



TA REVAMPS ADVANCE PROGRAM

TOURISM Australia's Business Events Australia division has opened applications for an updated "Advance Program" for 2020/21, with new requirements aiming to increase industry access to the scheme.

The Advance Program is a partnership marketing initiative, providing financial assistance to the local industry to support marketing and distribution projects aimed at driving business events visitation to Australia.

The new program gives greater access for smaller projects by lowering the minimum threshold to \$10,000; offering two application rounds annually; and streamlining the application process.

Penny Lion, Executive GM of Events at Tourism Australia, said "we know this is a challenging time for the industry and as we work on our long term recovery plans, we're looking for every opportunity to support the industry's re-emergence post-COVID-19.



"We're hoping that alterations to the application process for the Advance Program will drive innovation in internationally focused Australian business events marketing and distribution initiatives and, ultimately, drive demand culminating in more business for Australian industry".

Lion said the revamped program was an opportunity for the industry to turn "ambitious and effective ideas" from concept into reality.

First round applications close at 5pm AEST on 01 Jun, and can be completed online at events.tourism.australia.com.

A second round will open on 09 Nov and close on 30 Nov, with full details of the program available in the Advance Program Prospectus which can be viewed by **CLICKING HERE**.

A webinar covering the program and the application process will be hosted this Thu 30 Apr at 2pm AEST - register to take part by **CLICKING HERE**.

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news.

BECA warning

THE Business Events Council of Australia has forecast a \$35.7 billion hit to the economy over the next year due to the COVID-19 shutdown of gatherings.

The peak body says staffing losses across the business events sector will amount to 92,000 by 30 Jun, while almost 60% of businesses in the industry believe it will take a year or longer to recover after the pandemic.

BECA confirmed ongoing work on its COVID-19 Business Events Response & Recovery Framework (*BEN 21 Apr*) which is currently being finalised in consultation with the Government and will be made public at a later date - more info at businessescouncil.org.au.

Mackay Centre helps out



THE Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre (MECC) recently showcased its facilities by conducting the statutory inaugural meeting of the new Mackay Regional Council, as well as the swearing-in ceremony for newly elected Councillors.

Council Chambers were not suitable for the event for the first time since 1869 due to social distancing requirements, but the MECC offered the perfect solution (**pictured**) while the centre's tech facilities were also able to live stream the ceremony.



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THIS is a sure sign that at last Americans are taking COVID-19 seriously - not even the Insane Clown Posse is crazy enough to continue its music festival this year.

The hip-hop duo (pictured), founded in Detroit in 1989, is known for its elaborate live performances which are avidly followed by fans who are apparently known as "Juggalos".



This year the highly anticipated festival, known formally as The Gathering of The Juggalos, has been cancelled for the first time in two decades - meaning followers will be missing out on key features which include wet T-shirt contests, wrestling and of course performances from the Posse.

The event has been put off for 12 months, with organisers saying as well as the whole music industry being at a dead halt, "the bottom line is simply that we REFUSE to risk even ONE Juggalo life by hosting a Gathering during these troubling times".

Bolinger is back!

FORMER Melbourne Convention Bureau CEO Karen Bolinger has been appointed as MD Asia Pacific for the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), 12 months after stepping down from her previous role (**BEN** 02 Apr 2019).

PCMA CEO Sherrif Karamat said the move aimed to help build on the anticipated recovery of the business events sector in the region, saying the organisation believes Asia-Pacific will be the first to recover "and that the industry will be substantially changed".

Bolinger, whose new PCMA role started yesterday, will also continue in her strategic advisory role with the BestCities Global Alliance.

Arinex CEO

ARINEX has promoted Nicole Walker to the role of Chief Executive Officer, six years after she joined the company as a Project Manager.

Founder Roslyn McLeod said it had been "40 years since the company had such a young CEO who was also enthusiastic and wanted to create a journey of terrific successes".

Arinex is currently running a marketing campaign urging clients not to hibernate through COVID-19 but "lead the way by going online" - see it at arinex.com.au.

Gray's Say



Peter Gray, an independent Motivation Consultant, presents a regular **Business Events News** feature on current issues in the Conference and Incentive industries.

Has C&I life as we know it changed forever?

THE simple answer is, I doubt it, although according to many of the emails I have been receiving from conferencing and event management developers, the end of the world is indeed nigh!

The coronavirus has affected much of what we've all taken for granted, but from someone who has lived through a number of major phenomena in various parts of the world I know that conferences and incentives are very far from dead. And they will never be replaced by technology.

Technologies such as Skype, Facetime and Zoom have changed the way we can interact with each other, however the real thing - the actual interpersonal exchange - is so much better. Human interaction is always more rewarding. Before the Internet it was the usual practice to pick up the phone and talk to people. These days it's all too easy (and sometimes less confronting) to send an email. Unless you're adept in the use of the English (and all too often, Australian) language the nuances which will make your message clearer are often lost whereas a face-to-face meeting may render them unnecessary.

Anyone who has an understanding of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) will know that

what we say and how it is received can be vastly different. Imagine a radio station which broadcasts on a given wavelength - that's you - but your listener may unknowingly be 'tuned' to a slightly different wavelength which creates 'interference' in the understanding of what is being said. This is the equivalent of sending an email or a visual delivery using language which is inappropriate for the subject matter. It's also the reason that live meetings are far more successful than an electronic hook-up.

Those that don't 'receive' the speaker's message during the meeting (because they're listening on a slightly different wavelength) can interact with others, perhaps during a break or at the bar, who did receive the message but are capable of 'retransmitting' it on a wavelength that others can receive loud and clear. The result is a far more satisfied audience, a greater percentage of which understood what was being said to them.

This is just one reason why conferences, incentive programs too, will never be replaced by electronic interaction. An old African proverb says: "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

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