



## MEA HONOURS AWARD WINNERS

**AN ONLINE** audience of more than 500 attendees from across the country last Fri took part in the first ever virtual Meetings & Events Australia (MEA) annual awards ceremony.

MEALIVE 2019 was hosted at the International Convention Centre Sydney Studios, in a major technical production which saw winners accepting their accolades and entertainment presented online.

“This was a whole new experience,” said MEA CEO Robyn Johnson (**pictured**), adding that taking the awards online had been a complex undertaking that required an enormous amount of technical coordination.

“Our goal was to make it the benchmark in virtual awards events,” she said.

“We were absolutely delighted with the attendance and the way the industry grasped the opportunity to celebrate with their colleagues virtually. For the first time state and national awards were named together, honouring excellence in various types of events, venues, products & services,



marketing and individual event professionals.

Host venue ICC Sydney took out the “Event Venue - Capacity more than 1,500” category, while other venue winners included Hotel Grand Chancellor Hobart, National Wine Centre of Australia and Howard Smith Wharves.

Forum Group Events & Marketing took out the Event Agency of the Year category, while the Event Manager of the Year was Ellen Sexton from Solterbeck Events.

The Event Technology award was won by Cvent, while Milestone Creative Australia won the Event Marketing category and Novatech Creative Event Technology took out the

Audio Visual Services Award as well as the Innovation Award.

The Regional Destination Marketing Organisation award was won by Destination North Coast, and Kate Nichols from Howard Smith Wharves took home the the MEA Future Leader category.

La Trobe University was named winner of the Event Management Team - Corporate, while the Government section of the Event Management division was taken out by the Programs and Events Team from the Queensland Department of Education.

Gary Bender and Donna Kessler’s Get Global was named Exhibition of the Year, while the Association Event of the Year was the GOSCI 14th Biennial Conference 2019.

Amway China 2019 Leadership Seminar was the Incentive of the Year, and the Special Event of the Year was the Virtuoso 2019 Symposium Dinner.

Johnson congratulated all the winners and finalists, saying “it was an amazing night and a bright moment for the events industry”.

## ICC helipad?

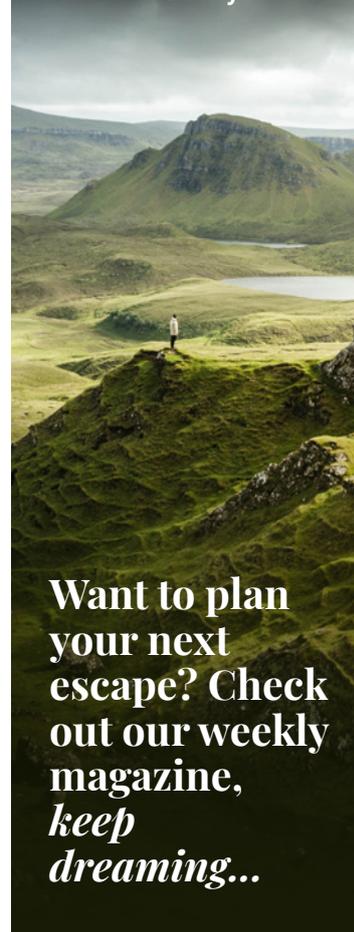
**JERRY** Schwartz, the owner of Sofitel Sydney Darling Harbour, has proposed the construction of a helipad atop the hotel which is adjacent to ICC Sydney.

The plan would “help revive Sydney’s economy and elevate the city’s business and tourism profile,” Schwartz said, adding that all of the world’s great cities have CBD helipads including Paris, London, New York and “even Melbourne”.

## Today’s issue of BEN

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

## Travel & Cruise Weekly



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## MULTIPLE NZ GROUPS

**AUTHORITIES** in New Zealand have confirmed that the latest stage of COVID-19 restrictions being eased permits multiple groups of 100 people to attend conference events.

NZ’s current Alert Level 2 came into effect on Sat, with general guidelines allowing an overall cap of 100 not including staff, and multiple groups of 100 allowed provided they are in separate “defined spaces”.

