# 15 successful years for ICC

In August 2012, the ICC Durban, the first international convention centre in South Africa, celebrates 15 successful years.

"It has certainly developed its credentials as South Africa's foremost international convention centre delivering fifteen years of world class hospitality and service to our many clients," said ICC Durban's, CEO, Julie-May Ellingson.

It has reportedly proved a pivotal money-spinner for the KwaZulu-Natal economy. It has generated in excess of R1billion in income over the past 15 years and firmly established Durban on the global conferencing map. The centre has been the trailblazer for the growth of the conferencing, meetings and exhibitions industry in South Africa with the other major cities in South Africa following Durban's example in constructing convention centres of their own. Collectively, these have catapulted South Africa into the 37th ranked global conferencing destination and Africa's number one conference destination in terms of the ICCA 2011 rankings.

## Impressive fiscal contributions

"It was originally developed as a catalyst for economic development and growth at a cost of R900 million and it has more than delivered on its return on investment for the city and province." commented Ellingson.

ICCD staff

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It has contributed significantly to the economy of Durban over the past fifteen years with economic impact studies indicating that the centre contributed approximately R2.7billion to the gross domestic product of KwaZulu-Natal during the 2010/11 financial year. In the same year, 3376 people were employed directly in the province as a result of the activities of the centre with a further 4462 employed indirectly throughout the country. In addition, it was a net generator of R467million in foreign exchange earnings in the same year. Measured over the past five years up until the 2011/12 financial year, it has made a cumulative contribution to GDP of R11.4billion.

Reports from Durban's leading hoteliers are fulsome in their appreciation of the value that the centre contributes to the success of their own businesses. Many have indicated that their businesses would have consistently performed at lower levels without its presence attracting thousands of delegates into the city on an annual basis.

Large events such as the annual Indaba Travel Trade Show and other conferences and exhibitions consistently contribute to the bottom line of Durban's hotel, transport, restaurant and retail sectors proving the importance of the centre as a catalyst for economic growth and sustainability in Durban.

"For those who are still sceptical about its value, another way of looking at its contribution is to imagine how things might have been if it had not been built. The foresight of those who originally conceptualised it as an important catalyst for economic growth and development cannot be overestimated. The fact that it was the trailblazer for the meetings and conventions industry in South Africa is an enormous accolade for those who pioneered its development in the city" said Ellingson.

## Rosy future

The ICC Durban will continue to act as a catalyst for the economic wellbeing of the tourism industry in the city and region with a very important role in offsetting the seasonality that exists in the leisure tourism industry, contributing significantly towards the well-being and sustainability of the hotel, transport, restaurant and retail sectors in the city.

"The centre has led the way in terms of the growth of the meetings, conventions and exhibitions sector in South Africa and we look forward to the next fifteen years and beyond. Our partnership with the Business Tourism industry over the past fifteen years has translated into our mutual success and the success of Durban as a major player in the global business tourism industry. We look forward to developing and strengthening our reputation as Africa's destination of choice for conferences, meetings and exhibitions in the years ahead," concludes Ellingson.

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