



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news.

BEA local push

BUSINESS Events Australia (BEA) will shortly launch a new domestic campaign targeting a "broader cross-section of local business events," according to an update issued yesterday.

BEA will also undertake a fourth wave of research into domestic corporate decision-maker attitudes towards restarting business events this week, with results to be distributed in early Mar.

The organisation's ongoing strategy in 2021 remains focused on marketing and distribution activity to serve the industry's immediate needs as well as build long-term desirability for Australian events in international markets.

EXHIBITIONS RECOVERY HOPE

JUST over a third of global companies in the exhibitions sector expect a "normal" level of operations by Jun 2021, while almost 70% of Australian operators believe the industry will most likely bounce back quickly after the COVID-19 pandemic eases.

The forecasts are contained in the latest edition of the UFI Global Exhibition Barometer, collated from 457 responses across 64 countries and regions.

UFI's local partner is the Exhibition Event Association of Australasia (EEAA), with the detailed breakdown indicating optimism that national and local exhibitions will once again resume in the first half of 2021.

However the situation for international exhibitions is less positive, with more than 50% of Australian respondents to the survey not predicting a resumption until 2022 or later.

The study also confirmed the massive financial stress



being encountered by industry businesses, with respondents overall reporting their revenue for 2020 was down more than 80% on the prior year.

That in turn led to widespread profit downturns, with almost 60% of the industry reporting a loss for the 12-month period.

The study asked respondents what would happen if there continued to be no business for the next six months, with 11%

of Australian businesses saying they would have to close down.

Another 74% said it would be difficult but "we can keep our heads above water," while 16% said they would survive by having pivoted to other profitable areas of business.

Three quarters of the industry confirmed they had been forced to reduce their workforce due to the pandemic downturn, while 21% had managed to maintain staffing levels with the assistance of JobKeeper.

Other trends forecast include a move to less international "physical" exhibitions and overall less participants, as well as a push to more hybrid and digital elements at events.

However just 6% of survey participants said they expected virtual events to replace physical exhibitions in future.

The full survey results, including breakdowns for other markets and regions across the globe, are online at ufi.org.

SAVE VICTORIAN EVENTS

THE "Save Victorian Events" lobbying campaign is urging Victorians to email politicians and Government Ministers to ask for an extension of the JobKeeper program.

The action group has released the results of a survey on the impact of the pandemic on the state's \$10-billion plus events sector.

More than 360 businesses and 200 individuals from across the industry responded, with the poll finding that 94% of businesses are currently receiving JobKeeper.

If the subsidy program ends as currently planned at the end of next month, 43% of companies will need to lay off staff, while others will potentially need to close.

Just 27% of people who were working in Victoria's events industry pre-COVID are still full time, while over a third have already left the sector.

Almost 70% of survey participants said they would need to get jobs outside of the events sector if JobKeeper ends in Mar, with the study also quantifying the massive impact on freelancers and contractors such as producers, stage managers, technicians and lighting designers.

Labor MP Bill Shorten cited elements of the survey in Federal Parliament last week, with the campaign website facilitating emails to MPs to push for the JobKeeper extension at savevictorianevents.good.do.

Aussie agency wins Crystal Award

SYDNEY-BASED The Conference Room has taken out the "Excellence in Incentive Travel: Europe" category in the 2020 Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) Crystal Awards.

The results were announced

overnight in Chicago, with The Conference Room winning for a London-based program designed as a second-tier reward for dealer principals of a leading automotive company in Australia - see all the winners at siteglobal.com.

Events space?

Let's talk about how our space can help fill your space.



SPECIAL PACKAGES AVAILABLE



AS WELL as destroying the MICE sector, the lack of events in Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic has had many other side effects, including serious issues for some of the country's retailers - particularly those who sell deodorant.

A new study released by *RTE News* has found a big drop in the sale of personal hygiene products, including antiperspirants for men.

Also down are sales of cosmetics, hairspray and lipstick - but women appear to be pampering themselves still, with luxury bathing products surging.

A potential obesity crisis is also in the offing, with the figures indicating a surge in snack consumption, including a 40% increase in sales of ice cream despite it being winter.

And the pandemic has also taken its toll on mental health, with a 30% increase in prescriptions for depression, anxiety and insomnia.

Gold Coast hails expo success

The Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC) has successfully hosted its first public event for the year.

The 1,400-visitor Your Local Wedding Guide Bridal Expo took place in accordance with the venue's Site Specific

Destination SA to go ahead tomorrow

THE Adelaide Convention Bureau (ACB) has confirmed that it will continue to host the highly anticipated Destination South Australia event, scheduled to take place 10-13 Feb 2021, despite the snap COVID lockdown in Perth.

"Frankly if we stop planning for future business events in South Australia - an incredibly safe state at managing COVID and with Australia's only visitor end-to-end COVID-Safe plan - then we are failing to understand how well we must be prepared for a post vaccine COVID national recovery," said ACB CEO Damien Kitto.

Kitto said while WA delegates were now unlikely to attend in person, there was an "eagerness from clients in Queensland, NSW and Victoria to travel to Adelaide and again meet - socially distanced - face to face".

He said those unable to attend in person would also be able to participate virtually.

"We cannot afford not to work towards a post-COVID recovery.

"Staying committed to holding Destination South Australia is therefore critical," he said.

COVID-Safe Plan, with layouts adjusted to allow for two square metres per person, and wider aisles than usual to allow for social distancing.

Other upcoming GCCEC events include graduations, dinners and business meetings.

EDITORIAL

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Gray's Say



Peter Gray, an independent Motivation Consultant, presents a regular **Business Events News** feature on current issues in the Conference and Incentive industries.

When 'loyalty' is no longer worth the effort

THROUGHOUT the pandemic, online retail sales have rocketed. According to Australia Post, the growth in online shopping in December was 34.9% year-on-year and Boxing Day sales increased 52.9% year-on-year nationally. With an estimated 73% of households now shopping online, that's grist for the mill in terms of retail loyalty programs. But many haven't evolved in line with the increased market size, they simply become an annoying consequence of shopping online.

A retail loyalty program is, as the name suggests, a means by which customers are persuaded to continue purchasing the same brands or shopping through the same outlets (electronic or physical). However, a recent McKinsey study revealed that more than 75% of consumers tried new brands, places to shop or methods of shopping during the pandemic. If nothing else this should have prompted many retailers to take a serious look at their loyalty offering but, in my experience, they haven't.

I am heartily sick of receiving emails and texts from various stores, supermarkets, brands and others the main purpose of which (apart from being very annoying) seems to be to advise me how much I've spent (I know) and what bargains I can continue to purchase. With my international travel - and therefore

my duty-free alcohol purchases - curtailed I made the big mistake of using a high-street retailer. I was subsequently regaled with regular reminders to purchase more on the basis that, clearly, I must be an alcoholic! I no longer purchase from that retailer.

Similarly with surveys. A petrol station I once used regularly has now lost my business because after every visit I received an emailed questionnaire about their service. Many other retailers are following suit, asking me to tell them about my 'retail experience'. This is not my job!

After leaving university in the UK I was employed by a market research company which was retained by several brands to 'test' their television advertising before it was released onto the general public. Watching television in Australia I can only assume that the same thing doesn't happen here! One aspect of TV advertising that is clearly overlooked here is repetition. A bad ad is not improved by endless repetition, and many of the good ones suffer as a result of it.

Consumer boredom is very real and can have a very detrimental effect on brand and loyalty strategies. The adage that if you shout loud and long enough people will believe you simply does not work.



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