



MEETINGS



News release
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MEETINGS marks turning point for business events industry

[MEETINGS 2021](#) has connected the best of New Zealand's business events industry with Australia's and New Zealand's leading event professionals in Auckland this week.

The two-day event, which concludes with a gala dinner tonight, is organised by Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA). It brought together 150 exhibitors from 18 regions with 50 Australian and 110 New Zealand hosted buyers, and 300 local day buyers in Auckland this week. Close to 800 people connected over two days on the show floor.

BEIA Chief Executive Lisa Hopkins says MEETINGS has marked a turning point for the business events industry.

“This is an extraordinary achievement for New Zealand. A significant business event featuring international buyers in a face-to-face environment. It is a reflection of the way New Zealand has managed COVID, and BEIA is excited to help facilitate this vital connection with Australian buyers looking to bring business to our shores,” she says.

Sixteen buyers originally planned to come from Melbourne were unable to attend due to the state-wide COVID lockdown in Victoria. Instead they will be taking part in a virtual appointment programme with MEETINGS exhibitors post-event.

“COVID has changed the sector over past 15 months. Working in partnership has never been more important. As an industry, we have had to learn to adapt.”

Lisa Hopkins says MEETINGS itself is a great example of some of the things which have now become standard in today's environment.

“For this event, we have implemented contactless registration for Hosted Buyers on arrival, thermal temperature checking, self-check in counters with QR code registration for Day Buyers — essentially a no-scan, no-entry approach. We have a triage room,

wider aisles between the exhibitors, and QR codes on all coaches being used for transfers.

“COVID has expedited the need for the industry to upskill in the use of different technology platforms, systems, and devices. Events now need a Plan B, C and in some cases D.

“Our world revolves around the need to be able to deliver events in an omnichannel environment. That means it could be in person and online, fully online, on demand, by subscription, or include other elements of event delivery. We were preparing for a hybrid event, if our Australian buyers couldn't attend, in partnership with our technology sponsor, EventsAIR. With the Victoria situation, we have been able to turn to that back-up plan on. Buyers and exhibitors will be able to engage in their pre-scheduled appointments on-line.

“We estimate that the Melbourne buyers were looking to place \$21.5 million in business in New Zealand – that is too great an opportunity to ignore.”

She says BEIA is working with the government and Tourism Minister Hon. Stuart Nash in the collective recovery. “We have shared with the Minister that our sector isn't looking for hand-outs. Its looking for hand-ups, and the opportunity to continue to trade, consistently and confidently.”

Despite the challenges of 2020, BEIA in partnership with the Regional Tourism New Zealand kicked off the Business Events Data Project in July.

“We felt it was important to start at the lowest possible position. For the six months from 1 July to 3 December 2020, there were 4,300 business events taking care of over 431,000 delegates with an estimated spend of almost \$124 million. While low compared to a normal year, it is at least encouraging to see that domestically, the business events industry was able to rally.

“Our goal now is to dive deeper into this, obtain a better understanding of the true value of the sector, which has been estimated around \$1.45 billion, and to look ahead.

“This information will be critical as we start to count the days down to Te Pae Christchurch in October this year, the opening of Tākina in Wellington in 2023 and the New Zealand International Convention Centre in 2024,” she says.

Mark Gosling, Chair of Event Venues Association of New Zealand (EVANZ) spoke at MEETINGS today about their collaboration with BEIA to work with government to clarify the term ‘gathering’. EVANZ and BEIA have co-sponsored a document developed by an independent specialist outlining how events can operate in a managed and controlled environment. We come from a position of experience, knowledge, and know-how to make this work,” he says.

“There is a difference between a social gathering, such as a wedding or funeral and a professionally managed and controlled gathering, like a conference. I want to acknowledge the partnership with MBIE and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet as we navigated this, and I think we got to a good position,” Lisa Hopkins says.

“This is a great example of the willingness of the events sector to be a proactive partner, offering constructive and alternative solutions to enable the industry to continue operating safely in this COVID-19 environment.

