



# 2026 **Executive PA corporate event organiser survey**

[executivepa.com](https://www.executivepa.com)

---

**“The findings of this survey indicate that corporate event activity, whilst not spectacular, is nevertheless recovering.”**

## Introduction

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) there are approximately 50,000 businesses in Australia that employ between 20 and 199 people. Each business will have a dedicated administrator or assistant working closely with the most senior executive in the business.

There are another 3,750 businesses that employ more than two hundred people (ABS), and each of these businesses will have a number of executive level assistants working closely board level executives.

Business size by employee is the most reliable method to estimate the population of EAs, because the higher the number of employees the more pressured senior executives become to better optimise their time and take on a trusted assistant to support them and delegate certain tasks to. Using this method of estimation there is a minimum total population of 60,000 (possibly up to 100,000 c-suite) executive level assistants in Australia.

Australia based EAs were contacted for this survey and 115 responded. Non-EA and incomplete responses were discounted, as well as EAs working within the meetings industry, leaving insights from 102 EAs.

Previous years surveys were conducted in the months of September and October. This survey took place over three weeks in December and January.



## Summary

### 2019

The surveys prior to COVID illustrated certain trends, such as shorter lead times and increasing interest in regional Australia to host events, together with simple but effective opportunities for suppliers to capture and keep business, such as refining their quotation and contract processes and delivering them in good time.

The 2019 survey was the last one before COVID and the findings indicated a softened but stable volume of corporate event activity. The EAs who responded expected to be managing even more events in 2020 than they had done in 2019.

Technology innovations and tighter market conditions had resulted in EAs being tasked with organising more larger events than previous years. And fewer EAs had organised overseas events, which was possibly due to market conditions.

The use of convention bureaux by EAs had substantially increased, likely as a result of consistent marketing to the corporate sector in previous years where prior to that little activity had occurred.

### 2026

COVID restrictions ended in Australia in September 2022, and a significantly understaffed event sector had to manage an immediate surge in event activity. Clients wanted to run their events that they had paid deposits for but had been postponed during the restrictions. Furthermore, corporate businesses urgently needed to reconnect with clients, workforces and other stakeholders. Business events provided the ideal vehicle for them.

The period since then has been one of adjustment for both suppliers and clients. Suppliers – having to initially fulfil a glut of event activity, whilst rebuilding their teams and attracting critically needed talent. Organisers – having to work with under resourced suppliers to deliver their events, whilst managing the expectations of their internal stakeholders used to pre-COVID levels of service, which most suppliers were only able to deliver several months later.

Three years later, the 2026 survey findings are consistent with a solid path for business event activity, rather than a stellar bounce back.

The findings also indicate that organisers are working to even shorter deadlines, and are more risk averse than they were prior to COVID.

Whilst the proportion of organisations running more than 50 events last year is down from 41% in 2019 to 36% in 2025, it's the same figure as reported in the 2018 Survey. Furthermore, the budgets the EAs said they had to work with in 2025 are almost identical to the figures in the

2019 survey.

The proportion of EAs who state they have organised an overseas event in the past two years compared to 2019 has unsurprisingly dropped from 24% to 19%.

A significant change is the percentage of EAs using convention bureaux. In the 2018 the figure was six percent and in 2019 the percentage had more than doubled to 13%. This 2026 survey indicates that 25% of EAs now use convention bureau services. Extensive promotional activity to corporate event organisers, not to mention investment in more user-friendly websites, has paid off. Convention bureaux services are free, so there is no reason why an increase in their use should not continue.

Anecdotal comments from some respondents suggest that virtual activity is now seen as more practical for executive and team meetings, than face to face. On the other hand, a significant number of comments from the EAs show an articulate and sophisticated understanding of the value of face-to-face events for their organisations. This indicates that, not just the use, but also the limitations of virtual events is firmly understood as far as c-suite executives are concerned – virtual events have found their place, for the moment at least.

