



BECA APPEALS FOR MORE SUPPORT

REPRESENTATIVES from the Business Events Council of Australia (BECA) met online with Federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment Dan Tehan this week to plead for more targeted support for businesses reliant upon income from business events.

BECA spoke with the Minister online about the need for an urgent bundle of targeted measures as a lifeline towards recovery focusing on the three key areas of survival, confidence and recovery.

The industry body campaigned for Tehan to champion the return of a national wage subsidy scheme to support business survival and retention of specialist industry skills, the introduction of a national government-led event insurance scheme, as well as the launch of an improved Business Events Grant Program to stimulate demand of in-person business events in 2022, via corporate and association event owners.

"If we are to be match-fit for domestic recovery and deliver



global best practice to our international clients for which we are recognised when the border reopens, retaining our people is essential," BECA Deputy Chair, Geoff Donaghy said.

"With minimal opportunity to earn revenue over the past 18 months, the current Delta lockdowns across Australia are directly impacting lives and livelihoods and the core capability of our dynamic industry."

BECA also informed the Minister

that his government's four-phase National Plan to transition Australia's COVID-19 response provides very little clarity for when meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions can restart across the country.

"When restrictions lift, business events cannot simply switch on like other industries. Significant lead time is required to book, plan, and deliver business events," Donaghy argued.

Pictured: Dan Tehan.

ICC Syd promotes

ICC Sydney has promoted Luke Fleming to be Director of Human Resources.

Previously in the role of Senior Manager Human Resources Shared Services, Fleming has stepped up to steer the entire HR department, which is responsible for ICC's workforce.

Chief Executive Officer Geoff Donaghy said Fleming has been an integral member of ICC's team, having joined prior to its opening.

Fleming has helped establish, develop and manage ICC's workforce for the last five years, he said.

"Luke has demonstrated that he is highly skilled at leading top performing, multi-disciplinary teams," Donaghy added.

"His strengths in strategic business planning, talent acquisition, employment relations and industrial compliance have earned him a sound reputation".

Vic pumps up live

THE Victorian Government is supporting the state's live performance events which have been cancelled due to the recent COVID restrictions.

Vic Minister for Creative Industries Danny Pearson yesterday opened the second round of the Live Performance Support program to help Victorian presenters and suppliers in the live performance industry who have been affected by event cancellations between 27 May and 02 Sep.

The program will provide funding of up to \$12,000 for eligible event presenters and up to \$4,000 for contracted suppliers.

Evolve postponed for the second time

MEETINGS & Events Australia (MEA) has postponed Evolve until next year, having been shifted previously to 08 Sep (**BEN** 10 Jun).

The continuing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated decisive leadership and action on MEA's part, the Association said.

The primary factor for the decision is the uncertainty around border restrictions and the limitations it poses on travellers to attend events in-person.

"In the interests of all stakeholders, MEA believes the best option is to reschedule Evolve to a time when immunised population target

levels are expected," said MEA CEO Peter McDonald.

"By doing so, we are reinforcing the significance of meeting in-person.

"Evolve's live hub will provide for richer in-person connections and optimal conference experience for our members, delegates, sponsors and exhibitors, speakers and the greater Australian events sector," he added.

The Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) offered its support for the decision, with Chief Executive Julia Swanson saying MCB values MEA, and wants to ensure Evolve is held at a time that will enable the sector to shine bright.

Oz in pole position

NEW international business events research from Tourism Australia indicates while the country is still considered a highly desirable destination, the main barriers to holding a business event here remain distance, time, costs, and an effective rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Almost 80% of association decision-makers stated they are likely to visit Australia for an event in the next two years, and almost 70% of decision-makers said they are likely to visit the country in the next two years, rising to 82% when considering the next three years.

Research suggests organisations are ready to hold an event of significance once travel is unrestricted and events can freely take place.