



B E C A

BUSINESS EVENTS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Every day, Australia's business events sector brings together thousands of people at meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions.

Business events stimulate the visitor economy; however, their impact is much more far-reaching.

We invite the Australian government to support the business events industry and get behind this mighty economic powerhouse.

Business events are major drivers of the Australian economy, generating jobs for life, international trade, investment and both regional and national economic development. We are on the precipice of major growth opportunities.

We must act now.

The business events¹ industry is a dynamic, organised and a vital element of the visitor economy. It stands on its own two feet as a major contributor to Australia's GDP and enables significant commercial opportunities, jobs and contributes to our reputation as a progressive, innovative and successful nation with which to do business.

The industry actively extends the government's investment in hospitality, transport and tourism into **real dollars** for communities across Australia's cities and regional areas.

Around the world, governments are investing in business events to attract trade, investment and talent. Globally, the business events sector is forecast to grow at 4% and for years has outstripped GDP². We were once in the lead, but we are now getting left behind.

Over 38 million people attended more than 430,000 business events across Australia between 2015-2016²

These DIRECTLY generated:

193, 203 direct jobs (2% of Australia's working population)

\$30.2 B in direct expenditure

\$13.9 B in direct value added

\$24.9B in total economic contribution (GDP)

¹ Business events are any public or private event consisting of a minimum of 15 people with a common interest or vocation and hosted by an organisation. They include conferences, conventions, symposia, congresses, incentive groups, trade shows, exhibitions and corporate retreats - *The Value of Business Events to Australia, Ernst Young, 2015*

² The Value of Business Events to Australia, Ernst Young

The business events industry is a powerful demonstrated facilitator of:

- Job generation across Australia
- International trade opportunities
- Regional development and tourism pathways
- Soft diplomacy
- Go-to-market strategies for new products and services (especially from regional areas)
- Knowledge sharing: research, new technologies and partnership creation

³<https://www.iccaworld.org/>

Support for the business events sector is risk free. It delivers ROI above and beyond tourism outcomes.

With limited government support, the business events industry has secured its own foothold as a major and serious contributor to Australia's visitor economy and harnessed our international competitive advantage.

However, in recent years, Australia's ranking on important indicators such as the International Congress and Convention Association's (ICCA) international country and city ranking³ which associations use to discover the top business event destinations, has dramatically slipped, and we now face serious challenges. Supporting the business events industry will drive economic growth and help create new jobs; it is vital we don't lose the momentum gained from this industrious sector, and its **reputation as job stimulator in cities and regional Australia.**

Case Study



Destination: Gold Coast
Event: Infinitus Incentive Group
Date: May 2018
Attendees: 6,100
Economic Impact: \$30M

Case Study



Destination: Darwin
Event: Asia-Pacific Sciences Conference (Science and Technology)
Date: August 2019
Attendees: 500
Economic Impact: \$1.4M (projected)

The Business Events Council of Australia calls for an unequivocal policy and funding commitment to business events to drive an increase to tourism, trade, investment and knowledge sharing through six pillars:

1. Ensure government investment in Tourism Australia

To secure ongoing investment in Tourism Australia, and in particular Business Events Australia⁴ (BEA), to help the industry leverage the potential of business events in major cities and regional areas. The recent Bid Fund delivered was received well, with tangible results already delivered. We seek a further \$10 million dollars or \$40 million over four years to boost the Bid Fund and BEA's other partnership programs with industry through a Business Events Growth Facility. This will enable more business events to be secured in major cities and importantly in regional Australia. It will also enable key events in strategic industry sectors to be developed further.

Not doing so, puts the business events industry at risk of losing out to competing international cities for events, and the subsequent loss of flow-on investment and innovation especially in regional Australia where there is untapped opportunity. In the international association meetings market, Australia's share has declined to 2.1%, ranked behind 13 other countries.⁵

2. Commit to ongoing business events research

To preserve and improve data sources that enable independent and ongoing benchmarking of the industry and continue the commitment to fund *The Value of Business Events*⁶ report produced by BECA. We seek essential investment to ensure core research of Tourism Research Australia (TRA) provides regular benchmark data on the sector's performance.

Not doing so, will mean the industry is unable to track growth, issues or strategically plan for the future.

3. Commit to an Infrastructure Study

To fund a national program to map the infrastructure needs of the business events industry across city and regional areas, to identify the gaps and priorities.

Not doing so, prohibits industry planning, investment attraction and growth - especially in regional areas.

4. Enable access to industry skill development programs

To support the business events industry to work with VET and higher education sector including TAFE to review, and refresh skills and training programs matched to workforce needs; now and in the future. This requires a more flexible structure for reviewing curriculums to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose and relevant to the industry.

Not doing so, will deplete the skills base of the sector and increase workforce shortages, for which the industry is already seeing the crippling effects.

5. Enable a nimble events workforce through visa reform

To support the business events industry's need to respond to fluctuating demands, with access to additional international and temporary skilled labour on short-term contracts to fill much needed gaps.

Not doing so, dramatically impedes Australia's ability to compete for lucrative in-bound business events particularly from growth markets in Asia especially China and India.

6. Encourage links with Austrade and other economic development and trade agencies

To create more collaboration and partnership between the business events industry and government, allowing for the direct link between the industry's work and the key drivers of economic development identified as the *Industry Growth Centre Initiatives*.

To establish a Growth Industries Business Events Team to coordinate the translation of Growth Centre output. This dedicated unit would be no more than 3-4 people (or Full Time Equivalent, FTE), requiring a budget of \$1.5m per annum or \$6m over the Forward Estimates.

Not doing so, prohibits the government from sharing in the achievements of business events with the centres of excellence that they boost.

