they typically refer opportunities to several PCO's and let them deal directly with the client. Only 12% stated that they have a less formal or only occasional working relationship with local PCO's.

A number of facilities cited the need to avoid competition with existing local PCO's as a reason for not having developed such a capability "in-house". Of those reporting neither in-house capability nor an ongoing relationship with a single PCO, the most frequently cited reasons were;

- a sense that the client should be allowed to select a PCO on their own;
- the need for the centre to remain "neutral" on the issue;
- the lack of suitable PCO's in their region, or

He subsequently held the positions with Air France of Vice President and General Manager for the United States, Vice President for the Americas and Asia and Executive Vice President of Commercial Operations and Member of the Executive and Strategic Committee, where he represented the company on the Board of Governors of IATA and the Executive Committee of the UEA. As Executive Vice President of Corporate, International & Industrial Affairs, he was also advisor to the Chairman.

After his departure from Air France, he established a company providing consultancy work and start-up advice for new businesses. He is both an Officier de l'ordre National du Merite and a Chevalier des Arts et Lettres. He is also advisor in Foreign Trade to both the French Government and the Chairman of the Tourism Commission. ■

Iberia Official Air Carrier for AIPC 2002, Tenerife



Iberia Airlines has now been confirmed as the Official Air Carrier for the AIPC 2002 Annual Conference in Tenerife, and is offering discounts on published fares for travel to the conference. Proof of registration or confirmation letter is required at time of ticketing. The discounts are as follows;

- For national flights with final destination Tenerife, 20% discount on published fares in Business class and 25% discount on published fares in Tourist class
- For European flights, 25% discount on published fares in Business, Tourist and Eurobudget.
- For intercontinental flights, 25% discount on IATA fares in Business, Tourist and Excursion. ■

See You at EIBTM!

If you're attending EIBTM this May, be sure to join us in the AIPC booth to pick up the Third Announcement and Program for this year's Annual Conference in Tenerife and for our "**Taste of Tenerife**" reception.

The AIPC Board and the Tenerife Host Committee are hosting the "Taste of Tenerife" cocktail reception as a reminder of the AIPC Annual Conference and 44th General Assembly to be held from June 30 - July 3, 2002 in the Piramide de Arona, Tenerife, Spain.

The reception will take place at stand 1054 at EIBTM in Geneva, Switzerland, on May 22 from 12:00-13:00. Come along and get the very latest on this year's conference and our fabulous host destination! ■

- the involvement of the local bureau in the process.

The overall conclusion of the survey is that the operation of an in-house PCO is less common than maintaining relationships with outside PCO's (27% vs 61%) with only about 12% of respondents reporting having no formal relationship at all. Of the latter, it appears that an informal process such as providing lists of local companies is the usual procedure. Concerns about maintaining neutrality, needing to work through a CVB or avoiding competition with or among existing PCO's seem to be the major factors in determining relationships, with a multiple referral process or project-specific partnering being two mechanisms to deal with these concerns.

The excellent response rate, combined with a fast turn-around, supports the utility of these kinds of "snapshot" surveys for key issues, says AIPC Board member Hugo de França. "We will be carrying out further mini-surveys like this in the months ahead as a way of better utilizing our member resources to the benefit of all" he said. ■

MEMBER UPDATES:

Austria Center Vienna Wins TMO Award

Following Austria Center Vienna's nominations in the 1998 & 1999 Adams Business Media awards for the "World's 10 best Conference Centres", they have recently received the "Award of Excellence for Best Conference Centre" made each year by TMO - The Marketing Organization, one of the largest event management agencies in the UK. TMO makes the award to those partners who have distinguished themselves through outstanding quality in service and cooperation.