“We are seeing a real surge in interest and understanding of this sector and a desire by regions to be actively involved. At MEETINGS, we saw the Central Otago Convention Bureau and Kaikōura regions well represented. First time exhibitors who are taking a long hard look at the product and services they have and creating solutions for those who are looking for destinations that are new and different. There are plenty of first timers on the floor.”

Australian Hosted Buyer, Tracey Edwards, Global Strategic Lead and General Manager, Australia and New Zealand at Event Travel Management says her first time at MEETINGS has been both educational and inspirational.

“New Zealand is so easily accessible, safe, and we are always given a warm welcome. MEETINGS has been a valuable opportunity to find out what will inspire and excite our customers about this international destination on our doorstep.

“I am excited to rediscover some of the regional destinations, where our customers can make the most of their visit with unique workshops, team building, scenic touring, and enjoy local food, wine and shopping,” she says

Christchurch-based hosted buyer, Karen Hamilton from 360 Events says there was a real sense of optimism during the two days on the show floor, and she had a full appointment programme. She made the most of the opportunity to meet suppliers, book services for the coming year, find out what’s new and trending, and look at ways people are being efficient, and incorporating sustainability initiatives.

“There is a sense of urgency for booking now, looking ahead for the next two years and getting dates booked in the diaries, as we know it will only get busier,” she says.

A 25-year veteran at MEETINGS, Eugene Fraser of Peek Exhibition says he was impressed by the quantity and the quality of the hosted buyers he met with. “There was a real buzz, with buyers telling us their visit to MEETINGS has been worth their while.

“Now more than ever, being part of the MEETINGS community, working together with all our peers from around New Zealand, has been crucial to our success,” he says.

Lee Watkins, Director of Sales and Marketing Wairakei Resort and Chateau Tongariro says he has been thrilled to meet so many Australian buyers at MEETINGS.

“I’ve had 10 appointments with Australians, and business confidence is certainly surfacing again. They are looking at New Zealand as an exciting event destination, and want to learn as much as they can about the options we can offer,” he says.

Tomorrow Australian and New Zealand buyers head to Waikato and Queenstown for weekend familiarisation experiences. Others visited Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch last weekend prior to MEETINGS.

Next year MEETINGS will be held in Ōtautahi Christchurch at the new Te Pae Christchurch convention centre on 15 and 16 June 2022.

Loren Heaphy, General Manager of Destination at ChristchurchNZ says MEETINGS was last held in the city in 2008.

“Christchurch is now a world-class host city and we are excited to be revealing it to everyone next year,” she says.

ENDS

Click here to access [MEETINGS 2021 Folder](#) on Google Drive with all images and media releases from the event.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LZ4cqWH5jUEMI-eMo6cll64lQysYEhJg?usp=sharing>

About [Business Events Industry Aotearoa \(BEIA\)](#) — formerly CINZ

- BEIA is the official, membership-based association of New Zealand’s conference and business events industry with more than 450 members across a broad range of sectors.
- It takes a leadership role in increasing meetings, incentives, conference and events business for the benefit of its members, principal stakeholders and the New Zealand economy.
- BEIA works to actively promote the sector, providing advocacy with central government and offering assistance, information, professional development and real business opportunities to its members.
- Pre-Covid, business events were generating in excess of \$1.5 billion annually for New Zealand and supporting around 22,000 jobs directly.

About [MEETINGS](#)

- MEETINGS is New Zealand’s largest business events trade exhibition.
- Auckland is host city for MEETINGS 2021 at ASB Showgrounds on 2 and 3 June
- BEIA owns and manages the event, which has been run annually since 1997, except in 2020.

- MEETINGS 2019 generated over \$62 million in business, signed during the two-day event.
- Air New Zealand is airline partner for MEETINGS 2021, renewing its ongoing commitment to the sector and to the hosted buyer and media programmes.
- MEETINGS 2021 key partners are Air New Zealand, Host City - Auckland, Venue Partner - ASB Showgrounds, Exhibition Partner - Peek Design and Display, Technology Partner - EventsAIR.