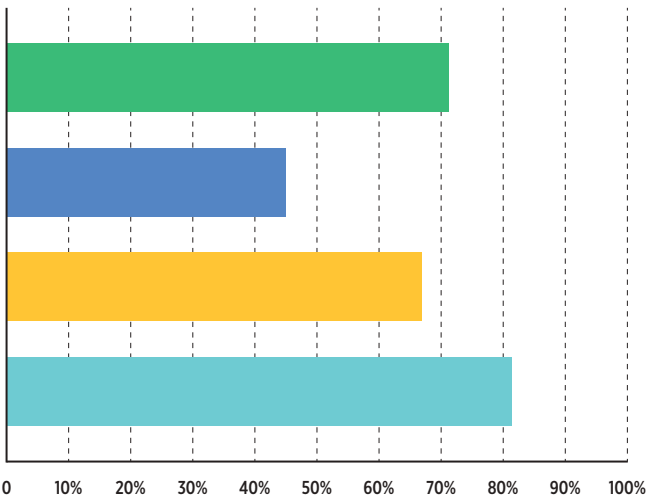
Geopolitical events over the past three years may have added to the inevitable turbulence involved in a post COVID recovery. However, the findings of this survey indicate that corporate event activity, whilst not spectacular, is nevertheless recovering.

# 1/ Organisations continue to invest in employee engagement

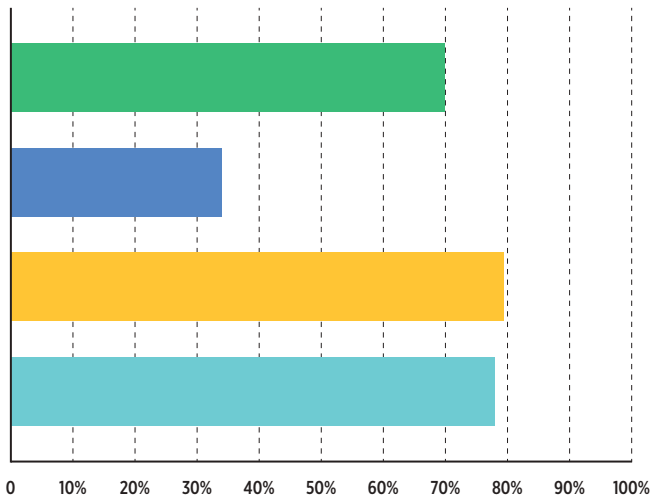
In 2019 the percentage of EAs running employee engagement events increased by 10% to 81%. The 2026 findings show no increase, despite concerted and increased efforts by organisations to get people back to the office and rebuild their teams. It's possible that eight out of 10 companies represent a ceiling of the proportion of businesses prepared to invest in their employees. Alternatively, the remaining 20% may have dedicated departments to handle this type of activity? Regardless, 80% is a high proportion of businesses and one that has been maintained.

## What are the purposes of the events you organise? (multiple choice)

### 2019 results



### 2026 results



Key:

- **Governance & administration** (such as executive meetings, retreats etc)
- **Marketing & sales** (such as product launches, client hospitality etc)
- **Education & training** (such as internal and external stakeholder training etc)
- **Staff incentives & employee engagement** (such as Christmas parties, team-building etc)

## 2/ The proportions of corporates holding multiple events is unchanged from 2019, but EAs are involved in more events for their organisations

Although the two graphs initially look different, the percentage of EAs who do not know how many events their organisation undertake annually has increased from 1.5% to 5.5% from 2019, and a corresponding reduction can be seen in the 50+ events bar. These ‘don’t knows’ are likely to be new staff who have been recruited post-COVID. The proportion of EAs involved in organising 20 plus events has significantly increased from 10.5% to 19.5%.

