



**[For immediate release]**

## **MEA POSTPONES EVOLVE TO 2022**

Meetings and Events Australia (MEA) today announced the difficult decision has been made to defer its annual conference 'Evolve' to 2022.

The continuing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, necessitated decisive leadership and action on MEA's part. The primary factor for this decision is the uncertainty around border restrictions right across the country and the limitations it poses on travel to attend events in-person.

MEA CEO Peter McDonald said, "In the interests of all stakeholders, MEA believes the best option is to reschedule Evolve to a time when immunised population target levels are expected. By doing so, we are reinforcing the significance of meeting in-person.

"Evolve's live hub will provide for richer in-person connections and optimal conference experience for our members, delegates, sponsors and exhibitors, speakers and the greater Australian events sector."

He added: "We also want to honour our commitment to host the next face to face Evolve in Melbourne. MEA has made every possible effort to bring that to fruition in 2021. However current government pandemic management restrictions right across our country, and the potential for their extension, make the risk of staging the event on 8 September too high. As we've said before, the health and wellbeing of MEA members and the wider community are priority considerations for us, and central to our decisions."



The Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) – a key MEA partner for this Evolve – offered their support for the decision. MCB Chief Executive Julia Swanson said: “We value MEA wanting to ensure that Evolve is held at a time that will enable the sector to shine bright. We welcome MEA’s continued support and leadership in championing in-person events to drive recovery of our industry.”

“The live hub in Melbourne will contribute to this action and build confidence in hosting and attending events which is right at the heart of the conference theme of Building Confidence through Best Practice.”

Registered delegates will automatically have their registration transferred to the rescheduled event, and options with respect to obtaining a refund have been advised.

MEA is pleased to also announce that Professor Catherine Bennett, Chair of Epidemiology, Deakin University will deliver a national Q&A webinar for us on 8 September. Acknowledging the timeliness of need for information by the events sector about the COVID virus, Professor Bennett has agreed to help answer questions that are front of mind about it, and given vaccines are part of the roadmap to recovery, about them, their impact, and rollout.

MEA reaffirmed that an annual Awards event will proceed in 2021. This will now take place on 22 September and be broadcast live to the industry. Nigel Collin, MEA Chair said “The MEA Board believes it is important to keep a positive focus wherever possible. The 2020 MEA National Awards is an opportunity where we can do that. We look forward to celebrating the success of all finalists and winners and recognising outstanding performance despite the adversity the world faced last year.”

---

**About MEA:** *Meetings & Events Australia (MEA) is the collective voice of the events industry in Australia. With the largest network of event professionals in Australia, MEA has been supporting the careers of our members and advancing the interests of the event industry since 1975.*

*MEA’s membership represents the largest community of businesses and individuals across the Australian events industry that employs more than 229,000 professionals who stage, produce, manage, support and supply the 480,000+ events held in Australia annually. These events include major events, festivals, conferences, meetings, exhibitions, launches, seminars, special events, community events and much more for associations, corporations, government and the general public.*

For further information contact:  
Meetings & Events Australia (MEA)  
E: [admin@mea.org.au](mailto:admin@mea.org.au)