

BUSINESS EVENTS VICTORIA

Strategic Plan

2019-2022



Connecting businesses to authentic experiences in regional Victoria



FOREWORD

We are pleased to present the Business Events Victoria 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan articulates a clear narrative about our organisation, providing members and partners the opportunity to identify collaborative opportunities and points of engagement with BEV and setting a road map for our future.

BEV has a long history of representing the business events industry in regional Victoria. Established in 1996, BEV was founded to provide an opportunity for regional operators to work collaboratively together to market regional Victoria to the Meetings, Incentive, Conference and Exhibitions (MICE) market.

The need today for an industry-led membership based organisation with a sole focus on promoting business events to regional Victoria is the same as it was 22 years ago, and BEV is committed today more so than ever to pursuing that goal.

We thank the Victorian State Government for their continued support of the regional business events industry through the *Regional Victoria Business Events Program*. This program has successfully delivered positive growth in the business events sector since its inception in 2010.

We look forward delivering on this Strategic Plan and working with our members to ensure regional Victoria continues to be a leader for regional business events nationally.

Brendan Maher
Chairperson

Chris Porter
Executive Officer



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ABOUT BUSINESS EVENTS VICTORIA

OUR ROLE

Business Events Victoria (BEV) offers a united and dedicated service for business events across Victoria.

BEV collaborates with regions across Victoria to identify, connect and promote the best of regional Victorian venues and facilities. As a single and independent entity, it exists to grow the business events sector and realise positive economic and social benefits for Victorian communities.

We work to build relationships, knowledge and partnerships across Victoria and Australia that will continue to increase the number, size and length of business events held across Victoria: visitation, attendance and duration of stay.

Our focus is business events.

Our people are known for their personable and passionate way of working to harness the best of regional Victoria to build the market share for business events across the state.

We invest our time to appreciate clients' needs and look right across Victoria to find the most suitable and unique experiences offered by our partners. Our Board represents all regions across the state, and they actively share their knowledge and expertise to connect clients and partners to authentic experiences.

BEV is funded through membership fees as well as by the Victorian Government's Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

WHAT ARE BUSINESS EVENTS?

Business events make up an important part of Victoria's visitor economy, alongside domestic and international leisure and business travel – the lines between which are becoming increasingly blurred.

Business events provide an engaging opportunity to grow the visitor economy in regional Victoria, since business travellers will often extend their visit or return with family or friends. They contribute to local economies and drive visitation and business during quiet periods (i.e. mid-week and shoulder seasons).

Business events traditionally include meetings, incentive trips, conferences and exhibitions.

Incentive trips include business-related travel that rewards and motivates employees or partners towards their organisational goals.

Industries and economic sectors continue to drive demand for business events, sometimes referred to as technical tourism. For example, fisheries or viticulture conferences in Melbourne can program events in production centres or regions with significant primary industries. BEV works to capitalise on these opportunities for our partners and the Victorian economy.

2018 Financial Year
BEV secured
80 EVENTS
WORTH **12,590**
DELEGATE DAYS
AND 3,880
ROOM NIGHTS
for regional Victoria

The business events
sector is worth an
estimated
\$475 MILLION
to the regional Victoria
visitor economy
SUPPORTING
3,127 REGIONAL
JOBS ANNUALLY

OUR PARTNERS

BEV is an industry-led membership organisation. We are networked with business development, tourism and statutory organisations such as Visit Victoria and the Melbourne Convention Bureau. We work in close partnership with our members to provide the following opportunities:

- Direct lead referrals for new business
- Website profiles
- Access to market through targeted sales and marketing initiatives including familiarisations, tradeshow attendance and sales calls
- Research and market analysis
- Industry engagement and networking opportunities

- General advice and information
- Opportunity to be elected to the Board
- Ongoing member communications
- Industry collaboration and partnership
- Professional development and networking.

As with any partnership, we achieve the best results for our members through two-way communication and combined effort: we strive for more than a transactional relationship.