**How many events did you organise last year?**

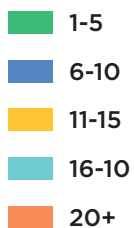
**2019 results**



**2026 results**

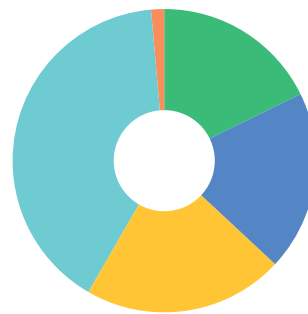


Key:

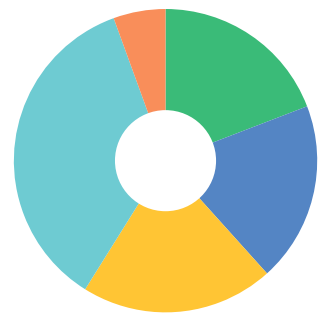


**How many meetings and events (including the ones you organise) does your organisation undertake each year?**

**2019 results**



**2026 results**



Key:



---

### 3/ Large budgets for EAs have increased and fewer EAs have low budgets

The percentage of EAs with budgets in excess of \$250,000 has remained the same at 20%. However, the percentage of EAs with budgets in excess of \$500,000 has more than doubled, from 7% in 2019 to 15%.

---

#### What is your annual budget for meetings, incentives and events?

2019 results



Key:

- 0 to \$10,000
- \$10,000 to \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$100,000
- \$100,000 to \$250,000
- \$250,000 to \$500,000
- \$500,000+

2026 results



Key:

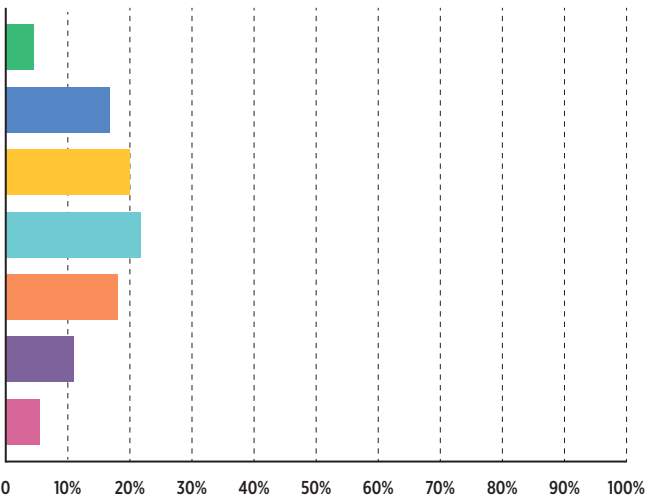
- 0 to \$10,000
- \$10,000 to \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$100,000
- \$100,000 to \$250,000
- \$250,000 to \$500,000
- \$500,000+

## 4/ EAs continue to organise larger events

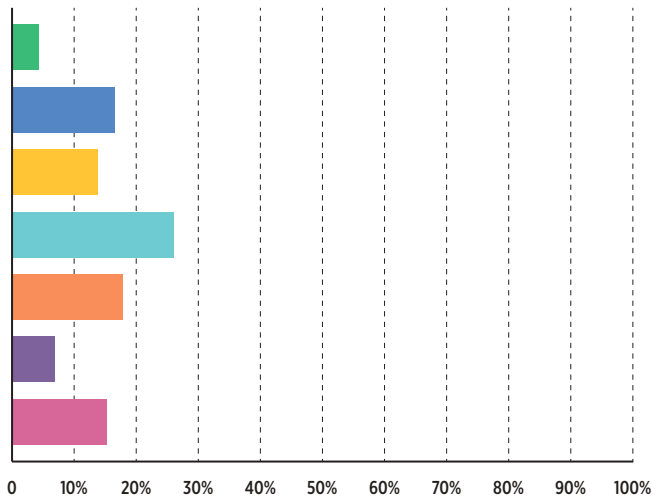
In the 2018 survey 15% of respondents stated that they organised events for over 300. By 2019 this increased to 17%. This figure has increased in the 2026 survey and now over one in five EAs (22%) organise events in excess of 300pax. Furthermore, the proportion of EAs organising events for over 500 has increased from 5.5% in 2019 to 15%.

