



Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news.

Auckland fund

THE Auckland Convention Bureau has opened applications for support through the Auckland Business Events Fund.

The program is targeting business events which drive visitation to Auckland and "enhance the region's reputation as a global events destination," comprising a series of contestable funding rounds for events to be held in the region through until 30 Jun 2024.

The Auckland Business Events Fund is part of the NZ Government's \$50 million Regional Events Fund, which is designed to stimulate travel between regions through holding events, supporting the tourism and events sector, and "helping to replace some of the spend lost from international tourists due to the COVID-19 pandemic".

Applications will be assessed based on economic, social and sustainability criteria, with weighting towards their economic benefit, replacing the loss of international visitation and assisting to create opportunities for exposure of Auckland's key sector industries and industry advocates.

See aucklandnz.com.

NSW EVENTS SUPPORT

THE NSW State Government has announced \$5.5 million in funding to support business events, conferences and conventions across the state.

The Business Events Industry Support package is part of a wider \$51.5 million funding deal designed to encourage people back into the Sydney CBD, re-ignite live music across the state and support jobs in accommodation, entertainment and tourism, according to NSW Tourism Minister Stuart Ayres.

As well as the \$5.5m for business events, there is \$20 million for up to 200,000 x \$100 CBD accommodation vouchers, \$2 million for a tourism industry marketing support package via the Love NSW campaign, and \$24 million to Destination NSW for a Live Music Support Package.

Ayres said supporting the business events sector was vital as NSW continued its economic recovery from the pandemic.

"Our success in containing COVID-19 means we can now focus on assisting these vital

industries get back to business.

"This package will ensure Sydney's world-class hotels, venues and facilities get the support they need to rebuild and thrive as they welcome increasing numbers of business visitors through their doors."

Business Events Sydney CEO Lyn Lewis-Smith said the announcement was great news for the local sector.

"The need and appetite for companies to reconnect and get back to business is clear...the funding program will provide the confidence for businesses to now confirm their in-person meetings," she promised.

Lewis-Smith said the package would play a significant role in firing up business confidence, stimulating conversion of pent-up demand for in-person engagement.

Full funding details are expected to be released by the Government after the upcoming Easter holiday break, along with info on how businesses can register and how people can apply for the hotel vouchers.

Glasses half full

MAUI Jim is continuing its corporate sunglasses gifting program despite COVID-19, with the introduction of a new "virtual try-on" facility on its website to help narrow down the style that best fits each recipient.

Online delegates who receive a digital Maui Jim gift can also use the site's live chat facility to help with any questions as they shop the website, while the company's 30 day return and exchange policy as well as lifetime repairs will ensure business events guests have "the best gifting experience available - mauijim.com."

Sydney collab

SYDNEY has joined the newly formed Hybrid Cities Alliance founded by The Hague, Ottawa, Prague and Geneva, aiming to lift the profile of hybrid event options.

Get Local deal

THE inaugural Get Local business events showcase will include a partnership with Destination NSW, which will see 20 suppliers from regions including the Hunter Valley, Central Coast and Orange participating.

Registrations for the 29-30 Jul ICC Sydney show are now open at getlocalexpo.com.au.



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30th March 2021



AUTHORITIES across Europe are working on ways to allow the events sector to resume, including an initiative in Germany where concert tickets now come bundled with a COVID-19 test.

The scientific research program in Berlin comes as the country enters its third wave of COVID infections, with a project of nine test events at a range of venues including theatres, opera houses, clubs & concert halls.

The pilot scheme requires anyone who wants to attend a cultural event to have a COVID-19 test within 12 hours of the show, and they must present a negative result along with their ticket in order to be admitted.

Other measures being implemented include social distancing and reduced capacity within the venues.

Germany's health system now has well established protocols for COVID-19 testing, with every Berliner now able to get a weekly COVID-19 rapid test free of charge - and results are available via a QR code within 30 minutes.

However a recent rise in infections has put in doubt a plan for the easing of restrictions, which had envisaged allowing theatres to reopen if there were less than 50 cases per 100,000 residents for 14 days running.

Singapore charts course to bigger events

AUTHORITIES in Singapore have released details of protocols which will allow the resumption of business events with up to 750 attendees.

The changes, which become effective 24 Apr, will triple the current limit of 250 delegates and are "in line with the safe and progressive resumption of economic activities in Singapore," according to the Singapore Tourism Board (STB).

Businesses can now apply to the Board to organise pilot B2B events with up to 750 delegates, with arrangements requiring pre-event testing (PET) for all attendees not based in Singapore.

Local residents who have completed a full COVID-19 vaccination regimen are exempted from testing for the larger events, while B2B events of up to 250 passengers will not require PET for locals.

Currently all B2B event applications with over 50 participants require a formal application, with organisers required to demonstrate their ability to implement measures under STB's Safe Business Events framework.

The STB is partnering with global organisations PCMA and UFI on a white paper to document the transformation of the MICE industry in response to COVID-19 and to chart pathways to recovery and growth for the sector.

The document is set to be released in the second half of 2021, the STB said.

Travel Daily



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AACB SCHOLARSHIPS



THE Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) has named Mia Oesterburg and Taryn Reid (**pictured**) as the winners of its 2021 Staff Scholarships.

The pair will each receive a \$3,300 grant to undertake projects which consider the future of Australia's business events industry.

Oesterburg (**left**) is Project and Events Executive at Northern Territory Business Events, with her project titled "Understanding how inconsistent communication around domestic border closures have impacted the rebound and recovery of the business events industry".

She will seek to demonstrate how discrepancies by language used by each State and Territory have adversely impacted decision makers within the sector.

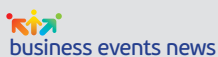
Meanwhile, Reid (**right**) who is Business Development Manager with Business Events Tasmania, will aim to gain

an increased understanding of the requirements and buyer behaviours of professional conference organisers operating in a post-COVID market, and the factors influencing decision makers to aid the recovery of Australia's business events industry.

The scholarship program is sponsored by Business Events Australia, in recognition of the key role played by convention bureaux in attracting business events to Australia.

"Congratulations to Mia and Taryn and we look forward to seeing the outcomes of the projects," said Tourism Australia's General Manager of Events, Penny Lion.

"Business Events Australia is very proud to support the future development of our industry, especially in response to crisis recovery to ensure Australia remains a competitive business events destination internationally," she added.



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