This strategy has been informed by consultations with members and partners. Its priority and actions respond to members' desires (e.g. more ways to engage with BEV, or BEV-led communications and market intelligence).



OUR CLIENTS

Any organisation that wishes to host a business event in Victoria can be a client of BEV. We routinely work with industry associations, professional conference organisers, Victorian Government departments and are connected to different executive assistant networks across Australia. BEV provides the following complimentary services to clients:

- Coordinating requests for proposals
- Sharing expertise on business event suppliers
- Recommending venues and professional support services (partners)
- Supporting incentive groups
- Providing 'tailor-made' bid documents

OUR CASE FOR GROWTH AND CHANGE



WHAT'S DRIVING OUR INDUSTRY?

While business events are a significant contributor to Victorian regional economies, the industry is at a crucial point.

Markets are expanding, and consumers are increasingly discerning. Regional Victorian locations are competing with other Australian states, as well as international locations across the Asia Pacific region, and many domestic and international locations are also supported by bid funds.

Similarly, clients are increasingly looking for distinctive venues and destinations that offer delegates unique experiences with first rate services and amenities, accommodation and technology. BEV works with clients and partners to ensure the best possible outcomes for the event organisers, attendees and each region.

While business events are an important contributor to regional economies, market forces, investor confidence and environmental factors all affect the demand and pipeline of business events.

Finally, the Victorian business events sector is framed by a range of stakeholders, including:

- Government departments and statutory entities such as Department of Economic Development, Jobs Transport & Resources (DEDJTR), Visit Victoria (VV) and the Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB)
- Professional Conference Organisers
- Regional Tourism Boards
- Local Governments
- Peak bodies such as the Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) and the Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB)
- Large venues, industry partners and our members.

While the industry is extremely competitive, these bodies provide an ecosystem that can support collaboration, extending the impact of each individual organisation and growing the collective economic and social impact for Victorians.



CHANGING MARKETS AND CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS



Local, national and international travel is more accessible than ever before. Victoria no longer competes locally or nationally, but with international destinations and experiences.



There is huge diversity in locations and experiences available to business events delegates across Victoria. Destinations and venues face pressure to define and clearly articulate their unique value proposition.



Rapid technological advances are affecting the business events sector, with many businesses opting to host remote events that remove the need for staff travel. There are also increasing consumer expectations of venues' technological capabilities.

A COMPETITIVE MARKET



Given the value of the business events sector, competition runs hot for funding, clients, market share, and exposure and awareness more broadly – Victoria competes with national bid funds and substantial investment by other state governments.



There are a myriad of organisations working in business events across Victoria. There is role overlap across these different groups, reducing individual cut through and generating confusion for potential clients.



There are increasing opportunities to work together across the business events industry to better meet the needs of clients and deliver greater economic and social impacts for Victorians. This includes policy, advocacy, research as well as winning and hosting events.

ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENTAL AND POLITICAL SHIFTS



Business events can be significantly impacted by market confidence, with economic downturn likely to place pressure on business events.



There are varied and changing climates across regional Victoria, with venues and destinations occasionally impacted by weather events.



The wider political landscape impacts business events, such as support for bid funding across jurisdictions, or uncertainty around funding cycles.



OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

BEV has identified three key pillars (our areas of focus) to respond to the strategic drivers. These pillars form the foundation of our strategic plan. Over the next four years, we will deliver on priorities across all three to provide our partners and clients with exceptional services, grow our market share and awareness of BEV (as well as business events more broadly), and build the capacity of our organisation and our partners.