### What was the largest event you organised last year? (number of people)

2019 results



2026 results



Key:

- 10-20
- 21-50
- 51-100
- 101-200
- 201-300
- 301-500
- 500+

---

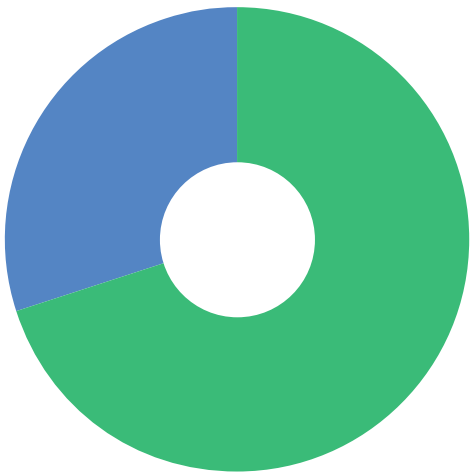
## 5/ **Event management is now an established job responsibility for executive assistants**

Nearly all executive assistants specify suppliers and organise events, and 70% state that 'event management' is in their job description. However, only 22% have received any formal event management training.

---

### **Is event management part of your job description?**

#### **2026 results**



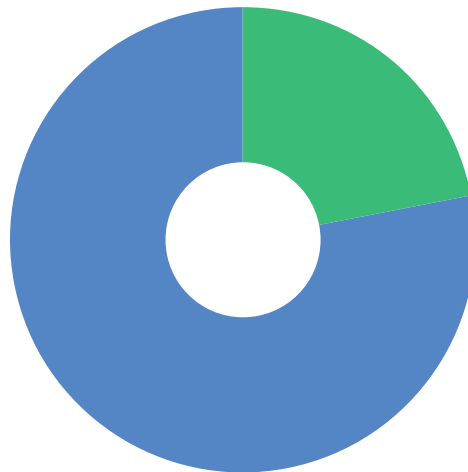
Key:



---

### **Have you ever received event management training?**

#### **2026 results**



Key:



## 6/ Big wins for Brisbane and Adelaide

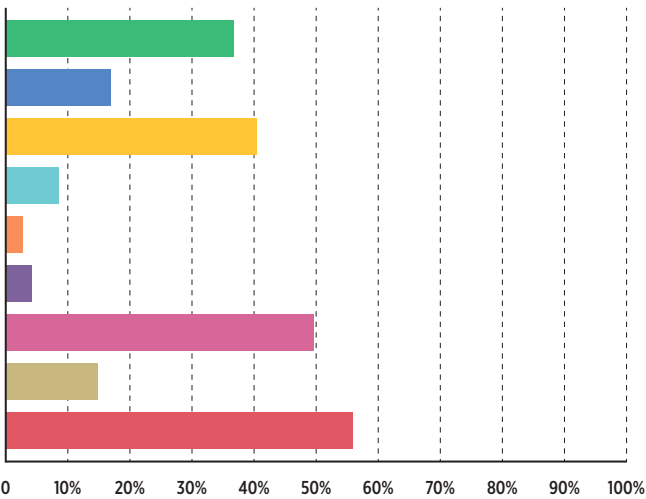
In the 2019 Survey 56% of the EAs stated they had organised an event in Sydney. This percentage dropped to 47% for the 2026 survey.

In 2019 regional Australia was gaining traction as a desired destination for events, however only 28% stated that they had run an event in regional Australia for the 2026 survey – down from 37%. Furthermore, interest in holding an event in regional Australia has decreased, from 73% in 2019 to 64%. This could be a hangover from the days of focussing exclusively on risk avoidance over the COVID period. Clearly there is more work to be done to encourage organisations to want to run their events in regional locations again.

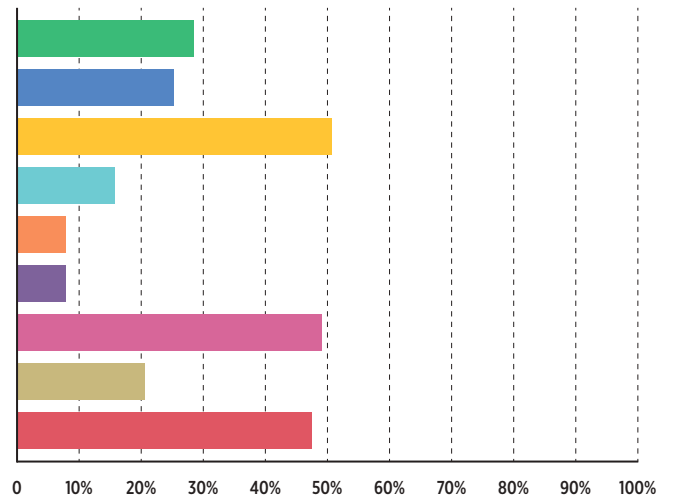
Large infrastructure projects in Adelaide and Brisbane have contributed to the increase in events taking place in both cities. Brisbane will be the host city for the 2032 Olympics, which has helped foster a vibrant environment for events.

