WINNING THE BID
The International Astronautical Federation (IAF) is the world’s leading space advocacy body whose members include all key space agencies, companies, societies, associations and institutes across 66 countries. Held annually, the IAC brings together the world’s ‘space family’ and is the largest gathering of the space industry in the world. With an annual rotation of host country, theme and local organiser the event first got on the radar for the host country, theme and local organiser than a decade ago. It was finally secured for the event in Adelaide Convention Bureau (ACB) more than a decade ago. It was finally secured for Australia by the ACB in conjunction with the Space Industry Association of Australia, defeating bids by Germany, Turkey and the United States.

“This conference has set the benchmark for IAC events. Our delegate numbers have by far exceeded our expectations”
Brett Biddington, CEO of the 68th International Astronautical Congress 2017.

STELLAR HIGHLIGHTS
The program featured many highlights, including an announcement by the Australian Federal government that it would establish a national space agency. A real stand out for both delegates and international media however was the presentation by SpaceX founder Elon Musk on ‘Making Humans a Multi-Planetary Species’. Musk told the audience at IAC that he hopes to start building a space vehicle by early 2018, with the goal to land manned missions to Mars by 2024. Lockheed Martin also unveiled updates to their plans for human exploration of Mars in the 2020s and many new business opportunities were forged during the week-long event, such as Italy’s largest privately-owned space company SITAEL signing a letter of intent with local start-up Innovar to jointly establish a multi-million-dollar company in South Australia.

NEW CENTRE DELIVERS
The IAC 2017 program was complex and used every part of the new East Wing of the Adelaide Convention Centre. In addition to networking sessions, breakfasts, lunches and dinners for the 5000 attendees there were eight plenary sessions, several highlight lectures, and more than 250 technical sessions with at least twenty occurring concurrently each day. There was also an exhibition where 80 businesses from the space sector showcased their latest offerings and developments.

FAST FACTS
Name of event: International Astronautical Congress 2017 (IAC2017)
Where: Adelaide, Australia
Flight connection: Adelaide Airport services 10 international airlines, including direct flights from Dubai, Doha, Singapore and Hong Kong.
Venue: Adelaide Convention Centre
When: September 2017
Who: Adelaide Convention Bureau; International Astronautical Federation; Space Industry Association of Australia; All Occasions Management (PCO)
Attendance: 5,000 from more than 60 countries
Theme: Unlocking Imagination, Fostering Innovation and Strengthening Security

“As the first major event since completing our redevelopment, IAC was always going to be a test for our team. Utilising every inch of space in various configurations, IAC was a great demonstration of the flexible nature of our venue and I’m thrilled to report that all ran smoothly with positive feedback received from the organisers and delegates alike,” said Alec Gilbert, Chief Executive of the Adelaide Convention Centre.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
The IAC shone a spotlight on Adelaide’s expertise in the space sector, and was complemented by community outreach programs that brought the entire city along on the journey. More than 700 school children attended a specially created interactive exhibition at the Parliament House while 3,500 members of the public attended an ‘open’ session of the exhibition. The State Library of South Australia staged an exhibition titled ‘From Outback to Outer Space: Woomera 1955-1980’ and the South Australian Museum hosted a ‘Spectacular Space’ exhibition.

“The IAC absolutely captivating the city and in addition to the large economic benefit for the state, it is the value of the incredible legacies that come into play well after the last delegate has returned home that truly highlight the importance of hosting these events.” said Darren Kito, CEO of the Adelaide Convention Bureau.

TRAVELLING BEYOND
Technical site visits to some of South Australia’s key locations were also arranged including the Woomera Test Range; the Institute for Telecommunications Research at the University of South Australia; Adelaide Planetarium; and an excursion to Stockport Observatory. Several pre- and post-touring options were organised for delegates and their families to take maximum advantage of their stay in Australia, including visits to the Adelaide Hills, the award-winning Barossa Valley wine region; and wildlife-rich Kangaroo Island. Tours to Broken Hill in New South Wales were also arranged for outback astronomy and star gazing.

TEAM ADELAIDE
Brett Biddington, CEO of the 68th International Astronautical Congress 2017 noted Adelaide’s seamless and connected approach to hosting the event. “Adelaide has been a splendid host city for IAC 2017. Its collaborative approach from the City Council, Library and Museum through to the Convention Centre and Convention Bureau have simply been exemplary. Our delegate numbers have by far exceeded our expectations proving that delegates will travel from long distances if the content of the conference is right and for the amazing experiences that Australia offers. This conference has set the benchmark for IAC events and Adelaide, and Australia should be justifiably proud of the legacies it will leave.”

John O’Sullivan, Managing Director, Tourism Australia

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