OUR VISION

Connecting businesses to authentic experiences in regional Victoria

Promoting awareness, sales growth and market share

- 1 Build awareness of Victorian business events offerings
- 2 Generate opportunities and leads
- 3 Undertake research to support growth in business events across new markets

Building high quality partnerships

- 1 Engage and connect with our members
- 2 Develop a comprehensive value proposition for partners
- 3 Develop and foster new partnerships that help us add value to regional Victoria
- 4 Support investment in public and private infrastructure for business events

Investing in our people and operations

- 1 Build internal capabilities
- 2 Support our Board's diversity of skills and perspectives
- 3 Secure the sustainability of our operations

PROMOTING AWARENESS, SALES GROWTH AND MARKET SHARE

STRATEGIC PILLAR 1

FOCUSSING ON THE MARKET: OUR PRIORITIES UNDER STRATEGIC PILLAR 1

Raising awareness of the business events capabilities in Victoria is crucial to the sector's success. Central to this will be a robust sales and marketing program to grow our market share nationally. This will help increase the number, size and type of business events held in regional Victoria, as well as support positive economic and social impacts for Victorian communities.

Success means more clients knowing about regional Victoria, BEV and our services, increasing visitor numbers and bed nights across Victoria, and being able to confidently demonstrate the social and economic impact of events for our members, government and Victorian communities.

1 BUILD AWARENESS OF REGIONAL VICTORIAN BUSINESS EVENTS OFFERINGS

In order to continue to grow event sales in regional Victoria and create value for our partners, we need to continue to build awareness of BEV and an understanding across clients of partners' unique offerings.

Actions include:

- Developing a bold marketing and communication strategy
- Identifying gaps in client knowledge of regional business events, such as value, transport and value-add opportunities
- Identifying the best tools to educate clients, either face-to-face, print or online

2 GENERATE OPPORTUNITIES AND LEADS

We will work with clients to identify and win opportunities, actively target industry sectors relevant to Victoria's regions and exceed expectations when responding to requests for proposals.

Actions include:

- Develop a robust Sales Plan, targeting our key target markets. Activities to include tradeshow participation, sales calls, Regional Victoria Showcase and familiarisations
- Actively researching and aligning conference opportunities with industry sectors in regional areas, working with regions where synergies exist
- Stepping up our efforts to target specific industry sectors and national associations

3 UNDERTAKE RESEARCH TO SUPPORT GROWTH IN BUSINESS EVENTS ACROSS NEW MARKETS

Growing lead referrals and targeting the right industries and sectors will require marketing and sales strategies that are supported by relevant data.

Data from partners is key to this market analysis. We will work together to identify appropriate data sources and collection methods to better understand business opportunities and the impact of different events in regional Victoria.

Actions include:

- Reinvigorating research into the business events sector, with support from partners including Regional Tourism Boards, Local Government and members
- Reviewing and collating relevant state and national visitation business events research

BUILDING HIGH-QUALITY PARTNERSHIPS

STRATEGIC PILLAR 2

FOCUSSING ON MEMBERS: OUR PRIORITIES UNDER STRATEGIC PILLAR 2

There are many business events stakeholders in Victoria: their understanding of and engagement with business events is key to continuing to grow regional Victoria's market share and event sales.

We are focussing on high-quality partnerships because they enable us to drastically expand our reach and impact, as well as support our members' capacity and capability. Partnerships between members, operators, service providers and others will improve Victoria's offering and value proposition, and support our growth ambitions. Success looks like a capable and connected sector, with close linkages and collaboration with our partners and a high retention rate and satisfaction levels with our members.

1 ENGAGE AND CONNECT WITH OUR MEMBERS

We have a unique perspective across the whole of regional Victoria, and are able to provide our members with information to support positive changes to their business practices and opportunities to learn.

Actions include:

- Creating an industry toolkit with templates and checklists
- Hosting member networking events across the state
- Supporting members to refer leads back to BEV and other members where they are unable to accommodate opportunities
- Providing our partners with data to support effective change to products and practices across the regional business events sector

2 DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE VALUE PROPOSITION FOR PARTNERS

We want to grow our membership base and create win-win relationships with our partners, based on a clear understanding of the way in which both BEV and our partners benefit from collaboration and shared initiatives.

Actions include:

- Improving our value proposition, and moving from 'one-to-one' to 'many-to-many' partnership arrangements with networks that benefit members and businesses alike
- Understanding what data is relevant to different partners, and offering the regionally-specific information these partners need to succeed

3 DEVELOP AND FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS THAT HELP US ADD VALUE TO REGIONAL VICTORIA

Leveraging our existing networks and strategically targeting new partners (i.e. those with the greatest mutual benefits – financially and otherwise) will help us reach new market segments. We will continue to develop new partnerships which expand our reach and lead to positive outcomes in regional Victoria for our members and their communities.

