



## MEA REVAMPS AWARDS NIGHT

**MEETINGS** and Events Australia (MEA) has revamped its National Awards Program after a review by a working group.

The review team consisted of reps from all sectors of the events industry who scrutinised and restructured the program's categories, questions and format.

As a result, more than 16 of the categories have been rewritten, renamed or consolidated.

New accolades include an Innovation Award, a Social Legacy Award, an award for Unique Event Venue with Accommodation, Creative Design, Education and Training.

There will also be several awards to highlight Associations, Government and Regional Events.

Alana Hay, chair of the Awards Review Working Group, said the new program for MEA represented a more accurate



picture of the meetings and events industry and the people it represented.

"This is your opportunity to reflect on your work, showcase your expertise and celebrate outstanding success with the best of the best from all sectors of the industry," she said.

The old two-part application process has moved into a single submission, with the application

period extended into mid-Feb.

The qualifying period for the first year of the revamped program is from 01 Oct 2016 to 31 Dec 2017 to transition from the previous scheme.

The State finalists and winners will be announced in Apr, while the national awards will take place at a gala dinner at the MEA Conference in Adelaide.

**CLICK** to view the changes.

Today's issue of BEN

*Business Events News* today has two pages of news.

### EEAA keynote

**DENZIL** Rankine from AMR International has been selected as a keynote speaker at the The Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia's (EEAA) upcoming annual conference in Nov.

Rankine is the founder of one of the global event industry's leading strategy consultancy firms & he will speak about the expo model & whether it's fit for purpose.

The EEAA conference will take place in Melbourne on 27-30 Nov.

**CLICK HERE** to register.

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## MARITIME PAVILION

**AUSTRALIAN** National Maritime Museum (ANMM) in Sydney's Darling Harbour will debut a brand new waterfront pavilion from 10 Nov.

Named after Captain Cook's *HMB Endeavour*, the Endeavour Pavilion can seat up to 200 guests or 350 cocktail style.

ANMM assistant director of commercial and visitor services Matt Lee said the space would save event planners the hassle of coordinating the necessary extras by being able to select from four different themes.

"It also minimises the risks associated with using multiple



suppliers," he said.

The Endeavour Pavilion will offer all-inclusive event packages, with everything from venue hire to catering and furniture looked after on site.

The venue can cater for cocktail parties, product launches, awards and dinners.



**WHEN** you think of dream destinations to host your next annual meeting, Hartford, Connecticut, in the United States is probably not at the top of your list.

A satirical and funny new video from the Connecticut Convention Centre attempts to portray the city as a great place to host your next business event.

The "More than Meetings" video features a guy taking a stab at boring conferences, while showing everything that makes Hartford a great place to hold an event.

Since it was released at the start of Oct, the unusual convention centre video has gone "viral" on social media.

**CLICK** to watch the video.

## AIME to allow day buyers

**FOR** the first time its history, the 2018 Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Expo (AIME) will open the doors to allow domestic day buyers to be a part of the official buyer program.

The change will allow domestic buyers to participate in AIME on their day of choice, with no mandatory events as part of their schedule.

AIME said it would provide exhibitors with further opportunities to gain more leads and business.

AIME project mgr Angela Sciacca said it would provide the "ultimate flexibility, with no mandatory sessions" for buyers to make the most of their time at the event.



Peter Gray, an independent Motivation Consultant, presents a regular *Business Events News* feature on current issues in the Conference and Incentive industries.

## Relationship? What relationship?

**I REGULARLY** travel to meetings in Melbourne's CBD by tram. From my office it's quick and convenient and doesn't involve car parking charges for which a sizeable mortgage is required. But these days, instead of the chatter of fellow commuters or the excitement of kids who may be going to one of Melbourne's many events, there is usually silence, punctuated only by the almost silent tapping of telephone or tablet keypads.

Nobody talks to anyone these days! We're too busy reading - or sending emails, perusing the news headlines on the web or using an app to check on stock prices, or some equally important information that we have to find out about instantly rather than waiting until we get to wherever we're going.

How the world has changed.

As a marketing student I was taught that the most effective form of promotion was 'word-of-mouth' but as we don't speak to each other any more, how do we do that? Yes, we can read recommendations on a company website, but how do we know that they're bona fide? A recommendation could have been written by anyone and who is to say that it's trustworthy? I'm not aware of any corporate websites displaying bad testimonials!

Apps are no better. Hotel apps abound and they all claim to contain recommendations from people who have used a particular hotel or venue and are delighted to tell the world how good - or bad - the experience was. And, of course,

the inevitable has happened. TripAdvisor, a website and app which has established itself as the supposed 'authority' on hotels, is now inadvertently providing hotel patrons with a new form of leverage: "upgrade my room or I'll give you a bad review on TripAdvisor!" Although I haven't heard about it happening in Australia it certainly is in Europe and Asia. My advice to hotel management would be to politely but firmly escort such people from the premises but whether this is happening I don't know.

Personal recommendations are effective because they're based on trust; it's unlikely anyone would accept a commendation from someone they don't know.

Trust is the basis for relationship management, an essential element of many incentive programs. It's a strategy in which a continuous level of engagement is maintained between the sponsor and the participants. There are, of course, software programs which can assist in managing incentive programs; apps which can keep the participants aware of their targets, achievements and relative positions in the scheme of things. But the program itself is something that is very personal to the participants involved and has to be right from the outset and, again, is based upon trust. In this case the participants trust the sponsor that if they achieve their targets in the manner prescribed, they will be adequately rewarded.

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