More detail on the priorities listed above is outlined in BECA's policy framework and pre-budget submission.

⁴ Is a division of Tourism Australia

⁵ Association of Australian Convention Bureaux and International Convention and Congress Association (ICCA) – Australian Chapter data.

⁶ EY Report, commissioned by BECA 2017 available at: www.businesseventscouncil.org.au

Case Study



Destination: Sydney
Event: International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML) 2017 (Science – Artificial Intelligence)
Date: 7 – 11 August 2017
Attendees: 3,500
Economic Impact: \$12.9M

Case Study



Destination: Melbourne
Event: PAX Australia (eSports)
Date: October 2017
Place of decision: Australia
Attendees: 65,000

Case Study



Destination: Adelaide
Event: 68th International Astronautical Congress
Date: September 2017
Attendees: 5,000
Economic Impact: \$17.8M

\$17.8 Million

Case Study



Destination: Cairns
Event: IUPAC Macro World Polymer Congress 2018
Date: July 2018
Attendees: 800
Economic Impact: \$4.4M

Case Study



Destination: Perth
Event: AOG18 Australasian Oil & Gas Exhibition and Conference
Owned By: Diversified Communications Australia
Date: March 2018
Attendees: 6,703
Economic Impact: \$18M



International delegates spend, on average, 21% more than other international visitors over the course of their trip and 77% more per day.⁶



Deloitte Access Economics

⁶ EY Report, commissioned by BECA 2017 available at: www.businesseventscouncil.org.au

Case Study

Destination: Sydney
Event: Fine Food Australia (Exhibition)
Sydney & Commercial Drinks Show
Date: September 2017
Attendees: 23,762
Scale: 1,000 exhibitors and 1,200 international buyers, 200 through Austrade

Case Study

Destination: Perth
Event: LNG18
Owned By: GTI (Gas Technology Institute), International Institute of Refrigeration (IIR), and International Gas Union (IGU).
Date: April 2016
Attendees: 8,500
Economic Impact: \$50m

Case Study

Destination: Melbourne
Event: Cathay Life Insurance Incentive (Insurance)
Date: May 2018
Attendees: 2,300
Economic Impact: \$10.6M

Case Study

Destination: Brisbane
Event: ISF World Seed Congress (Agriculture)
Date: June 2018
Attendees: 1,148
Economic Impact: \$2.8M



The business events sector is a high-value, fast-growing component of the visitor economy, where 1 in 5 dollars spent by international visitors in Australia is spent by an international event delegate.



Deloitte Access Economics



Why the business events industry should be supported now

The opportunity should not be squandered.

With support through the identified pillars, the results would be immediate.

A government commitment now, would provide the assurance the industry needs to grow. This would impact the industry in the following ways:

New Jobs for today and tomorrow.

Companies in this sector have jobs to fill⁷. In 2018, 62% of companies surveyed said they have jobs they can't fill due to the skills shortage, a 15% increase in a single year⁸. 39% of event companies said that 'government policies impacting business', would be a factor that may limit their growth in 2018⁹.

With government support, we can support the VET and higher education sector e.g. TAFE to ramp up their training programs and feed the employment pipeline. Practical skill development including apprenticeships and traineeships can address this shortage and enhance the desirability of this sector, especially to women, young people, older workers and those in regional areas.

Major knowledge translation.

Business events have an engagement footprint that goes way beyond the event. While scientific breakthroughs and commercial ideas make inroads to new development, it is through meetings and business engagement that the ideas are brought to life and commercialised – resulting in knowledge translation¹⁰.

The *Industry Growth Centres Initiatives* could be linked more closely to the business events industry, as important work in the six¹¹ identified sectors are already underway.

As large parts of the Growth Centres are regionally based, business events could play a practical and effective role in supporting regional areas, bolstering capacity, supporting jobs and generating growth.

Whilst Australia ranks in the top 10 of OCED countries for research and development, is the lowest country in the OCED for commercialisation of innovation. It is time for business events to take its rightful place at the trade table and make the type of impact only face to face collaboration can make.

Increased competitive power for the lucrative business events tourist.

Australia's key competitors for business events have caught on to the power, potential and economic activity generated by this lucrative market.

As such, the competition for hosting inbound international events is fierce, heightened by the subsidising and bidding by the governments of competitor destinations.

Whilst we can't compete on that level, help with reducing the costs of long-haul travel would be beneficial, as this is often a last stumbling block on bids.

The continuation and growth of the Government's Bid Fund is a highly efficient and effective way to win international business driving dollars directly into local economies.

⁷ The Australian Workplace Skills Survey for the events Industry Sector for the Meetings & Events Australia 2017 and 2018 Summary.

⁸ et al.

⁹ Exhibition and Events Association of Australasia's Market Monitor 2018 report.

¹⁰ Knowledge translation is the science of bridging the gap between what we know and what we do. It involves multidirectional communication, interdisciplinary processes, collaboration and includes all steps between knowledge creation and knowledge application.

¹¹ Advanced Manufacturing, Cyber Security, Food and Agribusiness, Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals, Mining Equipment, Technology and Services and Oil, Gas and Energy Resources.



Business Events Council of Australia (BECA) is the peak body for the business events sector and represents the industry to governments and its agencies on issues common to all segments of the industry.

The members include:

- Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB)
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- Australian Convention Centres Group (ACCG)
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- Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia (EEAA)
-
- International Convention and Congress Association (ICCA) - Australian Chapter
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- Meetings and Events Australia (MEA)
-
- Professional Conference Organisers Association Inc (PCOA)



**For more information, please contact the
Business Events Council of Australia via
www.besesseventscouncil.org.au**