Actions include:

- Find innovative ways to work with Melbourne Convention Bureau, Visit Victoria, Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre and State Government departments
- Identify new ways to work with new types of partner organisations such as service providers, speaker bureaux, entertainers, AV providers or transport providers
- Developing partnerships with Regional Cities Victoria and different business chambers

4 SUPPORT INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR BUSINESS EVENTS

To grow the number and size of business events held in regional Victoria, the infrastructure and product offerings needs to continually evolve. BEV can work closely with partners to support lobbying efforts for infrastructure funding.

Actions include:

- Providing evidence and research to partners to support their advocacy for infrastructure
- Working with VTIC to identify funding opportunities for supporting regional infrastructure projects
- Identifying funding opportunities, supported by strategies that cross multiple regions to boost mid-week visitation



INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE AND OPERATIONS

STRATEGIC PILLAR 3

FOCUSSING ON OUR CAPACITY TO DELIVER: OUR PRIORITIES UNDER STRATEGIC PILLAR 3

We are investing in our people and operations so that we can better support our members and more effectively grow business events in regional Victoria. This means ensuring we have the people and capability required to deliver for our members, and sustainable internal functions that provide continuity for partners.

Success means we will have the people, processes and systems required to deliver on this strategy and services that are relevant and accessible to members, while remaining a financially sustainable, industry-led organisation.

1 BUILD INTERNAL CAPABILITIES

Expanding our reach and impact requires a capable and efficient team. This will ensure our team and organisation remains well-connected, networked and informed to be able to share this information with the industry.

Actions include:

- Identifying internal needs and committing resources to meeting them
- Enhancing our Client Relationship Management (CRM) capabilities
- Supporting ongoing professional development and networking

2 SUPPORT OUR BOARD'S DIVERSITY OF SKILLS AND PERSPECTIVES

Our Board members serve a crucial advisory function for BEV as an organisation, while also supporting BEV's membership in each of their 'home' regions.

Members act as BEV ambassadors in their individual regions and it is important that this Board both represents Victoria's regions as well as our core partners and clients.

Actions include:

- Reviewing our governance to ensure that we have the right people, experience, and expertise to deliver on our strategy

3 SECURE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR OPERATIONS

BEV will develop an explicit and achievable plan to secure our longer-term viability.

