The first conference scheduled to take place in the Darwin Convention Centre has been confirmed less than a week after the preferred developer of the new Darwin City Waterfront Project was announced.

The Darwin Cove Consortium is the preferred developer of $1 billion development which has the as its focal point the Convention Centre, set for completion in 2007.

Today, Chief Minister Clare Martin announced that in conjunction with the NT Police, the Northern Territory Convention Bureau has successfully bid and won the right to host the 2008 International Association of Women Police Conference.

“The conference will attract about 700 delegates over six nights,” Ms Martin said. “And it shows that even though the Convention Centre is still in the planning stages, conference organisers are eager to come to the Territory.

“The International Association of Women Police is a group made up of women in police forces around the world and their annual conference has a strong training component, setting out to strengthen, unite and raise the profile of women in criminal justice internationally.”

This financial year already looms as a bumper year for Territory Conventions. For the 2004-2005 financial year, $6.1 million worth of conferences have been booked, as opposed to $3.9 million last financial year.

Securing the International Association of Women's Police Conference was the latest success of the Northern Territory Convention Bureau. The Bureau, with offices in Darwin, Alice Springs and Sydney, has won 65 per cent of its bids to secure conferences over the past year.

“What attracts international conference organisers is our capacity and capability to hold their events plus factors like flights, the amenities and the hotels. “But what really excites them about Darwin as a convention destination, is the prospect of a new purpose-built facility, plus the fact that once their meetings finish, they can experience the Top End and see what makes Australia different and exotic.”