



GRANTS SCHEME UPDATE

THE Federal Government's \$50 million Business Events Grants program, which closed on 30 Mar this year, was oversubscribed to the tune of \$6 million, meaning the scheme's funding was fully exhausted, according to an update from Austrade last week.

A total of 1,729 eligible applications for funding were received, of which more than 1,500 were awarded, the agency overseeing the scheme said.

The controversial program was announced nine months ago (**BEN** 15 Sep 2020), providing funding for 50% of the costs for delegates and exhibitors to participate in approved business events.

Then in Mar this year (**BEN** 16 Mar), after ongoing consultation with the industry, the program was "tweaked" to lower the application threshold to \$10,000 and permitting funding to apply to events through until Mar 2022, after yo-yoing domestic borders forced further cancellations and uncertainty for the sector.

The Business Events Council

of Australia was particularly critical of the scheme, with then-Chair, Dr Vanessa Findlay, who stepped down this week (**TD** 15 Jun) saying the program had been "misaligned" and had not delivered support to the industry in the scale or time frame that was critically needed - particularly in the wake of JobKeeper's cessation (**BEN** 06 Apr).

At that stage only \$8 million of the total had been earmarked for distribution, however now that processing is complete the total funding requested by applicants was \$56 million.

There are now suggestions of a possible extension to the scheme, with Austrade's update last Fri noting that "the Australian Government is currently considering options regarding the program, including in relation to eligible applicants who did not receive funding due to the program allocation being exhausted, as well as potential new applications under a program extension".

EEAA safety pilot

THE Exhibition and Event Association of Australia (EEAA) has launched a pilot program to provide risk and safety training and consultancy services to the business events sector.

A new pact with Beaspoke Safety will allow EEAA members to access custom support such as event and venue management plans, COVID-safe risk assessments, Safe Work Method statements, and training.

EEAA Risk & Safety Subcommittee Chair Paul Elliott said the organisation was confident that Beaspoke had "both the expertise and personalised approach to assist our members with their return to traditional business events".

Coogee on radar

THE recently refurbished Crowne Plaza Coogee Beach in Sydney is now welcoming a significant amount of business events delegates, after the launch of a new purpose-built events centre in its seaside location.

Eight new flexible meeting spaces with movable walls and state-of-the-art technology are complemented by a range of new group dining concepts and menus.

Also appealing to the leisure market, the property's culinary options include Estate Kitchen, Estate Terrace and a funky Taqueria serving up Mexican classics right across from the beach - as well as the Shutters Bar with a wide array of cocktails and an extensive wine list.

After a long day of conferencing groups may want to wind down in Confessional, a "private karaoke hideaway" - for more **CLICK HERE**.

Lister on the list

HARVEY Lister, ASM Global Asia-Pacific Chairman and CEO, has been named a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in last weekend's Queen's Birthday Honours list.

Lister was cited for "significant service to the arts, tourism, sport and to the venue management and events industries," having spent half a century involved in the development, presentation and management of events across sport, the arts, conventions, exhibitions, concerts and entertainment.

Lister thanked the "many people who have been there throughout my career for their generosity, loyalty and camaraderie".

Vic grant details

THE Vic State Government has provided further details of the \$20 million Victorian Events Support Package (**BEN** 01 Jun), which aims to acknowledge the "heavy and ongoing impact of the May-Jun restrictions" on the business events sector.

Payments of up to \$250,000 are on offer to major event organisers, hosts and suppliers who have seen a minimum 50% decline in turnover, with a payroll of over \$3 million in metro Melbourne or \$500,000 in regional Victoria.

Grants of \$25,000 are also available to organisers of events with crowds above 1,001 people, while suppliers to these events can access \$10,000 - business.vic.gov.au.

YES MINISTER, EVENTS MATTER!



EXHIBITION & Event Association of Australia CEO Claudia Sagripanti was up close and personal with Tourism Minister Dan Tehan earlier this week, taking the opportunity to highlight the importance of the business events sector in the wider economy.

In a LinkedIn update, Sagripanti said the Minister "clearly understands and is prepared to discuss the key issues, including the need for clarity around the Business Events Grants Program results, and also future direction and support for the sector".