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SYDNEY SHOWGROUND WINS THE NATIONAL MEA CATERING AND BANQUETING AWARD FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW

After a successful NSW MEA (Meetings & Events Australia) Awards campaign, Sydney Showground has triumphed over the best catering teams in the country for the second year in a row to win the coveted *Catering/Banqueting* Award at the National MEA Awards Gala Dinner held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre on April 29, 2006.

The Sydney Showground presented the Amway China Sales Incentive Dinners (13,000 pax), Dreamtime Buyers Gala Dinner (225 pax), Woolworths Gala Conference Dinner (3,000 pax) as well as the Sydney Expo Tech Safety Show and Conference (5,000 pax) 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; and this collective expertise in event delivery and product knowledge is reflected in its catering abilities. Additionally 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 Event Sales, Kim-Laura Brown.

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 MEA 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 consecutive 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 Brown.

One of the main challenges for the catering services business is staffing both Back of House and Front of house teams closely together to ensure that they deliver the highest presentation, quality and service standards 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 aim to appoint staff that has the necessary experience and are willing to work to our exacting RAS standards,” said Michael Collins General Manager Catering Services.

“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.” he added.

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