

19 May 2020

For Immediate Release

Behind the scenes of Australia's preeminent awards event

The Australian event industry's first, most loved and respected awards evening will be broadcast live from ICC Sydney Studios in just 10 days' time, on Friday 29 May 2020.

The broadcast marks a special occasion, being the first official event for the Australian event industry since the Federal Government's announcement about restrictions on gatherings.

Chairperson of the Business Events Council of Australia (BECA), Vanessa Findlay commented, *"I applaud MEA for leading the way with this innovative approach in presenting the MEA Awards in a virtual format. During a time of huge upheaval in the events industry the awards will be a welcome respite and will put the spotlight on something positive for the industry to celebrate."*

In preparation for the industry's gala evening, Meetings & Events Australia and major sponsor of the 2019 NSW and National Awards, ICC Sydney, joined for a technical walk-through of the event and captured some behind the scenes content of the first test.

Robyn Johnson, CEO, Meetings & Events Australia, commented *"This will be the first time the MEA Awards has gone virtual, and it will also be the first time that the State and National Awards will be presented together. The event will bring our industry together to recognise and celebrate our extraordinary talent and creativity at a time when we need to stay connected. It has been a huge undertaking to bring all of the elements together in an online format in a short period of time, however it will be a brilliant and memorable night of nights"*.

The reimagined format will set a benchmark for live online events, with the full event production being broadcast live from ICC Sydney Studios, including a virtual red carpet, glamorous stage set and in-studio MC with guests. ICC Sydney will be mustering finalists in virtual rooms, so that all viewers can see responses and winners' speeches live and interstitial messages from event professionals from around the country will be presented as part of the fast-paced, 2 hour program.

Geoff Donaghy, CEO of ICC Sydney, says, *"Delivering an awards ceremony as a virtual event is a first for both ICC Sydney and our industry. It not only poses huge technical challenges but has also put our experienced team's creativity to the test. I am confident that ICC Sydney will rise to the challenge. Using our world class in-house facilities and skilled team, the event will be seamlessly delivered and create the same special experience attendees have come to expect from the MEA Awards. In doing so, we are excited to be setting an industry benchmark"*.

In advance of the event, MEA is hosting a best dressed competition; encouraging guests to dress up, take a selfie at home and post it to the MEA Facebook event page using the hashtag #MEABestDressed. The best dressed will feature on the virtual red carpet half an hour prior to the broadcast, from 5.30pm AEST. There will be prizes for most debonair, most sparkly and most outrageous outfit, to be announced on the night by the MC. Live entertainment will follow the broadcast between 8:00pm - 8:30pm AEST.

Event timing (AEST)

5:30pm - 6:00pm	Virtual red carpet featuring best dressed
6:00pm - 8:00pm	MEALIVE 2019 AWARDS - live broadcast
8:00pm - 8:30pm	Entertainment - live broadcast

MEA would especially like to thank its major sponsors [ICC Sydney](#), [Destination NSW](#) and [AON](#) as well as Awards Category sponsors [Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre](#) and [StageKings](#).

Tickets are \$45 for members and \$55 for non-members, per person (inc GST) including state and national award winners, representing great value.

Tickets available through the MEA website:

<https://www.meetingevents.com.au/events/mealive-2019-awards>.

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Attachment for publishers

Behind the scenes insights, filmed by the ICC Sydney production team at ICC Sydney Studios.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3DXBTfLgk&feature=youtu.be>

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ABOUT MEA

Meetings and Events Australia (MEA) was established in 1975 and is Australia's largest association representing the entire spectrum of sectors that live within the Australian events industry ecosystem. MEA represents companies and individuals that stage, produce, manage, support and supply the 400,000+ events across Australia each year. These events are conferences, meetings, exhibitions, product launches, seminars, special events and much more. MEA offers professional development and educational programs, accreditation and recognition and is the only event industry-based Registered Training Organisation (RTO). It provides a forum for members to discuss current issues to improve delivery of events.

ABOUT ICC SYDNEY

ICC Sydney is Australia's premier convention, exhibition and entertainment venue. The showcase international venue underpins Sydney's place as one of the world's most desirable meeting and major events destinations. ICC Sydney is the epicentre of a 20-hectare transformation of Darling Harbour by the NSW Government to highlight Sydney as the first

choice in Australia and the Asia Pacific region for the major events industry. A NSW Government project, ICC Sydney was delivered in partnership with Darling Harbour Live, comprising Lendlease, Hostplus, First State Super, Capella Capital, ASM Global and Spotless FM. Hassell + Populous were joint venture design consultants for ICC Sydney.

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