

# Easter Show will go on but NYE in doubt

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## MAJOR EVENTS

The Sydney Royal Easter Show next year has been delayed for a week so that it coincides with school holidays and helps smooth out attendance to avoid massive peaks in crowds on weekends.

The latest efforts to ensure the show is held come as Premier Gladys Berejiklian delegated Deputy Premier John Barilaro, Treasurer Dominic Perrottet and Tourism Minister Stuart Ayres to work on spearheading a co-ordinated approach to potential cancellation of major events.

They will be in charge of creating a centralised portal for businesses and event organisers to access information on events they might want to host.

After it was forced to cancel the Royal Easter Show this year, the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW has decided to hold the 12-day event from April 1 to 12, a change from its original plans to run it from March 25 to April 5. The event usually draws up

to 900,000 people.

It means the show will better align with school holidays from April 5 to April 16. Those holidays will effectively start on Good Friday, which falls on April 2.

Despite doubts over the city's New Year's Eve fireworks, the agricultural society's event management arm, Sydney Showground, said it was still planning to hold the show and was canvassing options to better manage crowds and ensure social distancing. They include reducing the numbers of hours people can be at the show or lowering the number of exhibits.

Sydney Showground general manager Peter Thorpe said the show typically had "massive peaks" in crowds on weekends during school terms because it was a family event. "We have delayed it by a week so that it fits in with the school holidays ... to just give us some latitude to flatten the crowds out."

Other major events that stand to be affected by coronavirus restrictions over the next few months include the NRL grand final, Carols in the Domain, the New Year's Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground and the Sculpture by the Sea art event.

Sydney lord mayor Clover Moore has sought an urgent meet-

ing with the Premier to discuss the fate of New Year's Eve fireworks, which draw about one million people to the harbour foreshore.

Asked about the celebration yesterday, Ms Berejiklian said it would have to be approached differently, but she would

like to see the event go ahead in a COVID-safe way. Big crowds were out

of the question, and most people might be watching the fireworks from home, she said. Her comments come a day after Deputy Premier John Barilaro said that cancelling the celebrations was inevitable.

Sources with knowledge of a briefing on the fireworks event earlier this week said police, paramedics, transport agencies and council's staff were of the view that the festivities could not safely go ahead.

Councillor Craig Chung said a decision should be made this week as preparations, including manufacturing fireworks and creating traffic management plans, took months.

"My view is that Sydney's New Year's Eve fireworks belong not just to the City of Sydney but to Sydney and Australia as a whole. It needs to be a joint decision we all make together," he said.

Cr Chung said the decision would likely inform plans for Australia Day in late January and Lunar New Year events in February.

**Saving lives eclipses the NYE fireworks**

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