



Qld events support

THE Queensland Government has opened a second round of funding for its National Business Events Program, targeting national associations and corporate events bringing in more than 350 delegates who stay at least two days.

Funds must be spent in Qld to cover costs associated with the venue, delegate accommodation and/or ground transfers.

Funding of up to \$95,000 is available - for more details see teq.queensland.com.

Melb psych win

MELBOURNE has been chosen as the host city for the 2028 International Congress of Psychology.

Held every four years, the gathering is expected to deliver almost \$40 million in economic contribution, with over 5,000 delegates from across the globe taking part in a six-day program.

It's the first time the congress will have come to Australia in over 40 years.

VIC JOBKEEPER PUSH

A NEW report into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Victorian events and tourism sectors has recommended the state Government advocate for the resumption of the JobKeeper program for industries that continue to face significant restrictions on their activities, such as the events sector.

The comprehensive summary has formally confirmed a range of findings about the impact of the pandemic on business events, including that "many events businesses in Victoria do not feel represented by industry bodies".

The report found that the effect of lockdowns, border closures and other public health measures threaten the long-term viability of the state's events sector, while the inability to insure against COVID-19 was also cited as a "large barrier" to recovery, along with a loss of skilled workers.

Some participants in the inquiry noted perceptions that major events such as professional sport were treated more favourably than the business events sector in terms of restrictions and density limits, while others urged more rapid Government approval for COVIDSafe Event Plans.

Key recommendations included increasing Government mental health support for the events sector, as well as the publication of clear guidance on the types

of triggers for the imposition or lifting of density quotients and venue capacity restrictions "in order to maintain and support business confidence".

While some financial support had been provided by the Victorian Government, "more needs to be done to provide targeted support to ensure [the business events sector's] ongoing viability" as well as to identify and help those who did not receive any support, such as some sole traders.

As well as pushing for a return of JobKeeper, the report urged the release of public guidance by the Victorian Government on how its health mechanisms and policies will change in conjunction with the Prime Minister's new four-stage transition plan.

The Committee also suggested the establishment of a state-based "events industry taskforce" to review and revise the Government's consultation processes with the events sector, with the aim of independently recognising its value independent of tourism and other areas and also ensuring that small and medium sized businesses have a greater voice.

"A single peak industry body for Victoria's whole events sector would simplify consultation with the Victorian Government," the report also found.

BECA JAB CAMPAIGN

THE Business Events Council of Australia (BECA) has launched a new #GiveBEaShot campaign, urging the industry and the broader community to get vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible in support of the first stage of the Government's four-step national plan.

The move follows last Fri's announcement of the framework by Prime Minister Scott Morrison, with each phase of the plan triggered by vaccination thresholds which aim to ultimately remove restrictions, end lockdowns and domestic border closures and recommence international travel, "all of which are necessary for the business events industry to recover and prosper into the future".

BECA Deputy Chair, Geoff Donaghy from ICC Sydney, said prior to the recent lockdowns the industry had been clearly showing how business events could be held safely, effectively and in compliance with state-based health protocols.

"The nature of these highly organised and structured events, delegate behaviours, controlled settings and the contact tracing frameworks we have in place sets us apart from



mass gatherings," he said.

Donaghy noted that BECA and its member organisations continued to advocate for the sector to governments across the country, seeking industry and business support.

He also confirmed that "to further enhance our government engagement activities, we have formalised our relationship with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry through membership, over and above our active role on the Tourism Restart Taskforce."

BECA has also proposed a Business Events Catalyst Fund which outlines options for a rebate, incentive grant payment, underwriting facility or nationwide event insurance scheme which would support Australian associations and corporations to move forward with in-person business events.

MCEC supports homelessness initiatives

THE Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) has formalised a longstanding relationship with Launch Housing, in a new three year partnership in support of the 25,000 Victorians who are sleeping rough or homeless each night in Melbourne.

The initiative lines up with National Homelessness Week, with MCEC participating in various fundraising events as well as supporting an employee

volunteer program, workplace giving, significant donations of MCEC resources and an At-Risk Youth Employment Program.

MCEC CEO Peter King said the pact would support Launch Housing's ambition of achieving zero homelessness in the city.

"As a significant part of Melbourne's culture and economy, it is important MCEC acknowledges the part we have to play in the wellbeing of the people in our community."