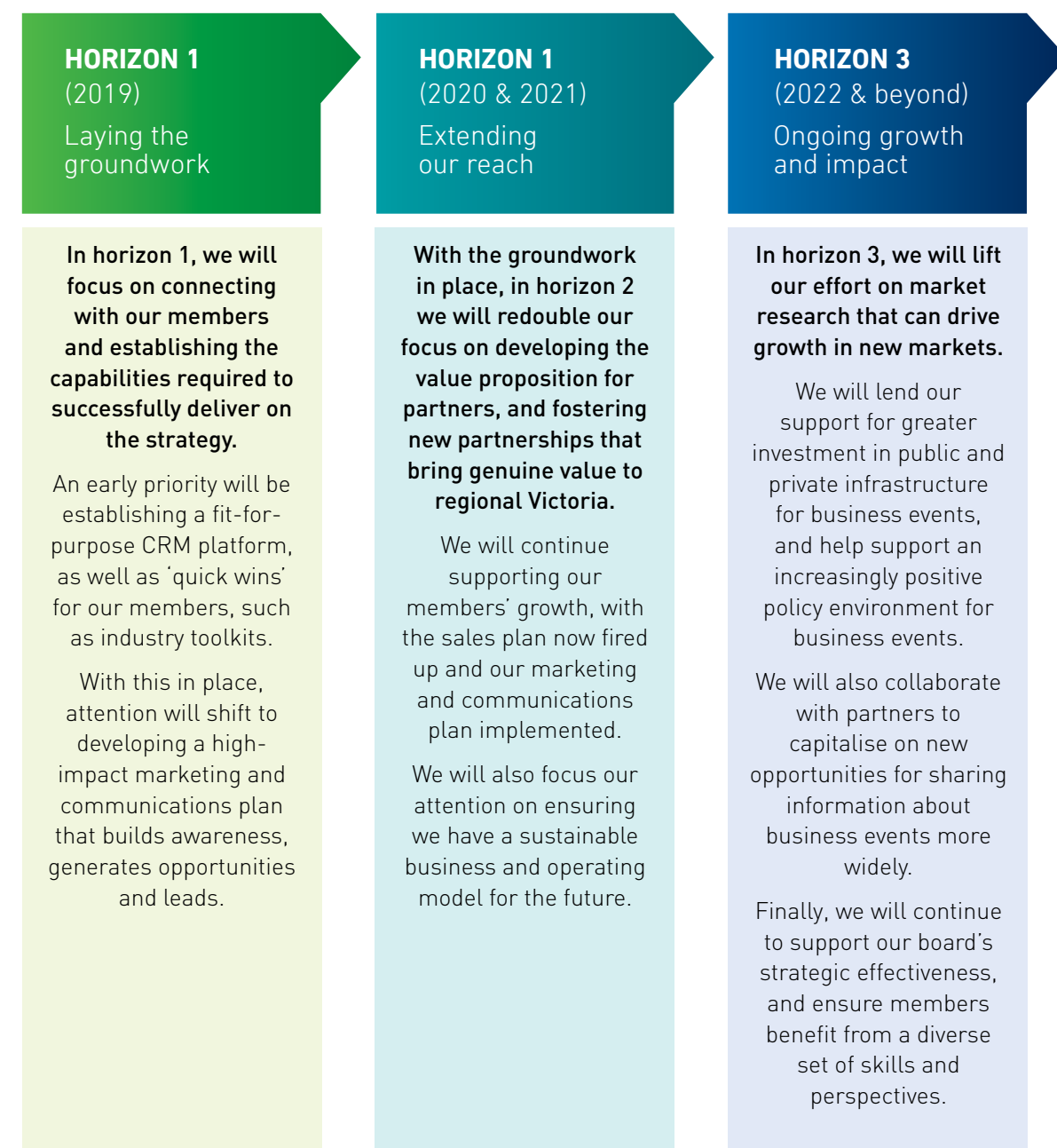
Actions include:

- Research to understand and demonstrate our impact (to support evidence-driven budget submissions)
- Identifying and exploring alternate revenue models, reconsidering the current membership structure and other partnership opportunities

HOW WE WILL IMPLEMENT OUR PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

The pillars and priorities presented in this Strategic Plan are supported by an Implementation Roadmap. While there will be work on all of our priorities during each year of the plan, the Roadmap provides guidance on the emphasis required for each specific priority to ensure progress in line with our implementation horizons.



Promoting awareness, sales growth and market share

	FOCUS OF EFFORT			
Strategic Priorities	2019	2020	2021	2022
1 Build awareness of regional Victorian business events offerings	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
2 Generate opportunities and drive leads	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
3 Undertake research to support growth in regional business events across new markets	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●

Building high quality partnerships

	FOCUS OF EFFORT			
Strategic Priorities	2019	2020	2021	2022
1 Engage and connect with our members	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
2 Develop a comprehensive value proposition for partners	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
3 Develop and foster new partnerships that help us add value to regional Victoria	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
4 Support investment in public and private infrastructure for business events	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●

Investing in our people and operations

	FOCUS OF EFFORT			
Strategic Priorities	2019	2020	2021	2022
1 Build internal capabilities	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
2 Support our Board's diversity of skills and perspectives	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●
3 Secure the sustainability of our operations	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●

LEGEND

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>
 HIGH EFFORT CONTINUED EFFORT



BUSINESS EVENTS
VICTORIA

Connecting businesses to authentic experiences in regional Victoria