



AACB WARNS EVENTS WILL GO

THE Association of Australian Convention Bureaux has urged the Government to provide a clear pathway to the reopening of Australia's international borders, with CEO Andrew Hiebl (**pictured**) saying that the current policy paralysis in terms of dropping restrictions means that "business events as a catalyst to driving travel, innovation, trade and the growth of industries cannot occur".

Last week's Federal Budget dropped a pall of gloom across the industry, with assumptions that a gradual reopening of "fortress Australia" will not commence until mid-2022.

In a video update Hiebl lamented the Budget outcome, saying: "I cannot help but feel that the tourism and events industry was left wanting".



Hiebl said his organisation's members had been extremely successful in retaining business thus far, with more than 70% of 318 confirmed future international business events having been successfully postponed at this stage.

"However this position cannot be maintained indefinitely," he said, with 200 events having also been cancelled,

representing more than 75,000 high value overseas visitor arrivals for Australia's capital cities and regional destinations.

"If we are not in a position to host these premium events in Australia, others will be," Hiebl warned - while noting that despite the uncertainty, Australia's convention bureaux continue to bid for and secure business over the long term.

"Australia must have a plan towards enabling delegates from around the world to meet here, classified as essential business travel," he said.

From a domestic perspective, Hiebl said there had been a 25% increase in the confirmed number of business events for their respective destinations on the forward calendar, compared with the same position six months ago.

Today's issue of BEN

Business Events News today has two pages of news plus a full page from **Get Local**.

BEN partners with Get Local

BUSINESS Events News, Doltone House and Business Events Sydney are the latest organisations to partner with the upcoming Get Local domestic MICE showcase taking place at ICC Sydney 29-30 Jul this year.

Registrations for attendance are now open - for more information see **page three** of today's issue.

Ambassadors showcase Hong Kong

OVER 100 prominent leaders of business and professional organisations in have become official Hong Kong Convention Ambassadors to promote the city as a MICE destination.

The new Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) program aims to help revitalise Hong Kong's business events sector.

"With extensive connections,

influence and personal standing in their respective fields, the Ambassadors have a significant advantage when they lobby potential conference organisers to consider Hong Kong as the preferred host city for future MICE events," the HKTB said, with 12 Ambassador-led events already in the pipeline.

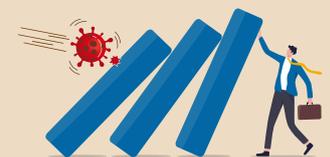
Truck yeah!

BRISBANE Convention & Exhibition Centre is celebrating the success of last week's Brisbane Truck Show, which was the largest indoor event to be held in Australia since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic 15 months ago.

Crowds of more than 30,000 were expected to attend, with the 2021 show forecast to generate \$72 million in economic benefit.

About 300 exhibitors showcased the latest in transport technology and safety, with logistics involving 1,100 truck movements through the Centre's exhibition halls, supporting 3,000 contractors.

BCEC GM Bob O'Keefe said the return of the show was another positive indication of a strong post-COVID recovery for Brisbane.



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AS IF event venues needed more competition, British department store Selfridges has announced it is getting into the wedding business.

The Oxford Street outlet is now promoting packages starting at £6,500 for couples whose plans to tie the knot were put on hold due to the pandemic.

The rapid rollout of COVID-19 vaccines in the UK has led to hopes of a return to normality, but it appears Selfridges, like other high street retailers, has also had its outlets heavily impacted as its customers learned to shop online.

Selfridges' pivot has seen the central London property granted a wedding licence, with packages including "Just-the-Two-Of-Us" which kicks off with a session in the store's beauty salon and ends with a film screening in the on-site cinema.

There's also an Earth Lovers package for 20 guests featuring a "locally sourced" wedding dinner, while the All Out Extraordinary deal includes a ceremony officiated by Jonny Woo, an iconic London drag queen.

The *Evening Standard* quoted Selfridges Head of Events, Rebecca Warburton, saying the new options were ideal for "those looking for a truly unique way to get married this summer".

SITE + Hilton

THE Society of Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE) has announced a new strategic partnership with Hilton Worldwide, which will see Hilton participate in SITE's global events and integrated marketing efforts.

The company will also host the upcoming SITE Classic conference, scheduled for 08-11 Sep, at the Hotel del Coronado, a Curio Collection by Hilton in San Diego.

SITE Classic is the flagship fundraiser for the SITE Foundation.

Eventbrite adds Boost

TICKETING and event technology platform Eventbrite has launched a new marketing platform called Boost, which aims to help event creators reach new audiences and increase attendance.

Eventbrite Boost has been built on the company's 15 years of experience helping address organisers' biggest pain points and help them make informed marketing decisions.

Real-time dashboards deliver personalised recommendations on the best campaigns to run based on when people are most likely to buy tickets, with Boost also featuring a "budget optimiser" to ensure advertising dollars are being spent effectively, automatically reallocating spend to the best performing channels.

Eventbrite Boost is available worldwide now, with details at eventbrite.com.au/boost.

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SIN shutdown

SINGAPORE authorities have imposed new restrictions on business events after a flare-up in COVID-19 cases.

Gathering sizes have been reduced for a 30 day period, with a maximum of 100 people at business events where pre-event testing has been undertaken.

Without testing the limit is 50 people, while venue capacities have been cut to 25% of pre-COVID levels and wedding receptions have been banned until 13 Jun.

It's expected that the measures will also impact the highly anticipated 26 May opening of the travel bubble with Hong Kong, with further announcements to made later this week.

Sydney success

BUSINESS Events Sydney is celebrating a strong year of bid wins, with 10 successes including being named the host for the Australian Physiotherapy Association's national conference in 2023.

The event is expected to attract 1,800 delegates over three days at the ICC Sydney, and is one of a total of 91 events on the books scheduled between now and 2026 spanning health, financial services and technology.

BESydney CEO Lyn Lewis-Smith said the organisation had retained 70% of COVID-impacted meetings, which was a "testament to our client relationships and the trust and quality of our partner network."

"Every event that is postponed to a future date in Sydney instead of cancelling is a win for Sydney," she said.

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