Full record-keeping is required for all participants including employees, clients

and delegates for contact tracing purposes, and one metre physical distancing is required where practicable.

Conventions & Incentives New Zealand CEO Lisa Hopkins welcomed the changes, saying the new guidelines gave the industry more confidence to plan.

“We can now go ahead and confirm bookings for groups of 500, for example, by using five different divisions within the same venue, ensuring groups can move in and out of venues in a safe way.”

## HK recovery

**THE** Hong Kong Tourism Board has flagged a multi-pronged MICE sector recovery plan, with heightened health and safety measures, technology, flexible hotel & venue policies and a new funding scheme for small meetings.

An all-new MICE branding campaign will showcase the city’s infrastructure, deals and unique experiences, with planning currently under way to “seize the first-mover advantage” once markets improve.



**EVENTS** across the globe have had to adapt or die during the COVID-19 pandemic, and one of Australia's favourites was quite literally not about to be left in the dust.

The "Kentucky Derby of ungulates", the ever-popular Uluru Camel Cup in Yulara, NT, was held on Sat, with only digital spectators for the first time in the event's almost decade-long history.

The Cup was won by German Lara Billar, who has been a resident of the Northern Territory for a number of years.

The festivities also included whip-cracking and camel pat-tossing competitions.

You truly can't keep a good event down!

## GCCEC bid win

The Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC) has been chosen to host the 2022 International Society for Eye Research meeting.

The GCCEC International team worked with Tourism and Events Queensland, Destination Gold Coast and Tourism Australia to secure the meeting which is scheduled to take place in Sep 2022 with an estimated 1,200 delegates, including 500 international visitors.

## #GED tomorrow

**THE** Exhibition and Event Association (EEAA) will host a Global Exhibitions Day (GED) webinar tomorrow at 3.30pm AEST, with more than 600 participants already registered.

A range of inspirational guest speakers have been lined up including Business Events Council of Australia Chair Vanessa Findlay, Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre Chief Operating Officer Leighton Wood, and International Convention Centre Sydney CEO Geoff Donaghy.

The webinar will be live streamed from the Studio at ICC Sydney which is the event's major partner.

For more details and to register see [eeaa.com.au](http://eeaa.com.au).

## Conference hunger

**ABOUT** 230 professional association conferences in Australia have been postponed or cancelled due to coronavirus, but a large proportion have been rescheduled for either late this year or early in 2021.

Conference Monitor says about 40% are looking for slots at venues in the first half of next year in what is shaping up to be a potentially very busy time.

Most organisers have indicated they plan to return to their originally chosen venue, and while 160 associations have completely cancelled for 2020 they expect to resume normal schedules next year.

Having trouble unpacking the government stimulus packages and how they can help your business? Read the May issue of *travelBulletin*.

**CLICK to read**

**travelBulletin**



## EVENTSAIR GOES ONAIR

**THE** EventsAIR team has rolled out a virtual and hybrid extension of the company's event management platform, with the new OnAIR add-on providing an online framework which empowers PCOs to curate complex content and deliver virtual and hybrid events easily.

Data held by the EventsAIR platform including attendee, exhibitor, sponsor and speaker information is used to create an online timeline, presenting a virtual attendee user interface.

CEO Trevor Gardiner said the OnAIR solution covers the short-term need for purely virtual events, but had also been designed to transition to hybrid and enhance live events as the industry gets back to

business in the coming months.

A range of modules allows OnAIR to be customised based on attendee requirements, such as on-demand or pre-recorded online sessions, interactive webinars or live broadcasts, video chat, interactive workshops and even online networking functions.

An exhibitor marketplace where participants are allocated virtual booths is also available, with the ability to pre-schedule one-on-one video chats.

The platform is supported by real-time analytics, and has already been tested by more than 8,000 attendees over the last ten weeks while it's been under development.

See [eventsair.com/onair](http://eventsair.com/onair).

## Catch up on the news of the week



Travel Daily

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