The announcement of the award was made in London at CONFEX. Austria Center Vienna won the award for special services during preparations for the Planet Tivoli EMEA meeting in June 2001. A further prize was awarded to the ACV Project Team, which through personal and technical know-how brought an outstanding contribution to the success of these technically and logistically demanding events. ■

New-look Grazer Congress Website Now On-line

Following a new extension and comprehensive refurbishment in 1999, Grazer Congress, the convention centre in the heart of Graz's old city, began a series of innovations. An example was the featuring of contemporary art by prominent Austrian artists to further enhance the splendid Stefaniensaal (Stefanie Hall) and Kammermusiksaal (Chamber Music Hall) which have helped make it a leading contender in the Historic Congress Centres of Europe (HCCE) alliance.

They have now followed this with a new-look website at www.grazercongress.co.at. A unique design and digital-context programming provided an elegant solution to the problem of constructing user-friendly service pages that also convey the incomparable atmosphere of Grazer Congress. The web design is based on the concept of parallelism as there is no forward

or back, and information and impressions exist side by side. The same principle was also applied to programming which uses Macromedia Flash 4 technology.

Thanks to an intelligent loading sequence, invisible to the user, the pictures - which represent an exceptionally large amount of data - are all streamed in parallel right from the start. The section chosen by the users is given priority, using the special menu-driven interface with information layers that unfold across the screen horizontally.

The design is both functional and festive, and laces its portrayal of Grazer Congress with a strong dash of charm. According to management, the site reflects the premise that the arts are inextricably linked with the centre's style and the emotions it arouses. ■

Valencia Conference Centre Takes PCO Award

The Valencia Conference Centre has received the PCO Annual Award in the "Congress Centre" category for the "quality of the services and facilities which contribute to the promotion of the city of Valencia as a Congress and Exhibition Centre".

The Spanish Federation of Professional Congress Organizers instituted the annual PCO Awards in order to distinguish outstanding Enterprises, Organizations and People in the development of the Congress sector. ■

Trieste: Big Business Year Leads to Expansion

The Conference Centre "Stazione Marittima" in Trieste, Italy has just completed an outstanding year in time for the beginning of a facility expansion.

"The year 2001 really has to be considered an outstanding year of big events, promotion and satisfaction", says **Fanco Milosic**. "We hosted a significant number of high level medical congresses, the International Summit of State and the Secretaries of the Central European Initiative, which included 17 state secretaries, 17 delegations and over 800 journalists." The success of the

summit meeting resulted in an enormous amount of publicity for Trieste as an ideal location for important international political meetings.

At the beginning of September the congress centre will expand from 4500 to 6550 square meters as a result of the positive conclusion of negotiations between the private consortium Promotrieste and the local public administration. "After 16 years, the community has become appreciative of the benefits of a congress centre, and this expansion is the result", says Milosic. ■

Orlando Convention Center On-Time and Budget

With approximately 14 months of construction remaining, the Orange County Convention Center's North/South Complex is nearing completion, and an independent auditor has confirmed that the construction, transportation and marketing of the county's largest construction project has maintained a position of on-time and within budget.

The construction project reached a major architectural milestone in October with the placement of the first "clamshell" unit. Workers placed the last structural steel truss in place on the southwest corner of the exhibit hall on Monday, February 18th, a month ahead of schedule.

At the same time, a new signing/directional and parking management system has been designed for effective transportation around the Convention Center. The plan

minimizes driver confusion and congestion, eliminates or reduces the use of variable message boards and eliminates or reduces the use of sheriff's deputies. Additionally, dynamic message signs on I-4 and S.R. 528 (the Beeline) will provide flexibility in directing attendees to their desired location. Smaller "trailblazer" signs will be mounted on posts along roads that border the Convention Center.

Convention Center marketing staff have been diligently promoting the expansion, and as of February 2002, there are 207 conventions and tradeshow's totaling 4,713,040 attendance and generating US\$5,971,421,680 in future direct spending on the books for the expanded North/South Complex. ■

Arusha Receives ICCA Recognition

As the first Conference Centre in East and Central Africa to be awarded a Commemorative Certificate by ICCA for being an active member for the past 20 years consecutively, Arusha International Conference Centre has embarked on a series of new programs aimed at improving the

quality of conference services.

