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Three Years of Negotiations Brings 3,500 Delegates to Cairns

In the first three weeks of June the Cairns Convention Centre and city of Cairns hosted over 3,500 conference delegates who contributed around \$16.5m to the Cairns economy.

The 5th International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) Annual Meeting plus the APEC Senior Officials and Ministers Responsible for Trade meetings were recently held at the Cairns Convention Centre.

The Stem Cell meeting attracted 2,000 delegates in its first foray outside North America. Organisers expected 1,200 attendees however Cairns proved its status as an attractive world class meetings destination resulting in increased delegate numbers.

Michelle Singe, Public Affairs Director, Australian Stem Cell Centre, said, "It was very difficult to convince an American-centric organisation to move a major annual meeting out of the United States for the first time. The location and attraction of Cairns and the Convention Centre clinched the deal. Our successful bid relied heavily on the natural attraction of tropical North Queensland and the quality of the Convention Centre.

"The city of Cairns offered the advantage of keeping delegates entertained during 'down time' and the Convention Centre provided excellent facilities, complemented by outstanding Queensland hospitality, during the day. Cairns certainly worked its magic."

The two APEC meetings hosted over 14 days at the Convention Centre were the culmination of three years of active negotiations with the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister and Cabinet and APEC 2007 Task Force.

Initial discussions with Senior Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade representatives were held during the Convention Centre's National Roadshow in May 2004.

Over 1500 delegates from the 21 APEC economies attended the meetings.

Geoff Donaghy, Managing Director, Cairns Convention Centre said, "successfully bidding for and hosting these high profile events highlights the ability of the city's key agencies to work together to attract large international and government meetings to Cairns."

ENDS

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