



CONFIDENCE IN EVENTS INCREASES

A **NEW** survey commissioned by Business Events Sydney (BESydney) has found over half of Australians are now comfortable to attend a business event, while “networking opportunities” were identified as the business aspect which has been most negatively impacted by COVID-19.

The poll by Roy Morgan Research provided a snapshot into the pre- and post-pandemic comfort levels relating to a range of different gatherings.

Events of up to 50 people were cited as suitable by 51.6% of the 1,007 people surveyed, in contrast to funerals (68.9%), weddings (66.2%) and going to the cinema (55.1%).

By state, NSW had the highest comfort level when it came to business events, with a 48.9% rating, a finding that was hailed by NSW Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney, Stuart Ayres.

“It’s pleasing to see confidence increasing in NSW when it comes to getting back to business and attending events



in-person,” he said.

“We’ve strong adherence to COVIDSafe guidelines here and a positive outcome as a result, and important milestones continue to be achieved as restrictions ease.

“Getting people and businesses back together is vital for our economy and we’re focused on increasing this activity and bringing key events to our city and state,” Ayres said.

The continued streak of zero community transmissions of COVID-19 in NSW is likely to see further easings in the coming weeks, including drinking while standing up at indoor venues.

BESydney CEO Lyn Lewis-Smith (**pictured**) said the

research provided real-time insight into Australian sentiment as the community continues to navigate COVID-19.

“Confidence has started to turn a corner and the need and desire to come back together both personally and professionally is rising - we expect to see that come through as increased meeting bookings in the months ahead.”

Lewis-Smith said she believed that as more in-person business events take place in the coming months, attendees will be reassured by “how far COVIDSafe meeting in-person at scale has come.”

“Our industry here in Australia is among the best in the world innovating and adapting remarkably while everyone has been away - particularly in specialist business events venues like the International Convention Centre Sydney.”

ICC Sydney will later this week host Tourism Australia’s seventh annual Destination Australia conference, with hundreds of delegates expected to attend.

Today’s issue of **BEN**

Business Events News today has two pages of news.

BE Perth rep

LAUREN Perkins has taken a new role as Senior Business Development Manager for Business Events Perth.

Melbourne-based Perkins has a range of industry experience including roles at Park Hyatt Melbourne, Crown Melbourne and Crown Perth, and will act as the local representative for Business Events Perth in Australia’s east coast markets.

MCEC foodies

THE Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre (MCEC) has partnered with premium Vic food distributor Flinders + Co. on a new Home Chef Series product range.

The initiative is part of the venue’s ongoing exploration of new products and business models, with the Home Chef Series able to contribute throughout Melbourne’s recent snap lockdown.

The products are now on shelves at 35 Coles supermarkets across Vic and NSW, with MCEC Executive Chef Peter Haycroft saying “our core business is about creating culinary experiences in an event context, but working with Flinders + Co. made it clear we could offer restaurant quality food at home”.

MCEC is once again open to events, but the partnership continues as a range of new opportunities utilising the creativity and experience of the venue’s employee team.

MEETINGS 2021

NEW Zealand’s Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA) is inviting the sector to save the date of 02-03 Jun 2021 for MEETINGS 2021.

Exhibitor and hosted buyer applications are now open, with the event to take place at ASB Showgrounds in Epsom, Auckland.

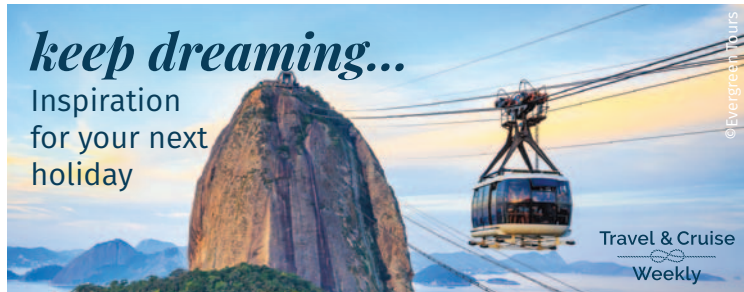
If border restrictions are lifted, Australian hosted buyers are offered return Air NZ flights, accommodation and family opportunities as well as a full program of scheduled appointments.

