



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news.

AIME buyers

AIME has launched its 2021 Hosted Buyer program, which will welcome buyers in person at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre from 15-17 Mar.

Virtual buyers from across the globe can also participate via the online event platform from 15-26 Mar 2021.

The hybrid model promises to bring together over 450 Australian and international "carefully vetted hosted buyers that are ready to do business in the region," said Matt Pearce from AIME organiser Talk2 Media & Events.

"Finding the right buyers has always been important, and after the impact we have all felt this year it is critical more now than ever to reconnect and kickstart the business events industry together," he said.

The traditional AIME Hosted Buyer program has been adapted, with physical hosted buyers having to commit to 32 pre-scheduled appointments.

Online attendees will only commit to 16 appointments, allowing delegates to better manage their "screen time," Pearce said - aime.com.au.

BECA CALLS FOR TARGETED SUPPORT

THE Business Events Council of Australia (BECA) appeared before the Senate Select Committee on COVID-19 last week, with Chair Vanessa Findlay and Australian Association of Convention Bureaux CEO Andrew Hiebl highlighting the heavy impact the pandemic has had on the business events sector.

The pair (**pictured**) appeared in a session alongside representatives of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents, presenting a combined front from the hardest hit parts of the economy.

Findlay highlighted ongoing engagement with governments in line with BECA's recovery and rebound framework, urging "industry specific support packages that will regain business confidence and drive momentum to see the return of business events".

She highlighted the massive impact that ongoing border restrictions were having on any recovery of the business



events industry, and described to Senators the importance of distinguishing between mass public gatherings and the range of measures which enable business events to take place in COVID-safe environments.

BECA thanked the Government for the JobKeeper program which is currently estimated to be supporting around 110,000 employees across the industry.

However conditions overall continue to be bleak, with two thirds of businesses recently surveyed by BECA confirming they had no bookings for 2020, while almost half had nothing confirmed for next year either.

Hiebl said enquiry levels remain relatively high, but the risk of future lockdowns and restrictions imposed on business events by states and territories were making it very difficult for organisers to sign supplier agreements and pay deposits.

Findlay said the industry had now faced close to zero revenue for six months.

"While it might be reasonable to expect a business to look after itself for that period of time, anything beyond that is now very serious danger territory for every business in our industry," she warned.

Cliftons hybrid

CLIFTONS Venues has launched "Elevate", a hybrid session showcasing the form and format of how a successful event can be designed, planned and delivered with great success.

Free registrations are on offer for the session in Sydney, Brisbane and online on 03 Sep - see cliftons.com.

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 business events news





RESEARCHERS across the globe are working hard on finding a vaccine for COVID-19 - but scientists in Germany are also taking a pragmatic approach aiming to study the effect of coronavirus on major events.

Funding worth about \$1.5 million is being used for the project, some of which was used last week to stage three pop concerts - all in the name of research under a study titled Restart-19.

The probe aims to "investigate the conditions under which such events can be carried out despite the pandemic," according to lead researcher Dr Stefan Moritz.

About 1,500 healthy volunteers attended the concerts performed in Leipzig by singer-songwriter Tim Bendzko, wearing special contact tracing devices and also cleaning their hands with a special fluorescent sanitiser, which allowed the scientists to examine which surfaces in the venue were being touched.

A fog machine emitted vapour to visualise the possible aerosol spread of COVID-19, to check forecasts from computer modelling.

The coronavirus experiment aims to help identify a framework for how large cultural and sporting events can be safely held after restrictions ease on 30 Sep.

Perth event funding

BUSINESS Events Perth has announced a new funding initiative to support companies and groups wanting to host local business events.

The organisation's CEO Gareth Martin said the WA business events sector had been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the funding aiming to help the industry get back on its feet.

"It's safe to meet again in Western Australia...we're doing everything we can to kick start the local business events industry which supports thousands of jobs across a range of local businesses, big and small," Martin said.

Funding of up to \$30 per delegate is available, with total support based on event duration and number of in-person attendees at workshops, seminars, conferences, trade shows or exhibitions as well as corporate meetings and incentive group events.

The limited time offer is valid for new business event bookings to be held in WA prior to 30 Jun 2021 - for more information call 08 9218 2900.

Sheraton appoints

KEITH Massey has been being named as the new GM of Sheraton Grand Mirage Resort on the Gold Coast.

He has returned to Australia after an extended overseas career including most recently as GM of the JW Marriott Khao Lak Resort & Spa in Thailand.

Together each achieves more

MICE bouncing back in Taipei!

THE winds of change and the waves of "old habits" will create a MICE tsunami in the years to come, "all" Taipei's MICE suppliers are working hard to ensure that health guidelines are met and exceeded, so participants will know they are as safe, maybe even safer, on a planned and tightly managed MICE trip. Taipei City Government has also made a series of preparations for pandemic prevention, such as relief programs, business revitalisation plans, quarantine hotels, a disease prevention tax fleet, employment subsidies and grant programs for people under quarantine, and more.

Secondly they are collectively exploring, and now implementing, the technologies related to on-line conferencing, enabling hybrid meetings and thus enlarging audiences. The Department of Information and Tourism of Taipei City Government Commissioner Yi-Ting Liu commented, "Entering the post-pandemic period, hybrid exhibitions and meetings that

combine the digitalization and transformation from physical to virtual will be the trend. In the future, we will create new opportunities for the MICE industry by connecting with experts from different industries and fields."

In New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern recently said in a Q+A interview, that officials were looking at tailored criteria for events and that "We're going to follow, pretty closely, the Taiwanese model. They worked up a framework for mass gatherings that's been quite successful."

All Taipei's MICE stakeholders are ready to soon serve Asian MICE participants to its fullest extend and capitalize on their country's enhanced image on making sure their citizens, and thus their visitors are as safe as humanly possible.

For more information please visit www.expopark.taipei or www.anticovid19tw.org.

Pictured: First large-scale medical conference sees one thousand participants (Source: Taiwan Society of Cardiology).

