



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news.

TAS baton passed



THE Association Specialists (TAS) has appointed Nell Harrison (**pictured**) as its new Managing Director, taking over from the company's owner Francis Child who will become Executive Chair.

Harrison has more than two decades of experience in conferences, events, association management, sponsorship and marketing, and has been at TAS for the last 12 years.

Child said he was proud of the business he had built over the last 20 years, saying "we have stayed true to what we have always been about: client satisfaction and adding value.

"I know TAS is in great hands with Nell and her leadership team," he added.

In 2020 TAS continued to deliver services to more than 70 national associations, and assisted in the management of more than 200 meetings and events for its clients, both face-to-face and online.

Huka change

NEW Zealand's iconic Huka Lodge in Taupo will this week become part of Australia's Baillie Lodges, as the group continues its international expansion under owners KSL Capital.

AIME cancelled

THE organisers of the Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) have made the difficult decision to cancel the 2021 show which had been planned for 15-17 Mar, due to the ongoing international and domestic travel restrictions.

Talk2 Media & Events CEO Matt Pearce said the company had seen healthy interest from exhibitors and buyers, but "as the past year has shown it's difficult to predict if border closures will be required to slow the spread of future outbreaks".

"As difficult as it is to cancel, we cannot in good conscience stage an event that devalues the quality of experience or accessibility of AIME in delivering meaningful interactions for exhibitors and visitors."

Pearce said a number of options had been explored to get AIME 2021 happening, but ultimately these had been unsuccessful.

The AIME team has been contacting exhibitors and pre-registered delegates to manage existing as well as event refunds for the 2021 show which had already been reimagined as a hybrid live and virtual show.

The 2022 edition of AIME is scheduled for 21-23 Mar 2022 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, with full details to follow in the coming months.

"As we navigate through these trying times, we remain optimistic that business events will adapt, innovate and emerge stronger than ever.

"We cannot wait to see you all next year - to connect and reunite as a community," Pearce said.

BECA BORDER BLAST

THE Business Events Council of Australia (BECA) says ongoing uncertainty in relation to border management within Australia and internationally continues to severely compromise the once-thriving sector's pathway to recovery and survival.

Other key issues include conflicting guidelines for event approvals across the various states, as well as the financial implications for industry businesses with the looming conclusion of the JobKeeper program.

"Whilst there is a genuine appetite to conduct events, the impost of border restrictions is impacting the confidence of event organisers and participants to make commitments, and we are now seeing events cancel for the first half of 2021 as a result," BECA said in a statement.

"Event organisers managing the financial risk of events are reliant on national participation...for participants, the perceived

risk to fly interstate to attend a conference, exhibition or meeting is too high if there is a potential threat of border closures or enforced quarantine, which will affect them professionally, personally and financially," BECA added.

The Council formally called on State and Federal leaders to create confidence in business once again by committing to an evidence-based approach to managing internal borders.

"A nationally consistent approach to the management of hot spots that may arise is essential to avoid the haphazard and unnecessary shutdown of borders...this approach is critical to enable survival and then recovery of the business events industry."

In addition, the business conditions that saw the introduction of JobKeeper have not altered for the sector, and in some cases have worsened in 2021, with most organisations continuing to experience 70%-plus downturns, BECA noted.

Catch up on the news of the week



Travel Daily

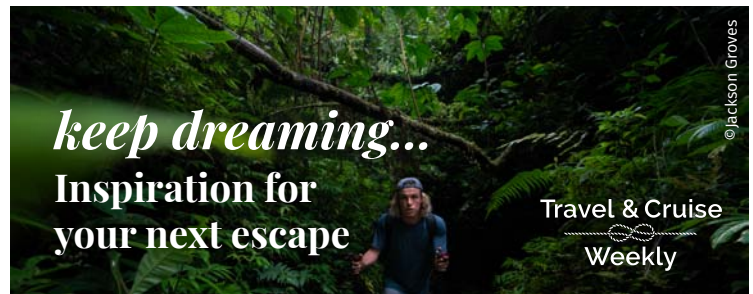
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2nd February 2021



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POLICE fears of a major event getting out of control in the UK last month turned out to be somewhat overblown, after officers responding to reports of an "illegal rave" found the kerfuffle was just a group of angry pensioners queuing for COVID-19 vaccinations.

The incident occurred at a community hall in Southend, Essex, after a tip-off about a gathering which would have flouted strict venue capacity and social distancing restrictions.

However rather than finding strobe lights, glow sticks and loud music, the response team found a group of octogenarians and nonogenarians with walking sticks and wheelchairs waiting to have their job.

The constables quickly adjusted their approach and offered to assist with traffic management in the car park which was filled with elderly drivers becoming increasingly agitated after the vaccine deliveries were initially delayed and then supplies later ran out.

Inspiring MICE live

SINGAPORE's Marina Bay Sands will next week host a live broadcast and panel discussion specially developed for the Australian and New Zealand meetings market.

Dubbed "Inspiring MICE", the virtual event will be run from the newly relaunched Hybrid Broadcasting Studio at the iconic property, with presentations and panelists from SITE, FCM Meetings & Events, Baker McKenzie and the Singapore Tourism Board as well as Marina Bay Sands.

The free event takes place on Tue 09 Feb from 1.30pm AEDT, and registered participants will also have the opportunity to compete for an exclusive experience in Singapore.

More at inspiringmice.com.

New EIC Chair

IACC CEO Mark Cooper has been appointed as the 2021 Chair of the Board of the Events Industry Council (EIC).

The EIC comprises more than 30 global events industry organisations, with the IACC being a key member as it represents more than 400 conference venues across the globe.

MCB China site

MELBOURNE Convention Bureau (MCB) has launched a new dedicated website for China, along with social media accounts on popular Chinese networks.

MCB CEO Julia Swanson said the expansion was part of the organisation's ongoing strategy to engage with Chinese clients.

The Bureau has had active in-market representation across China and Hong Kong for more than 15 years, with Swanson confirming that China is the top visitor market for business events groups to Victoria.

In the five years pre-COVID-19 MCB welcomed 23,000 delegates from Chinese MICE groups.

MCEC to 75% capacity

THE Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre is now able to host events with a maximum of 5,000 attendees, with the venue's COVIDSafe Event Plan approved by the Vic Government for seated or standing events of up to 75% capacity.

Measures include contact tracing, changes to F&B service and physical distancing.

Gongs for CCB leaders

FORMER Canberra Convention Bureau chair, Allan Williams, was last week awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Australia Day Honours list.

Williams was cited for "significant service to business tourism and the community," with his career also including senior roles in aviation.

Honours also went to Canberra Airport CEO Stephen Byron, also a former CCB Board member, who was named Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for advocating aviation, tourism and social interests.

Hyatt Brisbane

THE Hyatt brand has returned to Queensland this week with the opening of the new Hyatt Regency Brisbane, located in the heart of Queen Street Mall.

The 292-room property will undergo a makeover, and is being rebranded from its former identity as Next Hotel Brisbane.

Hyatt Regency Brisbane will be positioned as the city's "best premium upscale hotel", and is a 15-min stroll from the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre.

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Business Events News is part of the Business Publishing Group family of publications.

Business Events News is Australia's newest online publication dedicated to the vibrant meetings, incentives, conferences and events sector.

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