



Media Release – 31 March 2004

## **ICMS Australasia wins Event of the Year!!**

At the Meetings Industry Association of Australia Awards held this week at Sydney's Four Seasons Hotel, ICMS Australasia won the much-coveted Event of the Year Award. The award was granted to acknowledge the outstanding success of the *NSW Premier's Forum on Spinal Cord Injury and Conditions*, which took place at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre in January 2003.

The Forum, hinging on the controversial subject of stem cell research aimed to promote awareness, research and connections between people directly affected with a spinal cord injury and those working to develop a cure. With the theme "Making Connections", American actor, Christopher Reeve aka Superman, was an instrumental link to securing extensive global media coverage.

This world-class, world-first event had a challenging lead-time of only eight weeks, including the Christmas and New Year holiday period when many suppliers to the meetings industry are closed. ICMS Australasia played a pivotal role in coordinating the contributions of stakeholders and suppliers to ensure that the logistical challenges of managing such a unique event were met. This included project planning, budgeting, managing the scientific program, recruiting delegates, exhibitors and sponsors plus stakeholder, venue, speaker, supplier and volunteer liaison.

Key facts: 1000 people participated in the Forum, of whom 75% had a spinal cord injury or neurological condition. 250 of these people were in wheelchairs. 150 volunteers provided assistance to those with special needs and 125 facilitators chaired round table discussions. Over 17,000 square metres of flat floor space was used to accommodate a plenary meeting space, concurrent session rooms, an exhibition, access vehicle parking, 30 wheelchair accessible toilets, a medical centre and several retreat rooms.

In accepting the Award, Karen Wilkinson from ICMS Australasia paid tribute to the NSW Premier's Department for their initiative in convening the Forum plus the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre and other key meetings industry suppliers who customised their services to deliver this unique event. "The tireless efforts of all involved with this truly inspirational project surpassed the expectations of participants, giving them hope, courage and determination to remain focused on the possibility of a cure within their lifetime".

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