### Where in Australia have you organised meetings and events over the past two years?

2019 results



2026 results



Key:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <span style="color: green;">■</span> Regional Australia      | <span style="color: cyan;">■</span> Canberra | <span style="color: magenta;">■</span> Melbourne |
| <span style="color: blue;">■</span> Adelaide                 | <span style="color: orange;">■</span> Darwin | <span style="color: olive;">■</span> Perth       |
| <span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Brisbane and Goldcoast | <span style="color: purple;">■</span> Hobart | <span style="color: red;">■</span> Sydney        |

---

## 7/ Lead time continues to shorten

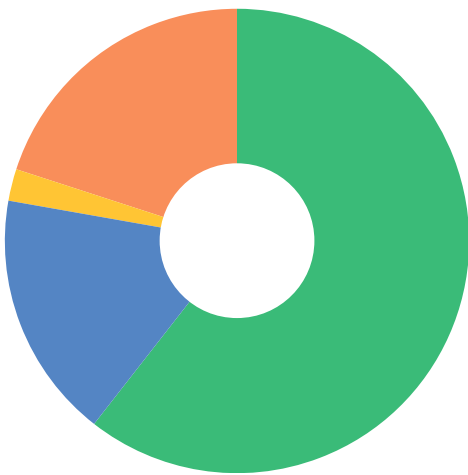
In the 2019 survey, less EAs were being given shorter lead times for events for under 100 than the year prior. Sixty percent stated they had been given lead times of less than three months. The percentage has increased to 66% in the 2026 survey. This reinforces concerns of many suppliers who are having to quote and deliver events at very short notice.

For events over 100 the trend is similar. Just 19% of the 2019 respondents were given three months or less put their events together. The 2026 survey shows that the figure has increased to a significant 27%.

---

### What is the typical lead time you are given to source suppliers and venue?

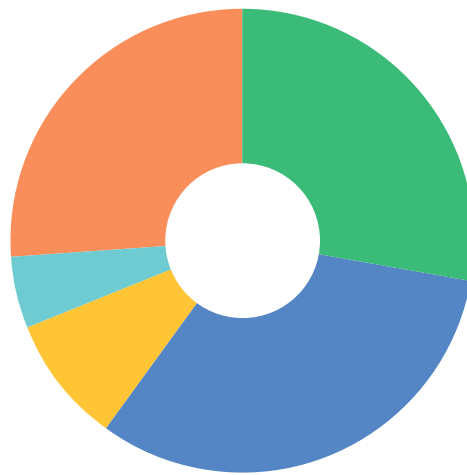
#### Under 100



Key:

- Less than three months
- Six months
- 12 months
- It depends on the event

#### Over 100



Key:

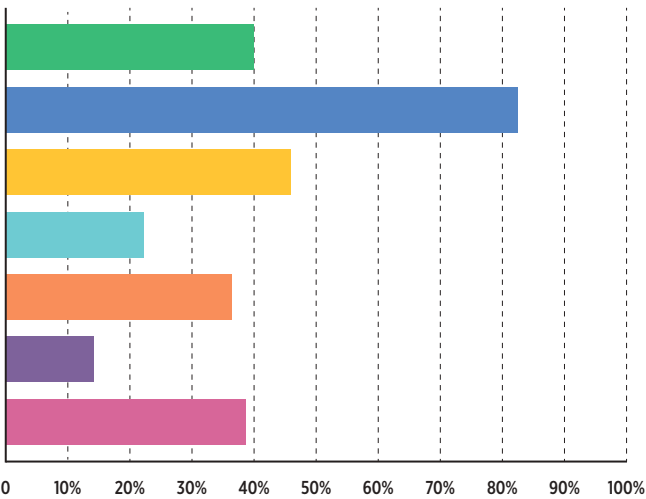
- Less than three months
- Six months
- 12 months
- More than 12 months
- It depends on the event

