

8 April 2005

**SYDNEY SHOWGROUND WINS THE NATIONAL MEA CATERING AND
BANQUETING AWARD**

After a successful NSW MEA (Meetings & Events Australia) Awards campaign, Sydney Showground has triumphed over the best catering teams in the country for the first time to win the coveted National *Catering/Banqueting* Award at the MEA Awards Gala Dinner held at the Perth Convention Exhibition Centre on 5 April 2005.

The Sydney Showground presented the 2003 Rugby World Cup (13,000 pax), Hillsong (16,000 pax), General Practitioner Conference & Exhibition (3,350pax) as well as the Royal Agricultural Society's (RAS) 'Best of the Land' series of fine dining events as core submission case studies for the award.

One of the major points of difference for Sydney Showground catering is its connection to the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW. All revenue generated from business events held at the venue is channelled back to the RAS to finance the promotion of agriculture in NSW and Australia.

"We have developed catering services that truly reflect the best that Australia can provide by using our knowledge of quality award winning produce and developing menus to showcase this great product to our corporate guests," said General Manager Malu Barrios.

The *Catering/Banqueting* category criteria is judged on a number of key elements including Business Planning and Event activity, Financial Management, Resource Management and Sales and Marketing.

Each event case study showcased challenges outside the normal sphere of providing catering and banqueting services and highlighted the practicality and diversity of Sydney Showground's premier venues, primarily The Dome and Southee Complex.

The award hallmarks a continuing trend of success for the team since the Royal Agricultural Society moved to Sydney Olympic Park in 1998.

“Our team has previously won NSW Restaurant and Caterers Awards in 2002 and 2003 and this National MEA Catering/Banqueting award is a fantastic milestone to achieve in a very competitive catering environment. I believe that this success will provide the impetus for the whole team to strive to new levels of catering excellence,” added Ms Barrios.

One of the main challenges for the catering business is staffing and both Executive Chef Bryan Fawcett and Food and Beverage Manager Paula O’Connor work closely together to ensure that the highest presentation, quality and service standards are provided for all client events.

“We have five Sydney Showground Kitchen and five Front of House permanent staff so we have to employ a lot of casuals for these events. We try to appoint staff that have the necessary experience and are willing to work to our RAS standards.

One of the main professional traits we look for is a true passion for presenting great food as well as having the capability to meet exacting standards and tight service requirements for business events,” said Paula O’Connor Food & Beverage Manager.

The award is testimony to the hard work and dedication of the entire Sydney Showground team and positions the business as the best in the country when it comes to catering for the Australian business events industry.