



**Media Release: Monday, 6 November 2023**

## **Australian Business Events Association welcomes two distinguished Directors to its Board**

The Australian Business Events Association (ABEA), the peak body for the Business Events industry, proudly announces the appointment of two additional industry leaders to its Board of Directors.

Penny Lion, Non-Executive Director of Racing SA and Adelaide Venue Management Corporation (AVMC) and the Clare Valley Wine & Grape Association, joins industry luminary Dr Leo Jago OAM, Director of Tourism and Business Events International, who was appointed to the Board last month.

Melissa Brown, ABEA CEO, expressed her enthusiasm for the latest additions to the ABEA Board.

"All directors appointed have garnered acclaim as industry leaders, with our latest appointments being no exception. Each director is uniquely positioned to propel the Association towards its goals.

"In Penny Lion we have a wealth of industry connections and influence, business vision and planning, and in Dr Leo Jago, an abundance of research and advocacy knowledge and guidance.

"With nine of the eleven Board positions now occupied, ABEA is galvanised with a representative Board, comprehensively reflecting, and addressing the industry.

"We invite Business Events leaders with a passion for championing our industry and serving our members to join us. We want to see the final two positions on the Board filled by high calibre individuals who, together with our current directors, will represent the full scope of our industry." said Brown.

Penny Lion is well recognised for her dedication to the business events industry, championing excellence and driving global partnerships through astute strategy and masterful stakeholder engagement. Her governance experience spans NFP, government and the private sector, including 11 years leading Business and Industry Events at Tourism



Australia. Penny's extensive global network within the Business Events industry affords ABEA a unique opportunity to drive the Australian industry forward.

Dr Leo Jago is Emeritus Professor at the University of Surrey in the UK and an Adjunct Professor at Griffith University, specialising in assessing the economic impact and legacy of business events. With over 25 years of active involvement with international organisations, including the UNWTO, JMIC, and ICCA, Dr Jago's accolades include chairing the Business Events Council of Australia (BECA).

With these appointments, the Australian Business Events Association continues its unwavering commitment to the growth and success of the business events industry in Australia.

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### **PENNY LION GAICD**

Penny Lion GAICD is a Non-Executive Director of Racing SA and Adelaide Venue Management Corporation (AVMC) and the Clare Valley Wine & Grape Association. Graduating from the AICD, her governance experience spans NFP, government and the private sector. As the Executive General Manager, Events at Tourism Australia, Penny headed Business Events, executing global marketing and distribution activities within a \$35B sector; and Industry Events, showcasing Australia's tourism offering and consequently generating up to \$8.5B in sales to Australia's tourism industry.

Notably, she solidified the \$12M Bid Fund Program which positioned Australia to capture new international business events, with 40+ event wins totalling \$400M+ prior to the pandemic. After more than 11 years at Tourism Australia, Penny left executive employment to become the Managing Director of her family's wine company and build a portfolio of complementary non-executive directorships.



For a high-res photo of Penny Lion, please email Zadro.



## **DR LEO JAGO OAM**

An Emeritus Professor at the University of Surrey in the UK and an Adjunct Professor at Griffith University, he specialises in assessing the economic impact and legacy of business events. With over 25 years of active involvement in evaluating business events for international organisations, including the UNWTO, JMIC, and ICCA, Dr Jago's accolades include chairing the Business Events Council of Australia (BECA).

He has served as the director of government and university research centres in Australia and the UK for the past 30 years, including three years as the inaugural Chief Economist and General Manager of Tourism Research Australia; is a distinguished member of the Association of Australian Convention Bureaux (AACB) Hall of Fame and was honoured with an OAM in 2016 for his outstanding contributions to tourism and education.



For a high-res photo of Dr Leo Jago, please email Zadro.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

The Australian Business Events Association Ltd (ABEA) is the leading industry body responsible for representing and supporting the prosperity of the organisations and people that work in, or benefit from, the Australian Business Events Sector.

ABEA represents the unified ambitions of the Australian business events industry and its people. We will drive real impact regarding sector growth and development through advocacy, members support and innovation.

For membership enquiries and general association information, please contact Domenic Genua via [join@abea.org.au](mailto:join@abea.org.au) or 0412 642 357.

## **MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES**

[ZADRO](#) are representing the Australian Business Events Association to media.