



**KEEPING
ASIA PACIFIC
MEETING**



**KEEPING
AUSTRALIA
MEETING**



**KEEPING
NEW ZEALAND
MEETING**

20 August 2021

The Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe
Minister for Tourism Industry Development and Innovation and Minister for Sport
1 William Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

By email: tourism@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister Hinchliffe

I write to you as the Queensland Councillor of the Professional Conference Organisers Association (PCOA), which represents conference and event organisers throughout Australia to seek a meeting in order for our industry sector to discuss with you our grave concerns for Business Events (BE) in Queensland.

Nationally, our industry sector supports \$35.7 billion of economic activity annually and supports over 229,000 jobs.

Specifically in Queensland, our sector supports over 36,000 employees and drives \$5.4 billion of economic activity of business events.

More broadly our industry works with the supply chain of businesses that are all part of, and vital to the continued success of the business events sector in Queensland. Event spaces, accommodation providers, tourism experiences, audio visual suppliers, caterers and audio-visual companies are just some of the other businesses that are all needed to bring events to life.

The recent surge of lockdowns and restrictions in the wake of the Delta strain have seen our industry beset with essentially the same set of circumstances as those laid before us in early 2020. Conferences and business events have either been cancelled or postponed (in most cases until well into 2022), and few if any of the support mechanisms available still exist. Multiple businesses in the industry have already reported that turnover in coming months will be reduced by up to 90% as lockdowns and restrictions continue.

The nature of our industry is that there is long lead time for planning and activation of Business Events. These long lead times in co-ordinating many of these events mean that even with a substantial easing of restrictions nationwide in coming months, it will likely be mid-late 2022 and beyond before revenue streams are returning to levels that can sustain even the current levels of employment.

The companies that create and deliver business events for audiences of anything from 50-2000 delegates and the supply chain that supports those events are now in

dire straits. The state Government support packages do not fit the way our industry is structured and operates, and our members are often deemed ineligible.

We recognise the efforts so far of both the State and Federal Governments with programs such as Jobkeeper, the QRIDA loans, the Small Business Adaptation Grants, commercial lease moratoriums, payroll tax deferrals (where applicable) and other support given to business more broadly since the onset of the pandemic. However, the recent \$5000 Queensland Government Support Program is indeed one of those where feedback from our members indicates that they cannot prove a loss of income over the days of the recent lockdown and accordingly they are ineligible to receive the payment.

We seek your support to be a strong voice in the Government for an important part of your portfolio and offer to work with you to explore ways to better support the business events sector and the businesses that underpin that sector. Without support, there stands a substantial risk to the Queensland economy, both economic income and employment that can't be recouped.

I look forward to meeting with you in order to discuss the issues raised in this letter.

I can be contacted on mobile 0418 877 279 or email mary@yrd.com.au

Yours sincerely



Mary Sparksman
Queensland Councillor
PCO Association Inc

Mary Sparksman
YRD Event Management