



# **BEIA Conference**

## **Report by Jessica Langelaan**

September 2023

## 1. Show Attendance

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### Event background

Held over three days, the BEIA conference was hosted in Blenheim, Marlborough this year. The purpose of the event was to get insights into the upcoming year's strategic initiatives and further updates from BEIA, to hear from influential industry leaders around the country, as well as connecting with industry colleagues.

This event is hosted annually with around 170-200 attendees each year consisting of RTO's, event planners, hoteliers, venue managers and further industry leaders.

QCB took a different travel approach by taking the Coastal Pacific train route from Christchurch to Blenheim with less of a carbon footprint.

The event started off with a welcome function at the Wither Hills winery. The conference was held in the ASB Theatre, and the Marlborough Events Centre followed by a gala dinner at the Omaka Aviation Heritage Centre. Attendees also got a chance to 'experience Marlborough' with an activity with a choice of a wine tour, a seafood sailing trip or a conservation walk. See full programme of the event [here](#).

QCB also attended the National Convention Bureau Meeting prior to the conference as well as the 'First Timers' session hosted by Team Up.

## 2. Insights & Summary

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BEIA will continue to work on their 10-year strategy which is yet to be finalised. They will go live with a new website, early 2024, focusing on sustainability and being more consumer friendly. The strategy will be reviewed in 2025. They have sent out their last paper version of 'The Planner', which will be digital going forward.

Challenges for New Zealand include cost pressure, the tyranny of distance, the New Zealand hotel brands that aren't recognized internationally, the TNZ budget being significantly reduced and the lack of data we collect.

Looking forward means focusing on measured sustainable events, health and safety, cultural inclusion, agility and flexibility and quality over quantity. *We are a nation with a lot of ambition.*

### Australian PCO perspectives on Australian market

The market remains strong; the pipeline of events are solid however skilled resources remain an issue. The corporate market has softened, and flight prices are a huge concern, as high airfares and sustainability impacts on travel have reduced numbers internationally. Large international events will increase hybrid for the next 12-18 months.

Nationally, they are seeing an increase in some areas of strong, short lead enquiries with associations looking at hosting events closer to their home base. Cost and legacy are key factors in decision making.

### Panel session & speaker key points

(Lisa Hopkins, Senthil Gopinath (ICAA) James Doolan, Steve Armitage, Elaine Linnell, Rebecca Ingram, Kylee Daniel)

- \$15M was taken out of TNZ budget, showing the lack of understanding of the tourism industry by the government.
- Anticipation of more pandemics in the next decade; how do we prepare for these upcoming challenges?
- A strong shift to AI and the digital space, emphasizing the need for us to adapt to these advancements. However, personal relationships will always be essential and remain crucial in converting business opportunities.
- Highlighting the significance of our domestic markets and how we lean on each other. More conversations about mental health and creating stronger relationships.
  - How to support businesses during climate change.
  - The need for more data and insight within the business events sector.
  - We need to follow in the footsteps of places such as Copenhagen and Denmark with their sustainable practices.

**Immigration:** For visa processing, immigration has said incentive and conference delegates need to state the reason they are travelling to NZ (i.e. event) in their application as this will speed up the processing time and decrease likelihood of the application being rejected (BEIA to inform us on a contact to help with this). New Zealand is getting close to pre-covid visas for working holiday and working visas. The visitor visas are approaching pre-covid levels. The Skilled Migrant category has closed and will reopen in November with a new points system.

**Data:** New Zealand currently lacks comprehensive data collection from venues and hotels. The objective for this would be to create an annual report to collect the economic value on multi-day conferences in New Zealand. Building and increasing data accessibility is crucial to deliver value, information, and insights to use this to support informed industry decision making. The company Fresh Info is working on a system to solve this issue.

### Cameron Bagrie – Ignore the recession Narrative

Cameron's views showed a shifting of nature with an economic reset. The next 5 years will be the most interesting years in the economical history of New Zealand with no political party drawing the path of what we need to do. The nation agrees, they want change. The next three years will be determined by what businesses do, not the market.

In summary, the trip was a success and a great chance for QCB to connect, network, and reconnect with fellow RTO colleagues and further industry leaders. This was especially important to Jess and Luisa, who are new additions to the QCB team this year.

The emphasis on sustainability continues to be the focus for the future of business events. Everyone remains optimistic and positive about tourism and the countries rebuild post-covid.

### 3. Activity Imagery

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QCB, Queenstown Operators and NZICC at the Gala Dinner



Luisa & Jess from QCB on their train journey up to Blenheim

