

Hon Stuart Nash
Parliament Building
Wellington, 6160

23 November 2020

Dear Hon Stuart Nash,

COVID-19 Impact on the events sector and its recovery road map

Firstly, congratulations on your appointment to the Economic and Regional Development, Tourism, and Forestry portfolios in addition to your existing Small Business portfolio.

Your appointment is welcomed by the New Zealand events sector who has faced not only six months of business interruption due to COVID-19 but continues to face an uncertain future due to the 'what if' scenarios of future community outbreaks. The impact of COVID-19 on our industry has been significant, some operators and even more events have not survived, many more are on a precipice, reliant on the success of the coming months.

We would now like to meet with you to discuss the industry and solutions to ongoing issues and challenges.

Who we are

The NZ Events Association (NZE A) has grown steadily since its inception in 2005 to now represent over 3,000 events professionals of New Zealand's highly accomplished and respected events sector in all regions of the country. Our members and supporters include event promoters/owners/agencies, suppliers, venues, service providers, not-for-profits, educational institutes, and local and central Government. This broad supporter base represents events ranging from major large-scale international events which deliver significant economic, social and promotional benefits for New Zealand; through to domestic, regional and community events that deliver local economic, cultural and social benefits. The span of the sector is huge: from sports, arts and culture through to consumer events, industry events and business to business events of all types.

Our purpose is to advocate for all aspects of events nationally; their economic outcomes and social benefits, and the people who work and volunteer in and around this unique industry in New Zealand.

What we want to achieve

The NZEA has acted on behalf of the industry in response to COVID, spear-heading engagement with central government and doing so with the support of its highly capable and vocal members. We have worked closely and in good faith with the team at NZ Major Events within MBIE as well as collaboratively with other industry interest groups such as Conventions & Incentives New Zealand (CINZ) and Entertainment Venues Association New Zealand (EVANZ), just to name a few, for the benefit of the sector

Whilst acknowledging the \$10m Domestic Event Fund (DEF) and the \$50m Regional Events Fund (REF), our work continues to ensure the events sector is well represented in the COVID recovery with our priorities as follows:

- Ensuring the Regional Events Fund is an effective tool for supporting the events industry

- Leading the charge for industry-led guidelines for biosecurity by working closely with MoH
- Clarifying and refining the rules for events at alert level 2 and beyond, providing much needed certainty for the benefit of the events sector and the public.
- A Government-backed insurance facility to underwrite events from COVID related impacts to ensure events continue to be delivered to stimulate domestic tourism
- Borders opening – with Trans-Tasman bubble to start with – allowing talents but also overseas attendees enabling financial viability of those events that so much rely on overseas visitors
- An overall valuation of our wide and complex sector (leisure events as well as business events). New Zealand currently lacks comprehensive data on the true value of the events sector to the wellbeing of New Zealanders across economic, social and environmental spheres. The NZEA have been proactively working for some months to undertake an industry-wide impact evaluation yet funding is lacking.
- An increased multiyear appropriation of \$30 million for the NZ Major Events Fund (that will also fund business events attracting high-spending visitors) and its Creative and Cultural Events Incubator to grow the pipeline of event activity in the country and aid in the recovery of international tourism. Alongside this increase we would like to see the Major Events prospecting criteria widened including increased support for feasibility).
- Ensure appropriate Ministerial interest in and representation for New Zealand's events sector

While the \$60m funding (DEF & REF) is a good initial step for the sector in the short term, we must also be mindful of the medium to long term prospects for the events industry. Without strong leadership and advocacy from Government in this space, we are likely to find that New Zealand has very few major events in the coming years, which would be hugely damaging for the entire sector, domestic tourism, and deprive New Zealanders of the significant benefits those events provide.

Why we matter

We certainly see events being a critical part of your portfolios, events can be a key driver of Economic and Regional Development as well as a significant contributor to Tourism at all levels. Events can not only help to improve social cohesion, community spirit and pride; develop a stronger identity and sense of place; improve cross-cultural awareness and understanding; but also stimulate domestic and international tourism and generate national and global media profile. We know that one third of domestic tourism is driven by people attending events. That is a multi-billion dollar spend directly linked to the work of event professionals.

Furthermore, the events eco-system is broad and the supply chain multi-faceted. As such, a number of professions from both the private sector and the public sector are reliant on events for their livelihood. Much of the industry is, in fact, made up of small and medium businesses - from event organisers and throughout the entire supply chain. Having a Minister who understands small business can only be positive for the thousands of companies that make up the events sector.

My Chair and I look forward to hearing your advice regarding a suitable date and time to meet with you to discuss the events sector priorities as part of its recovery roadmap. In the meantime, I remain at your disposal for any additional information you may need.

Your sincerely,



Ségolène de Fontenay
General Manager