



## TA REVIEWS STRATEGY

**THE** departure of long-time Business Events Australia chief Penny Lion (**TD** yesterday) is part of significant changes to Tourism Australia's (TA) activities within the sector, which become effective from today.

TA MD Phillipa Harrison said the reorganisation was necessitated by the ongoing impacts of the global pandemic on tourism.

"The past 18 months have been the most challenging that our industry has ever faced, and throughout the crisis we have continued to adapt our business operations to place resources where they are needed most," Harrison said, with the departure of Lion "among the most significant changes to the business".

Lion's tenure over the last decade has seen a number of key achievements, including consolidating Tourism Australia's approach to marketing Australia as a business events destination.

She has also overseen the implementation of the Business Events Bid Fund Program, the

Advance Program and the Business Events Boost Program, the launch of the Australia Next publication and the Australia Innovates video series.

Tourism Australia's international business events operations will remain in place to continue to build demand for future business, but the current distribution and partnerships will transition to reporting to Robin Mack, who has been promoted to Executive General Manager - Business Events Australia, alongside his existing commercial role within TA's executive team.

Business Events marketing will move to the organisation's wider marketing team led by Chief Marketing Officer Susan Coghill.

The change will see "greater integration of business events across the business, which Penny has always passionately advocated for," Harrison said.

Lion said the decision to leave had been difficult, saying working to grow the business events opportunity for Australia had been "such a great honour".

## Get Local in Aug

**THE** highly anticipated Get Local expo will now take place on 24-25 Aug (**TD** 09 Sep 2020), after co-owners Donna Kessler and Gary Bender decided to move the event in light of the current COVID-19 lockdowns.

"We have always maintained that Get Local would be an in-person event and by moving it to Aug we are confident that it will happen," they said.

Get Local has already exceeded exhibitor participation levels and has a strong line-up of speakers - see [getlocalexpo.com.au](http://getlocalexpo.com.au).

## IMEX is now open

**EVENTS** Industry Council (EIC) has launched its IMEX America Hosted Buyer Programme, which will take place at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas from 09-11 Nov.

Applications are open now, and as part of the experience, EIC Hosted Buyers will be able to enjoy exclusive content and sessions personally delivered by the Council, networking opportunities and full access to IMEX America.

In addition, successful applicants will receive complimentary accommodation support services and more.

IMEX America 2021 is expected to attract more than 3,500 exhibitors from 155 countries.

## GC GOES BACK TO THE FUTURE



**LAST** week's This is Gold Coast business events gathering showcased some of the region's top venues, experiences and professional services to 26 delegates from across the country.

The delegation represented "companies and associations with the potential to generate more than \$14 million in future business events for the city," according to Destination Gold Coast CEO Patricia O'Callaghan.

Activities included a welcome lunch at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, watching the sunset aboard YOT Club & a visit to the newly opened \$60m Gallery at

HOTA, Home Of The Arts.

Delegates were able to engage with more than 30 Gold Coast venues and specialist suppliers in a full day of meetings at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre.

A highlight was the major event dinner hosted by Village Roadshow Theme Parks at Warner Bros. Movie World.

The retro celebration included appearances from 1980s favorites such as Pacman, cassette tapes, and Rubik's cubes, while even Batman (**pictured**) showed up to thrill the revellers.

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