## 8/ Traditional venues maintain their EA client base

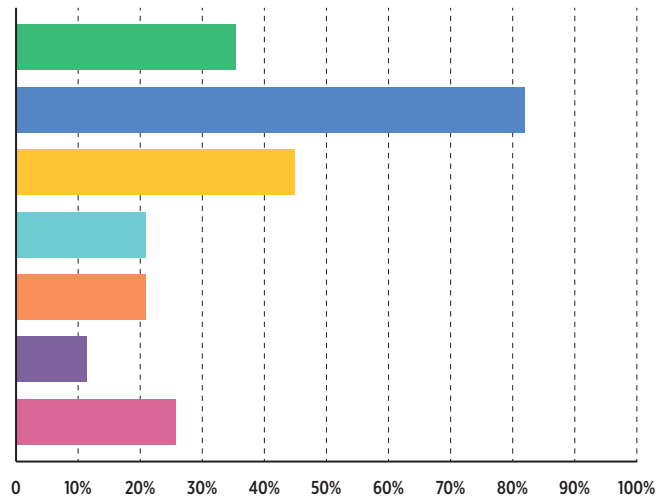
Responses indicate that traditional venues for corporate events, such as hotels, purpose built venues and retreats, have maintained or gained clients compared to resorts, universities, unique venues, and – to a lesser extent – convention centres.

### What types of venues have you used in the past two years?

2019 results



2026 results



Key:

- Convention centre
- Hotel
- Purpose built event venue
- Retreat
- Resort
- University
- Unique venue (such as a gallery or museum)

---

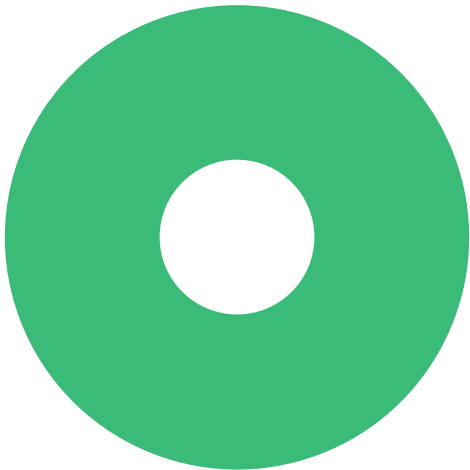
## 9/ The executive assistant's preference of supplier is always agreed to

All of the respondents to the 2018 and 2019 surveys stated that in the cases where they presented a number of supplier quotes to their executive, the EAs preferred choice was agreed to. In the 2026 survey 95% said the same.

---

Is your recommended or preferred choice of supplier usually agreed to?

2019 results

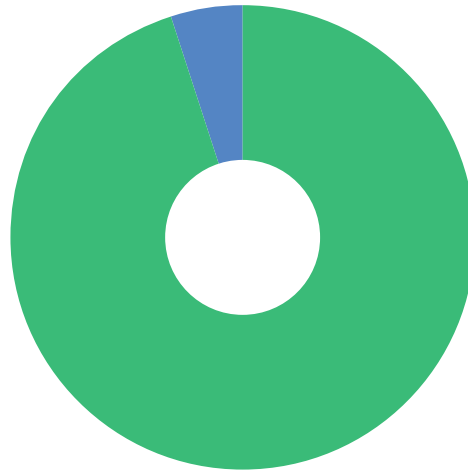


Key:

Yes

No

2026 results



Key:

