

# Association Watch

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## Joint Meetings Industry Council To Increase Global Advocacy

The Joint Meetings Industry Council this month announced plans to increase its role as a global advocate for the meetings industry through a separate administration, fund new research, increase its government lobbying efforts and coordinate member positions on key issues affecting the industry worldwide.

The council is made up of many of the major meetings associations in the United States and abroad, including the Destination Marketing Association International, Meeting Professionals International, the International Congress and Convention Association, the Professional Convention Management Association and Site.

The new projects are being funded by increased allocations from members and through sponsorships from IMEX and Reed

Travel Exhibitions. Total additional funding exceeds €60,000, according to Leigh Harry, JMIC president, chief executive of the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre and ICCA president.

In late 2010, JMIC will convene a summit of its members to align their views and to develop a plan to help guide them for the next 10 to 15 years, something Harry said that has not been done since 2000.

"The intent is really that association members in the past all tended to have their own voice out there in the marketplace and they'll still do that, but what

we need to do is have a more coordinated voice," Harry told *MeetingNews*.

Some of that will come through commissioning new research studies, primarily focused on the industry's total impact globally and then using those findings to influence policy makers at the governmental level. "We are getting better at measuring the economic benefits of the meetings industry, be it spend in hotel rooms, restaurants or whatever, but now looking at the downstream things that come

out of the meetings industry as well," he said. Harry noted that the Convention Industry Council, which conducts many of the same efforts for its association members in North America, supports JMIC's efforts, which he said are not in competition with CIC.

"We are mindful of the fact that CIC is doing a number of similar things in the states," Harry said. "MPI and PCMA are part of CIC, so we are talking closely with CIC to make sure there is a coordination in the activities because the JMIC focus is more about the rest of the world, but will have a focus in the United States as well."

The council also is creating a separate administration. Previously, the organization was administered by member organizations with the chair's association handling the bulk of the work and rotating treasury responsibilities with another association. Currently those fall to ICCA and the International Association of Congress Centres, respectively. The chair is rotated semiannually.

The additional funding also allows JMIC program manager and president of Criterion Communications Rod Cameron to serve in a wider consulting role to the council, according to Harry.

The Secretariat Office remains at the International Association of Congress Centres' Brussels office, where association secretary general Marianne de Raay handles some JMIC administrative duties. ○



JMIC's Leigh Harry



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