



## CINZ PCMA pact

**CONVENTIONS** and Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) has signed a new strategic alliance agreement with the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA).

The partnership has been led by recently appointed PCMA Managing Director for Asia Pacific, Karen Bolinger, who formerly headed up the Melbourne Convention Bureau (*BEN* 28 Apr).

"Through our new alliance we recognise the unique qualities and services each of us offer to our respective membership bases, and how a collaborative approach can support not only each other but the business events community," Bolinger said.

CINZ CEO Lisa Hopkins said the deal brought major benefits for the organisation and the wider industry, with CINZ members to now have access to PCMA's "exceptional education content" including the Digital Events Specialist (DES) certificate program as well as a range of COVID recovery resources, she said.

The alliance will also work together to research the scale and value of business events for the region.

## TASK FORCE PLOTS EVENT RETURN

**DRAFT** guidelines released on the weekend by the Tourism Restart Taskforce envisage a return of small and large business events with up to 50% of normal capacity.

The Taskforce, convened by the Australian Chamber - Tourism, includes a wide range of tourism and travel representatives including ICC Sydney chief Geoff Donaghy and Bruce Baird on behalf of Business Events Sydney.

The overall "Tourism Restart Plan" urges Governments to reduce uncertainty and commit to a timetable beyond the current Step 3 of COVID-19 recovery and "make clear the conditions that will enable each step to be taken".

The report notes that the tourism and events sector have been those hardest hit by border closures and coronavirus restrictions, with demand completely flatlining.

A sector-specific Restart Proposal for business events notes the critical importance of more clarity around the timing of any restart.

"Most events have long lead times, some years in advance, and there needs to be a clearer pathway through the steps for operators to understand what is possible," the plan suggests.

The Taskforce reiterated



the vast difference between business events and other forms of mass gatherings.

"Delegates to business exhibitions and events are all registered and their movements through areas within venues are strictly and closely monitored and controlled," the report notes.

It also added that event and exhibition managers are already well accustomed to complex risk management plans, which are routinely produced for each event.

Adding to existing procedures, new COVID-19 mitigation steps are being outlined, including conducting all meetings with up to half normal capacity, with delegates from non-household groups seated in a socially

distanced way.

Similarly exhibitions would only operate at 50% levels, with visitors moving through venues separated at all times by social distancing.

Infection control best practice would apply, including handwashing and hand sanitiser available in public and staff areas, and the possible use of "e-lanyards" which allow delegates to be notified when they come within 1.5m of another person.

Organisers would commit to greatly enhanced systemic cleaning practices, with one-directional flow where possible and the use of contact-free technology at registration points and entrances.

For larger events, limitations would see participants broken into smaller groups for dining and breaks, with no buffets and staggered entry and exit.

The guidelines provide for the promotion of the Government's COVID Safe app, customer tracing through registrations and the elimination of non-guest areas such as reception rooms and bars.

All staff would be required to undergo COVID safety training, to stay at home if symptomatic in any way, and be aware of plans to react to any positive case in staff, clients or suppliers.

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business events news

## Aussie BDM for Te Pae Christchurch

**TE PAE** Christchurch Convention Centre has appointed former Conventions & Incentives NZ (CINZ) exec Heidi Heming (*pictured*) as its new Sydney-based Business Development Manager.

The part-time role will see Heming "cultivating leads in one of the centre's core markets," according to the centre's GM Ross Steele.





**THE** events sector across the globe is having to adapt to the new normal of online or hybrid gatherings - even the organisers of cockfighting tournaments in the Philippines.

The centuries-old blood sport is wildly popular, and despite COVID-19 restrictions is continuing in a virtual format, despite being highly illegal.

Each match involves two people who release the fighting birds, and two others who record the live action with their smartphones while participants lay wagers via Facebook or Google Meet.

The change has seen law enforcement officers at their wits end, complaining that the virtual events are much more difficult to police.

## "SA FE" for COVID

**SOUTH** Australia's Team Adelaide, convened by the Adelaide Convention Bureau, (ACB) has developed a marketing campaign titled "SA FE" showcasing a promise of "exemplary health and safety standards and procedures as our COVID freedoms return".

It will encourage visitors "to travel here to join us, and to stay, and work with us," said ACB CEO Damien Kitto.

## AIME TO GO HYBRID

**NEXT** year's Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) will for the first time ever be conducted in a hybrid format, allowing attendees from across the globe to take part even if COVID-19 travel restrictions have not lifted by then (**BEN** breaking news).

Organisers Talk2 Media & Events cited a recent poll during the Asia-Pacific webinar on the Joint Meeting Industry Manifesto for Economic Recovery using Business Events, which found almost 90% of attendees expect to see hybrid events in 2021.

CEO Matt Pearce (**pictured**) said the show would also move to 15-17 Mar, giving the industry extra time to adjust to post-COVID conditions "as well as providing them with a road to new business opportunity".

He said the AIME hybrid model would see exhibitors, hosted buyers and visitors attend either in person or online.

"As we explore how to maximise the hybrid nature of the event, the virtual component means that meetings will no longer be restricted to the physical show dates," he noted.

"International virtual exhibitors and visitors will have the freedom to schedule meetings best suited to individual time zone schedules...in addition the Knowledge program content will be accessible at any time," Pearce added.

All exhibitors will form part of the virtual exhibition, with



those able to travel also taking part on the show floor in Melbourne.

"They will also benefit from an increased number of buyers, particularly buyers who have previously been unable to attend and can now do so from the comfort of their own office," he added.

All hosted buyers, whether in-person or virtual, will continue to be vetted to ensure they have business to place, with Pearce saying buyer recruitment was already under way with a large increase in numbers for 2021.

The hybrid event is being backed by Business Events Australia, with Tourism Australia's Penny Lion saying "the recovery of Australia's business events industry will depend on careful planning, unity and the industry coming together."

"Engaging with businesses across Australia on the importance and value of events will also play a role in ensuring they are ready and willing to meet and do business when the time is right," she said.

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## AACB awardee

**LUCINDA** Hunter, Event Services Coordinator from the Brisbane Economic Development Agency has been named as the winner of the 2020 Destinations International Prize awarded by the Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB).



Hunter (**pictured**) will be able to attend the virtual Destinations International 2020 Annual Convention this month, as well as participate in the prestigious 30 under 30s virtual professional development program, including monthly webinars until Feb 2021.

"With the impacts of the coronavirus, it is great to see our global partnership with Destinations International still provide opportunities for young professionals to learn from the international business events community and connect with their peers from afar," said AACB CEO Andrew Hiebl.

The 2020 Destinations International convention will be delivered online from 14-15 Jul.

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