

10 October, 2024 - From the QBA

A 60+ year's old institution will be coming to an end in 2025. The Queensland Bridge Association Management Committee has announced that **the 2025 Gold Coast International Congress will be the last** following recent notice from the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre that the venue is fully booked throughout 2026 except for one week during the last week of the January school holidays. That week is unsuitable for a number of reasons which include the cost of accommodation which peaks at this time.

In negotiations over the past few years, the QBA had requested forward dates 18 months ahead but were never successful in obtaining these. The GCCEC was aware that, apart from school holidays, the QBA in consultation with the Australian Bridge Federation, had been prepared to shift the GCC to any other time of the year which would suit the GCCEC but no alternative dates were forthcoming. The GCCEC is managed by Star Entertainment on behalf of the Queensland Government. Appeals to several government departments, ministers and politicians for their intervention resulted in a formal letter stating that 'the government is not involved in the day-to-day operations or commercial decisions regarding the Centre'.

The GCC is the largest in the southern hemisphere and it is estimated that it brings in over \$8 million of business to the Gold Coast for the week it is running. Research has shown that there are no other venues at the Gold Coast able to accommodate an event of this size and calibre apart from the Carrara Indoor Sports Centre which, apart from having the necessary floor space, is unpopular because of its distance from Broadbeach, accommodation and restaurants.

This decision has not been made lightly. After thoroughly exploring all possible alternatives over the past 18 months, the QBA understands that it will bring with it a wave of disappointment to thousands of loyal players in Australia and around the world. We truly appreciate everyone's support during this challenging time.

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