

## **Matters taken on notice - LC EIC public hearing 28 June 2021 - DJPR**

### **Provide a summary of consultation and other engagement activities undertaken with stakeholders from the events sector in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and related public health measures.**

- Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, DJPR has:
  - Established a dedicated Public Events Team, which has supported organisers of 8,607 Tier 1, 2 and 3 events (as of 21 June 2021) through the Public Events Framework (PEF) registration and approval process.
    - The team has worked closely with individual event organisers, venues and other bodies to provide information and advice on the requirements and process under the PEF, and how these apply to specific types of events and venues.
    - For example, for a complex event such as the Royal Melbourne Show, the team will put in place a series of meetings with the event organisers and representatives from the Department of Health, to work through the event plan, identify COVID related risks and develop mitigations to support the finalisation of the event plan and the pathway for approval.
  - Established the Event Observer Program.
    - Event observers were established to engage with event organisers through attendance at their events. As of 27 June 2021, Event Observers have attended 198 events approved or registered under the PEF and helped the event organisers self-regulate to comply with their COVIDSafe Event Plans.
    - Feedback from these events is passed onto the Department of Health and the Public Events Team to inform future engagement with event organisers.
  - Conducted approximately 26 industry engagement roundtables and information sessions for the events industry with nearly 1,000 invitees from across business events, sport, recreation and racing, creative arts, tourism, local government and multicultural and interfaith communities. The roundtables have included targeted sessions for subsectors such as business and local government.
  - Engaged with industry peak bodies and representative groups including the Victorian Tourism Industry Council, Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), Live Performance Australia (LPA), Live Entertainment Industry Forum (LEIF), Exhibitions Events Association of Australia (EEAA), LGPro Events Special Interest Group, Meetings and Events Australia and Save Victorian Events through industry forums and direct engagement.
  - Met regularly with Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC), Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) and Business Events Victoria (BEV) to discuss and understand the impacts of restrictions on business events.
  - Consulted directly with events businesses and industry bodies to design the Events Support Package and incorporated insights from event organisers, venue operators and event suppliers into the design of the grants program.
  - Worked with the Department of Health to resolve and directly respond to event industry queries about restrictions and impacts on events.
- DJPR is implementing a program of engagement with event organisers, including regular events newsletters, and increasing participation in community-based event information sessions in partnership with local government and Multicultural Affairs, to facilitate better grassroots outreach

to large and small event organisers. Insights gained from these activities will provide an evidence base to better support the industry's recovery.

**Provide an overview of the Department's internal structure as it relates to events, and in particular, the Public Events Team within the Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy (TEVE) branch.**

- DJPR has dedicated areas to support the events industry.
  - Tourism and Events comprises the Public Events Team and Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy branch.
  - The Public Events Team works with the Department of Health to provide dedicated support to event organisers to facilitate the safe resumption of COVIDSafe events and sector recovery. This includes:
    - Taking a proactive approach to communicating changing restrictions to event organisers and stakeholders throughout Victoria to ensure information is provided quickly and as clearly as possible.
    - Providing comprehensive concierge support for Tier 1 and Tier 2 event organisers, including preliminary guidance on the approval process, coordinating meetings with the Department of Health's public health experts and communicating updates to public health settings.
    - Fielding questions and supporting industry to understand the intersection between the Restricted Activity Directions and the PEF.
    - Supporting the Digital Services Team of Small Business Victoria to promote a PEF aligned Online Events Portal.
    - Providing event organisers' feedback on the functionality of the Service Victoria QR code App to Service Victoria via the DJPR Industry Coordination and Recovery Group.
  - The Tourism, Events and Visitor Economy branch develops and delivers strategies, programs and other initiatives to support the growth of the visitor economy, including the events industry. This includes:
    - Providing oversight, coordination and governance support for public visitor economy entities that are integral to Victoria's events industry, such as Visit Victoria, Australian Grand Prix Corporation and Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Trust.
    - Administering major events legislation, including crowd management and the prevention of ticket scalping.
    - Working with Visit Victoria and the Melbourne Convention Bureau to secure funding and support major, business and regional events.
    - Overseeing COVID-19 support programs such as the \$20 million Events Support Package.
    - Negotiating and liaising with the Commonwealth Government on key policy issues which affect the events industry.
  - Creative Victoria support small, medium and large cultural and creative organisations across the state, including theatres and performance companies and festivals, and administers grant programs to support the staging of cultural and creative events.

- Sport and Recreation Victoria supports a program of national and international competitions and events through the Significant Sporting Events Program.
- Rural and Regional Victoria supports the Regional Events Fund and other grant programs providing support for the staging of events outside of Melbourne.
- Visit Victoria is responsible for attracting events to Melbourne and Victoria, and driving the growth of a diverse, year-round calendar of major, regional and business events across the state.
  - Visit Victoria has a dedicated Major Events Acquisitions team that works directly with event organisers to ensure they are able to stage their events in the current environment.
  - As a part of Visit Victoria, Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) leads the acquisition and delivery of national and global business events for Melbourne and regional Victoria. This is achieved through partnering with the Victorian State Government, City of Melbourne, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, and over 250 private enterprise partners.
- All areas of DJPR, Visit Victoria and Melbourne Convention Bureau work closely together to achieve the best possible outcomes for the events industry and support the staging of events across Victoria.

**Provide a summary of how the Department differentiates between the tourism and events sectors.**

- Victoria's tourism industry encompasses the people and businesses that provide goods and services for those travelling to the state for leisure and holidays, business, education and health services, and visiting friends and relatives. The industry comprises a diverse range of businesses and operators including accommodation, tours, and attractions.
- Victoria's events industry includes the people and businesses that contribute to the staging of events. The events industry is broad and diverse and includes but is not limited to event organisers, suppliers, creatives and performers and venue providers.
- The two industries are distinct, but there are strong connections and shared opportunities between the industries with many events driving visitation to Victoria and tourists choosing to attend Victorian events during their visit.
- Visit Victoria is the primary tourism and events company in Victoria, and its structure recognises the linkages between the two industries.
- This is further reflected in the Government's Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan which outlines priorities to support the recovery and growth of both the tourism and events industries.
- The Plan is being delivered by DJPR and Visit Victoria with specific funding provided for events in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 State Budgets:
  - \$20 million renewal of the Regional Events Fund
  - \$152 million over four years for the Major Events Fund
  - \$42.91 million renewal of the Business Events Fund.
- This funding is separate to funding provided to support tourism businesses and facilitate investment in new tourism product and infrastructure.
- In addition, the \$20 million *Victorian Events Support Package* was announced on 30 May 2021 to support events impacted by the May/June 2021 circuit breaker restrictions and opened for applications on 18 June 2021. The package comprises several program funding streams to support event organisers, hosts, live performers and suppliers, with events cancelled due to circuit breaker settings.