

SA business events - back in business for some months now; next step is welcoming back the east as it finally re-opens safely

South Australia's business events sector is pleased it can yet again welcome the eastern states back from COVID shutdowns. "We have been hosting large controlled and highly successful business events for some months now, such as those at the Adelaide Showgrounds and the Adelaide Convention Centre, so it will be fantastic to see the eastern states able to re-join us," says Adelaide Convention Bureau (ACB) Chief Executive Damien Kitto.

Being able to host such events since late winter means we have been back at work "to very quickly assist grow the State's economic recovery," said Mr Kitto. "And 2021 looks to be a big year for the ACB after we managed to secure an 85 per cent postponement rate of our 2020 business events into the new year. We are also working already with postponed International events."

Mr Kitto said the ACB had held its own controlled COVID- SA FE event for more than 150 delegates and some 45 exhibitors so the ACB clients could see it stress-test Adelaide's business event COVID plan, which it already knew was excellent. "Adelaide has shown that a COVID-SA FE event with a well-rehearsed plan was entirely doable for larger and larger events," he said. "Good hygiene throughout, social distancing, and exceptional logistics for people movement and seating totally succeed. We also displayed the capability to provide high quality 'boxed' food at scale. It worked for exhibitors as well as delegates, guest speakers and panellists."

Mr Kitto said that despite the recent minor blip in COVID numbers in SA which was superbly contained only to family and close contacts, Adelaide remained one of the nation's safest and most COVID-prepared destinations.

"I can say that with some pride because using the ACB's convening power we gathered 'Team Adelaide' together to develop what remains Australia's *only* capital city end-to-end COVID safety plan for visitors," he said.

Throughout COVID restrictions, Adelaide's ACB has remained firmly focussed on the revival of its economic growth KPI. In a growing business sector where delegates have a daily spend triple that of other visitor segments, and an economic tail from events of research collaboration, business partnerships and knowledge transfer, Mr Kitto said reassuring national and International business event clients of Adelaide's safety promise was critical.

"International clients are already expressing keenness for a low-density destination with an end-to-end COVID safety ethos," he said. "We have that with Adelaide. It's the perfect destination to host a post COVID business event. The message we are ensuring is heard is that we are open for business, and you can trust us, not only to ensure a successful business event, but a COVID SA FE one."

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