There are also options for virtual attendance - more details at meetings.co.nz.



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IT IS important to make virtual and hybrid events super engaging, right?

Apparently not if you're a Taiwanese social media influencer.

Wang Yiming, who is a former pop star, made about \$4,500 last week by streaming herself having a five-hour snooze.

Yiming uses the Twitch platform to engage with her fans, and usually plays video games and chats with her online counterparts.

However in her latest broadcast she logged on at about 5pm, with viewers simply seeing her bed.

She donned an eye mask, lay down and slept until about 10pm - attracting tens of thousands of viewers along with comments and lots of advertising revenue.

EEAA CELEBRATES WOMEN

THE Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA) is inviting the industry to help celebrate International Women's Day this Thu 04 Mar, with free registrations available for a special online event.

To be broadcast live from the Connected Event studios in Chippendale, NSW from 12 noon until 1.30pm AEDT, the event will explore this year's #ChoosetoChallenge theme, with EEAA CEO Claudia Sagripanti saying the aim is to "give everyone in our industry an opportunity to come together and recognise the incredible talent pool in our industry, and the ability to reinvent and transform".

The keynote speech will be delivered by social entrepreneur Simone Allan (**pictured**), director of mentor matching platform The Mentor Evolution and executive search consultancy Mondo Search and founder of The Women's Resilience Centre.

A panel session led by



Sagripanti will include Marie Kinsella from International Exhibitions and Conference Group, Peggy Reevell from The Australian Council for Education Leaders and international panelist Stephanie Selesnick from International Trade Information.

EEAA launched its first International Women's Day event in 2014, and this year's online session is open to both members and non-members.

For more information and to sign up **CLICK HERE**.

Marriott's new online options

MARRIOTT International is expanding its Connect with Confidence Program to offer a range of new multi-brand hybrid meeting solutions.

The company's *Connect with Confidence Hybrid Meetings and Events Insights Guide* showcases Marriott's reimagined processes and meeting spaces along with learnings from a recent gathering at Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Centre with 100 in-person attendees and 800 online delegates.

"Hybrid meetings have become an essential way for meeting and event professionals to provide an immersive, engaging experience that integrates both virtual participation and in-person experiences through technology," said Tammy Routh, Senior VP Global Sales Organization for Marriott International.

Marriott has curated a list of key providers including Encore, Cvent, Convenga, MeetingPlay and Hopin which offer a range of technology solutions.

Routh said organisers can work with these organisations to reach a larger audience and incorporate speakers from other locations as they continue to plan future events and conferences.

To access the new Marriott guide **CLICK HERE**.

Raffles offers virtual experience

SINGAPORE's iconic Raffles Hotel has launched "The curious case of the missing Peranakan treasure," an online collaboration allowing guests to explore the hotel via "pure virtual gameplay".

The unique initiative immerses audiences into the role of a detective asked to solve a whodunnit, at the same time experiencing the Raffles' historic grounds and illustrious halls while piecing

clues together.

The experience has been filmed on site with special 360-degree Virtual Reality cameras, and it's also possible to try to solve the mystery in person at the hotel.

Participants who successfully figure out the puzzle can win a range of prizes, and be entered into a Grand Draw for a one night Palm Court Suite stay, with tickets for "Virtual Play" on sale at sistic.com.sg.

Saxton adds

SAXTON Speakers has announced the exclusive addition of Aussie champion basketballer Luc Longley to its roster of presenters.

Longley joined the Chicago Bulls in 1994 and will share his story in conversation with keynote speaker Holly Ransom, sharing insights on leadership, resilience, high performance as well as behind-the-scenes anecdotes.