

Stage it and they will come

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Hotels push for major events to draw in visitors

THE hotel industry has thrown down the gauntlet to the Queensland Government to attract the sort of top-quality events that Brisbane's revitalised tourism sector deserves.

"The investments being made in major projects will be a game-changer for the city and make it much more attractive for people to visit and stay longer," Accommodation

Association of Australia chief executive Richard Munro said.

"We have the big capital expenditure coming in, but that needs to be backed up with spending on major events and so on."

The association held an event in Brisbane last week, attended by about 70 industry leaders. They watched presen-

tations updating progress on seven key projects worth more than \$15 billion – Brisbane Airport's new runway, Brisbane International Cruise Ship Terminal, Queen's Wharf resort, Brisbane Live entertainment precinct, the Dexus group's waterfront revitalisation plans, Cross River Rail and Brisbane Metro.

"The investment is going to be a boom for the city which is still suffering a bit of a hangover from the G20 (in 2014). We've never got back to that level," Mr Munro said.

"It's probably been a bit underweight for investment and attractions in the past. This (investment) is tipping the scales and will make it a much

more attractive destination." A wave of new five-star hotels was also adding high-end luxury accommodation options.

Mr Munro said the collegiate attitude demonstrated by industry players in Brisbane towards developing the attractions and appeal of the city was "like nothing I've ever seen".

And the combination of the

city with Moreton Bay, the Gold and Sunshine coasts gave it a real strength as a destination. There was a lot of discussion about how best to market the region.

The major projects would create marketing opportunities and tens of thousands of jobs.

The challenge now was for "government to come to the party" in terms of attracting drawcard events, promotion and training to support jobs.