Amongst the initiatives have been a state-of-the-art infra-red sound system, renovating and redecorating meeting areas and a major landscaping program for exterior areas to create a year-round "evergreen" environment. ■

NEW MEMBERS:

■ AIPC New Members

AIPC Welcomes New Members DüsseldorfCongress...

DüsseldorfCongress, the newest member of AIPC, offers a highly diversified portfolio of event facilities under one management group. Included in their holdings are five different locations which offer facilities for nearly any type and size of event, with 40 function spaces which can host up to 12,200 persons with all the latest technical equipment.

Among the available facilities are two convention centres - the Congress Centre Düsseldorf, including CCD. Süd, Stadthalle and Pavillon and the CCD. Ost, with 35 rooms for up to 8,000 participants; two event locations; the Philipshalle and the new RheinHalle, for up to 12,200 participants and a special location, the Robert-Schumann-Saal at museum kunst palast, for up to 826 participants

The CCD Congress Center Düsseldorf, the CCD Ost and the RheinHalle are located adjacent to the fairgrounds of Messe Düsseldorf and the River Rhine. The Philipshalle is situated in the South of Düsseldorf. All offer excellent transport links whether by car, train, plane or public transport and there are parking lots for up to 20,000 cars.

DüsseldorfCongress' facility portfolio is completed by full technical support and catering services as well as all the services required by a professional congress organisation. The overall mandate of the company includes responsibility for acquiring, planning, marketing and staging a variety of events from congresses and meetings to social, cultural and sporting events. In addition, it is to serve as a platform for economy/industry and the research community

Düsseldorf itself is the capital of North Rhine-Westphalia, a

...and Cairns Convention Centre!

"The Cairns Convention Centre is a world class meetings venue in the tropical paradise of Cairns, fringed by the Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage Rainforest. Cairns is the very heart of the Asia Pacific region and its International Airport makes it the most convenient of convention locations". That's how the promotional copy reads, and the Cairns Convention Centre delivers!

The Cairns Convention Centre first



Geoff Donaghy, Managing Director



modern metropolis with more than 700 years of tradition and a harmonious blend of past, present and future. The "Altstadt" with 260 cosy pubs and "the longest bar in the world", the famous Königsallee (shopping promenade), numerous museums and galleries are only some of the cultural highlights worth seeing.

Düsseldorf also is a key location for political and commercial decision-makers. As an international business city, it is Germany's second largest banking centre and is number one in telecommunications. The region has 54 universities and academies along with the largest Japanese community within Europe. ■



Hilmar Guckert, Managing Director



opened in July of 1966 as Australia's first international standard facility to be built outside a major capitol city. In 1999, a second major component was completed which provides additional facilities for trade exhibition, banquet and plenary style functions.

The Great Hall offers 1720 square meters of flat floor space and has a maximum capacity of 2300 delegates; it is divisible into four quadrants of 430 square meters or 500 delegates each. Hall 2, with 1470 square meters of floor space, can handle up to 5,000 delegates in a theatre setting or over 100 trade show booths. In addition, there are seven meeting rooms that can seat from 60 to 140 delegates theatre style.

Dedicated event managers, in-house production managers and 5-star cuisine delivered by the executive chef complements a range of Cairns-based AV, exhibition and event management companies. A wide range of three, four and five star hotels are minutes from the Centre, and the Cairns International Airport is only ten minutes from the city center.

Situated in the heart of the Asia Pacific region, Cairns boasts more than 95 international flights daily, making it readily accessible not only to other parts of Australia but the world as a whole. It is a vibrant, tropical city with a lively, cosmopolitan atmosphere and abundant accommodation, entertainment and recreational opportunities based on its proximity to some of the most important natural sites in the world. ■