

22 November 2023

MEA ANNOUNCES NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICE BEARERS

At its 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 21 November, Meetings & Events Australia (MEA) announced that Oliver Sheer, Benjamin Ferry and Craig Watson have been elected by its membership to fill the 3 Directors positions created by retirement.

All 3 new Directors represent an industry sub-segment that is not otherwise represented on the MEA Board. Oliver Sheer is Managing Director of Be Challenged. Benjamin Ferry is Director of Commercial, Premium & Essentials, Australasia & Pacific at IHG Hotels & Resorts, and Craig Watson is General Manager of Sydney Prop Specialists.

They join Jess Glass (University of Queensland), Megan Peters (Lateral Event Management), Vanessa Green (Cliftons Events Solutions), Emma McDowell (Saxton Speakers Bureau), Thomas Staunton (SoldOut Events) and Alicia Thomas (Royal International Convention Centre) as existing Directors to constitute the full Board to govern the organisation through until the 2024 AGM.

The diversity of Directors' employers reinforces how MEA is an industry association and peak body for, and concerned with matters affecting, the full breadth of the Australian events industry; be those of event organisers, venues where events are held, or suppliers to event organisers and venues.

Messrs Sheer, Ferry and Watson replace retiring Directors Michael Firman, Paul Davison and Mike Schrafft.

The new Board has elected its officer bearers for up until the 2024 AGM. Vanessa Green was elected unopposed as Chair. Megan Peters was unchallenged to remain Deputy Chair, and Craig Watson has been entrusted with the role of Treasurer. MEA CEO Peter McDonald was reappointed by the Board as Company Secretary.

Incoming Chair Vanessa Green said, *"I am honoured and delighted to assume the role of Chair of MEA. It is with deep appreciation that I extend my gratitude to the outgoing Directors, Michael Firman, Paul Davison, and Mike Schrafft, for their invaluable contributions to MEA and the events industry."*

She added *"Michael Firman and Paul Davison have dedicated five and three years respectively to the MEA Board, serving with exemplary commitment during challenging times. Michael's leadership as Chair for the past two years and Paul's diligent work as Treasurer have not only steered the association but also provided a wealth of ideas, thought leadership, and hands-on support. I also sincerely thank Mike Schrafft, a seasoned industry veteran, for his valuable insights and dedicated service."*

On the election of the new Directors, Ms Green commented *“As we bid farewell to these exceptional individuals, I am excited to welcome our three new directors, Oliver Sheer, Benjamin Ferry, and Craig Watson, who join the MEA board for 2024. Their diverse backgrounds and expertise in various sectors of the events industry bring a fresh perspective to our Board. The events industry is continually evolving, and MEA is committed to playing a pivotal role in its growth. We focus on leadership, empowerment, and connection opportunities for our members. In the dynamic landscape of today, the MEA Board for 2024 is well-equipped to represent and support our unique and diverse membership.”*

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About MEA: Meetings & Events Australia is the collective voice of the events industry in Australia. With the largest network of event professionals in Australia, MEA has been supporting the careers of our members and advancing the interests of the event industry since 1975. MEA’s membership represents the largest community of businesses and individuals across the Australian events industry that employs more than 229,000 professionals who stage, produce, manage, support and supply the 480,000+ events held in Australia annually. These events include major events, festivals, conferences, meetings, exhibitions, launches, seminars, special events, community events and much more for associations, corporations, government and the general public.

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