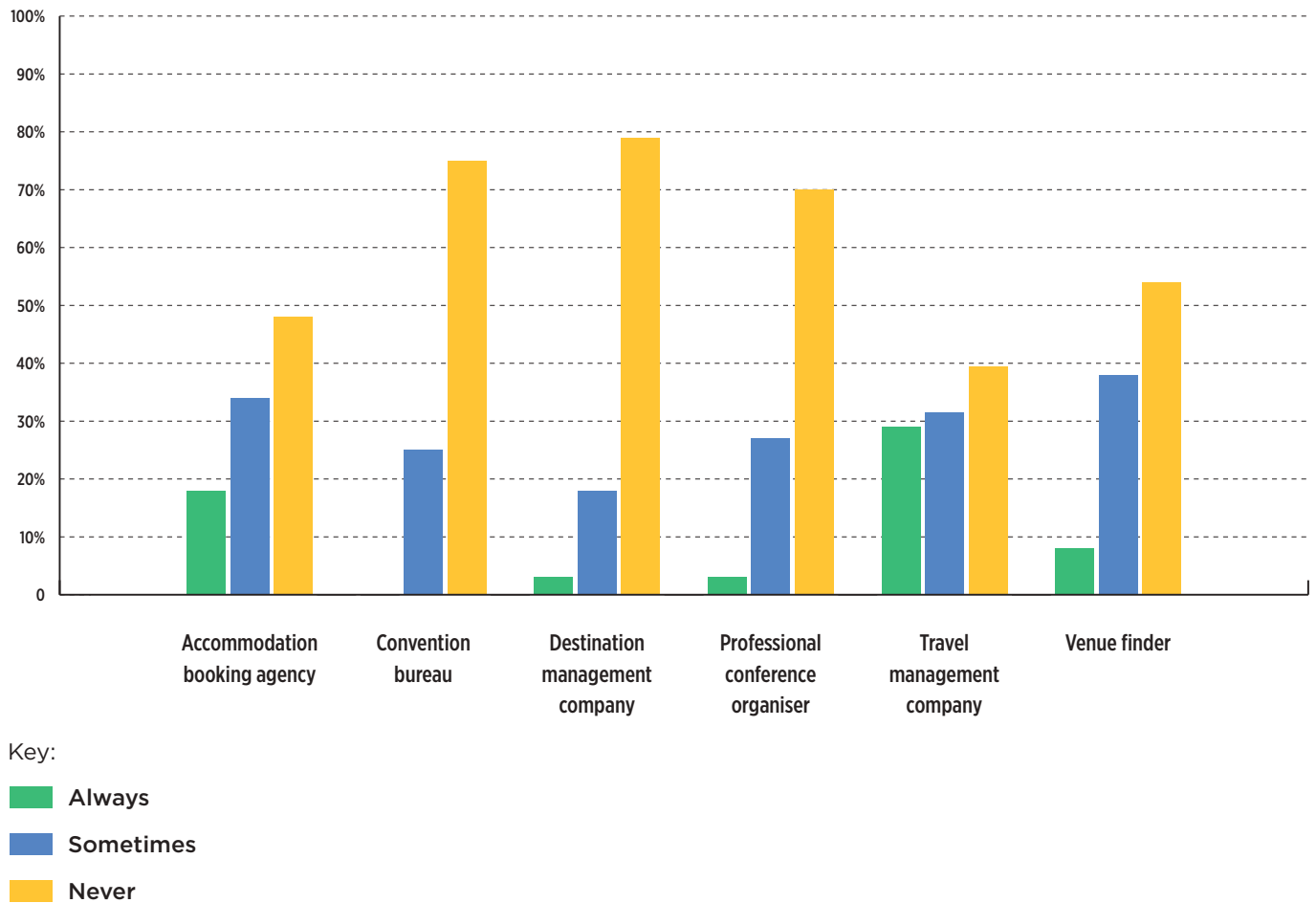
Yes

No

## 10/ EAs are increasingly using support agencies

Apart from venue finders, EAs have increased their use of support agencies since 2019. Notable increases are convention bureaux up from 13 to 25% and destination management companies up from 11% to 17% since 2019.

