

## **SAVE THE DATE. MEA ANNOUNCES A REGIONAL EVOLVE 2024**

Meetings & Events Australia (MEA) is delighted to advise that Evolve 2024 and the 2023 MEA National Awards Dinner will be held over 12 and 13 June 2024 at Rydges Resort Hunter Valley. It will be delivered under the theme of 'Lead with Impact. Empower to Grow. Connect for Success.'

The NSW Hunter Valley was to have been the destination of Evolve 2020, but the COVID pandemic necessitated the event's cancellation. MEA views holding Evolve 2024 there as recognition both of the suitability of the region as a major event location as well as the patience of the local event community there awaiting the national event industry's return.

So heavily impacted by the pandemic period, Evolve 2024 going to the Hunter Valley puts a symbolic full stop to it for the sector. In a sense, it marked the beginning for the industry. It will now mark the end.

Peter McDonald, CEO of MEA, took joy in saying, *"It will be fantastic to bring the national events community together in the surrounds of the picturesque NSW Hunter Valley for the first time since 2003. There are people in the industry workforce who weren't even born the last time we were there. It's a long overdue return"*. He added, *"We're very grateful to Rydges Resort Hunter Valley for being our Evolve 2024 venue partner, and to Destination NSW for being a strategic partner that enabled us to support a regional events community with our major annual event."*

Rydges Resort Hunter Valley Director of Sales & Marketing Anita McInnes said. *"Rydges Resort Hunter Valley is beyond excited to have been selected to host Evolve 2024, and to welcoming MEA and the national events industry in June. The ability to showcase the resort's purpose-built Conference & Events Centre, unique outdoor spaces, dedicated culinary and event teams, in our tranquil setting is a dream to us - especially to this calibre of professional industry leaders."* She went on to say, *"We have worked tirelessly to be known as one of the great domestic venues for Business Events, with the ability for a bit of fun along the way. It is with great pleasure we get to show attendees exactly why events in the Hunter Valley and with EVT are unmissable!"*

Meetings & Events Australia (MEA) Evolve Conference in the Hunter Valley is supported proudly by the NSW Government through its tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW. The NSW Government acknowledges the vital role of events and conferences in achieving its target of \$25 billion in total visitor expenditure for the regional NSW visitor economy by 2030.

Registration will open in early February, and information about program and other event partners will be progressively announced.

In the meantime, MEA encourages everyone to block out June 12 and 13 in their diaries to ensure they can join an industrywide and nationwide congregation of events peers in the Hunter Valley for a time of professional and social enrichment.

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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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