



PRESS RELEASE – 19 JULY 2010

World Disaster Experts to Meet in Melbourne

Melbourne has won the right to host the Thematic World Congress on Human Factors in Crises and Disaster Interventions 2013.

Announcing the win today, Sandra Chipchase, CEO of the Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau (MCVB) which secured the congress, said the win was significant, marking the first time the event had been held in Australia.

Hosted by the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the congress is expected to attract more than 1,500 delegates, generating an economic impact in excess of \$6 million for the State of Victoria.

“The congress will bring together psychiatric and other health care professionals to examine best practice in treating populations affected by man-made and natural crises and disasters, such as bush fires, tsunamis and disease outbreaks,” said Ms Chipchase.

“The congress will be attended by a range of delegates from the health and education sectors including doctors, emergency service workers, non-governmental organisations, volunteers, policy advisors and others interested in expanding their knowledge and networks in disaster response management.

“By hosting WPA psychiatrists from more than 100 countries, as well as the many other specialist delegates attending from around the world, we are expanding and re-enforcing Melbourne’s reputation for hosting successful Business Events,” said Ms Chipchase.

The four-day event will be held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) in 2013. Leigh Harry, Chief Executive of the MCEC, said, “We are delighted that the MCEC has been chosen to host the Thematic World Congress on Human Factors in Crises and Disaster Interventions in 2013.

“The congress will provide Victorians with an invaluable opportunity to meet and share knowledge with the global experts in their fields and we look forward to welcoming all delegates to Melbourne and Victoria.”

Professor Russell D’Souza, Vice President of the WPA Section on Disaster Psychiatry and Bi-National Secretary General for the Indo Australasian Psychiatry Association, worked with MCVB to attract the congress to Melbourne, and has been appointed the 2013 Congress President.

“The congress plays an essential role in informing and reporting on updates and advances in human and natural disaster response management, including refugee health, the mass movement of traumatised populations and asylum seeking, with delegates presenting their scientific and anecdotal experiences from disaster response initiatives.



“With many natural disasters having occurred around the world in recent years, including Victoria’s Black Saturday bushfires, Haiti’s earthquake, Human Swine Flu and the Pacific tsunami, the congress provides a platform for knowledge sharing, collaboration and the creation of global affiliations to develop even better disaster response activities in the future,” Professor D’Souza said.

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