### Do you use any of the following external support agencies?



---

## 11/ Cautious but positive optimism for 2026

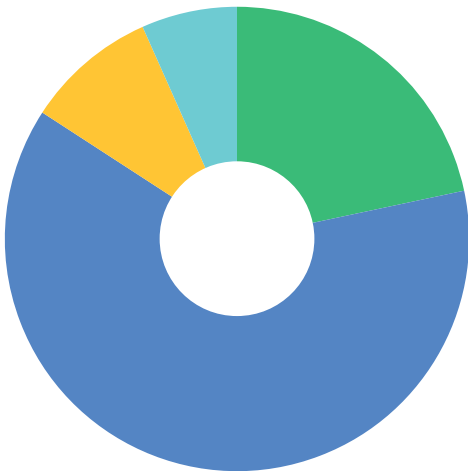
Unsurprisingly, only 24% of the EAs state that their organisations conducted more events in 2025 than it did before COVID. In the 2019 survey EAs were asked to compare the previous year to the five years prior and 40% stated an increase in events.

However, predictions for future event activity are almost identical to those made by EAs in 2019. Eighty five percent of the EAs responding to the 2026 survey believe their organisations will conduct the same level of event activity or more this year, compared to 2025. And 20% of the respondents (compared to 22% in 2019) believe their organisations will be running more events this year.

---

### Can you give an indication of your future meetings activity compared to last year?

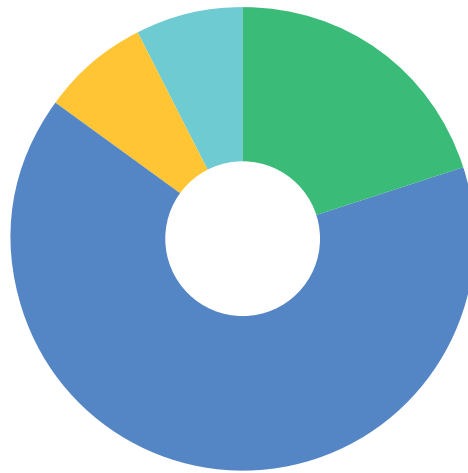
2019 results



Key:

- More
- The same
- Less
- Don't know

2026 results



Key:

- More
- The same
- Less
- Don't know

## What our respondents said...

### Recommendations for suppliers

- “Be open to thinking outside the box a bit more on offerings for corporates.”
- “Be honest and up front about all costs at the start.”
- “Be upfront with additional fees and what can go wrong with unique requests.”
- “Ensure communication is consistent and forthcoming, to make co-ordination easier between the two parties.”
- “Apply all discounts at the start of the quoting process as it makes a difference, especially when comparing venues based purely on cost, not quality or value.”
- “Make quotes available online/automatically for a quick comparison. Having to make phone calls feels old fashioned.”
- “More variety in the meal choices, as I receive many more dietary restrictions than I used to.”
- “Stick to the same person from quoting through to event completion to avoid items getting lost in translation.”

### Objectives for holding events that can't be achieved through other means

- “Bringing people together and gaining feedback, advice, ideas immediately. People can't avoid this when on site and present.”
- “Collaboration in person, nothing is more powerful!”
- “Community involvement, special recognition events; staff culture events”
- “Connection and the opportunity to debate and discuss”
- “Face to face connection, easier to have discussions etc. Bringing together national teams annually. Staff incentives and fun.”

### Reasons executive assistants use convention bureaux

- “Information on new destinations.”
- “To get expert advice.”
- “Area information for those attending my events.”
- “Knowledge of venues and ‘insider’ contacts.”
- “Price comparison.”
- “To get an idea of their recommended hotels etc (on the understanding that they are biased and likely to recommend their members).”

### Reasons for the change in volume of events over the past six years

- “More new clients using our services.”
- “A budget increase.”
- “Budget cuts.”
- “The business is growing.”
- “Changes in the executive team.”
- “Changes within company.”
- “COVID has changed the landscape for sure, but I feel we are heading back to what we were like pre-COVID.”
- “Creating more opportunities for staff connection and celebrations of days of significance.”
- “Cuts in funding.”
- “Increase in people and sectors.”
- “More virtual events that don't require event spaces or venues”



# 2026 **Executive PA corporate event organiser survey**

**EXECUTIVE PA**  
— MEDIA —

SPL Learning & Media  
PO Box 10137,  
Adelaide Street,  
Brisbane, 4000, QLD