

MEDIA RELEASE

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MACKAY'S HOSTS SATELLITE CONFERENCE GROUP

A recent visit to the Mackay Region of Queensland by a group of international bioenergy experts showcased how satellite meetings, technical tours and off-site visits can be attracted out of major conferences being held in Queensland's capital, Brisbane.

The visitors, who were from Austria, Ireland, the Netherlands and Canada attended the 2016 *Bioenergy Australia Conference* which was held in Brisbane in mid-November. The participants represented the *International Energy Agency (IEA) Bioenergy Task 42 Biorefining Group* which, in addition to holding its Annual Meeting in Australia, also undertook a Mackay site visit as part of their conference activities.

The Mackay Region is well positioned to capitalise on the growing bio-energy market and relevant business events associated with that sector. The *Wilmar Bio-Ethanol Sarina Distillery* is the location of one of Queensland's only two operating ethanol plants. The region is also home to the *Queensland University of Technology's Renewable Biocommodities Pilot Plant* which is co-located with *Mackay Sugar Ltd*. More than a third of Mackay's electricity is currently provided via *Mackay Sugar's* co-generation electricity plant. In addition, *Sugar Australia's Racecourse Refinery*, which is also in the Mackay Region, is Australia's newest and most advanced sugar refinery and can produce up to 420,000 tonnes per annum.

While in Mackay, the delegates visited the above bio-refining plant sites and held an internal *Task 42 Planning Day* at the *Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre (MECC)*. This was followed by a Civic Reception at Mackay's regional gallery, *Artspace* which is conveniently located within the MECC Convention Centre Precinct.

With up to 70 services per week across a range of carriers delivering the 1.5 hour flight between Mackay and Brisbane, the destination offers a quick, affordable and easy connection for any satellite event attendees. Over 2000 business event standard rooms are available in the city, with more than six 4-star quality hotels located within easy walking distance of the convention centre.

Mackay Regional Council's Economic Development Program and the Queensland Government's *Department of State Development* collaborated to facilitate this delegation's Mackay visit. The MECC continues to source conferences and events of relevance to the region's various business and industry strengths and amongst other events, will be hosting a *Clean Energy Investment Forum* early in 2017.

For more information on the MECC and Mackay, visit www.mackayecc.com.au

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