

AUSTRALIAN SUPERYACHT, MARINE EXPORT & COMMERCIAL MARINE INDUSTRY

CONFERENCE



ASMEX 2019 CONFERENCE WRAP UP

ASMEX 2019 once again lived up to expectations delivering lively industry debate and stimulating dialogue both on stage and through active audience participation. The conference, which attracted 170 registered delegates from both Australia and 15 international locations saw an increase in attendance from closer-to-home neighbours in the Pacific Rim including Canada, Asia and New Zealand.

Richard Chapman, President of AIMEX welcomed all guests underscoring this year's theme of 'Driving innovation and sustainability' being core to what the Australian marine industry delivers. Michael Healy MP, Member for Cairns and Queensland Government's Superyacht Strategy Champion officially opened the conference with clear messages on current government support and progress for the superyacht industry in Queensland.

ASMEX 2019 Day 1 sessions delivered both overall scene-setting presentations plus drill-down focus panels on specific locations and topics. Data based presentations on the superyacht industry globally and in Australia provided a firm understanding of where Australia is currently in their vessel visitation levels. This was followed by an illuminating look at the state of the Great Barrier Reef with a key takeaway being the reef is still very much alive. A request went out to the audience to please help to change the international perception that the Great Barrier Reef is dead.

The regional focus session was on Tasmanian ship builders where panellists outlined the challenges and innovative solutions local builders and shipyards face as well as the strong line up of attractions that make the state appealing to the industry builders and as a cruising destination for vessels. Marine WA presented an update on key builders Echo Yachts, Silver Yachts, Austal and AMC.

The Refit and Repair panel was most lively with robust debate amongst Australian yards but still agreeing that Australia has the world's top standards and that investment in new facilities was a positive sign for the industry. Opinion however remained divided on the influx rate of expected superyachts and a possible skill shortage was also a concern.

The final session for the day saw senior industry spokespeople from Hong Kong, Indonesia and Thailand on stage discussing the diversity in the cruising habits of the Asian superyacht market with owners making their own decisions on destinations but typically guided by yacht managers' research. Also discussed was how Australia can do so much more to attract Asian based vessels to come here for servicing and for the cruising grounds by providing detailed information to the Asian market overall on distances, costs, where to stop over and clear pricing structures.

ASMEX 2019 Day 2 opened with a detailed look at the upcoming major events in the Pacific Rim region kicking off with the 36th America's Cup planning and progress in Auckland, New Zealand which is scheduled for March 2021. The presentation included an outline of the lead up events, the race track locations and also superyacht visitation and berthing enquiry levels.

A presentation on Japan, which will host the Rugby World Cup this year and the Tokyo Olympics next year, followed with detailed stats on the size of the cruising grounds, available marinas and services finishing with a key message that Australia is not that far from Japan with support all the way. It is actually a shorter distance than the 'milk run' between the Caribbean and the Med undertaken annually by many yachts.

Balancing out the Pacific Rim discussion, the audience heard details on what was happening on the west coast of Canada and its vibrant yachting community including a new marina in Victoria, British Columbia. It was agreed the Pacific has enormous potential and needs to be promoted to the US and European markets as the future.

An Australian panel followed discussing the increased activity in the Pacific over the next 24 months and how important it is for Australia to not only drive collaborative efforts with other Pacific destinations - to attract vessels already in the neighbourhood to its shores - but also to be fully prepared for the influx of visitations and what benefits this could bring.

Innovation and project development were also top of mind at ASMEX 2019 Day 2 and the formidable panellists agreed that much of the design innovation is led by owners and their appetite for new technology, long-range autonomy and health and well-being. Although there remains a drive for superyachts to be bigger and bigger, the industry is also witnessing a return to smaller boats with order books filling up in the 50m-90m segment.

The audience was then treated to a full blown presentation complete with a stunning video on the journey of the design and build of the award winning WHITE RABBIT by Echo Yachts. A true example of Australian innovation and design. Closing the conference was a lively presentation on innovation and intellectual creativity urging the audience to look beyond their typical peer group and learn more about what motivates other groups of people and why the intimacy of the yachting industry, more than any other, has more appeal, personality and allure!

After the coffee break, delegates attended the break-out sessions for the remainder of the afternoon. The Superyacht session focused on working more successfully with government and a strong panel line up discussed maintaining Australia's competitiveness in crew training and recruitment. The combined Export and Commercial session included presentations on the latest in environmental protection from a regulator's perspective, trade finance and foreign exchange and also innovation through design.

ASMEX 2019 organisers are pleased and proud of the positive feedback received from delegates on the quality of the speakers, the session topics and the openness of the dialogue.

Richard Chapman, AIMEX President said "ASMEX has once again brought together key decision makers from across the globe and Australia to look at opportunities and challenges alike in the marine industry. The calibre of the presenters, the enthusiasm of the delegates and the genuine desire for industry players to collaborate for mutual benefit is encouraging and AIMEX looks forward to facilitating these partnerships and opportunities"

Thank you to the ASMEX partners Pantaenius, Queensland Government and Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show and sponsors Benetti, Aqualuma LED Lighting, Rivergate Marina & Shipyard, Sydney City Marine, Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Maxwell Marine, AwlGrip & International Yacht Paint, Wärtsilä, Marine Engineering Consultants, BSE Maritime Solutions, The Yard Brisbane, Gold Coast City Marina & Shipyard, TAFE Queensland, Pyrotek, Scotchmans Hill, Quality Marine Clothing and Boat Style for their support and to delegates for their enthusiasm.

Thank you also to all the ASMEX 2019 speakers for enriching the ASMEX program, passing on their knowledge and hard-won expertise from so many different areas of the global industry.

- Final program with session descriptions and speakers is available [here](#)
- Full speaker list and profiles for ASMEX 2019 are available [here](#)
- Photos of the speakers presenting on stage during ASMEX 2019 are available [here](#)