


**2022 MEETINGS INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA LTD
T/A MEETINGS & EVENTS AUSTRALIA (MEA)
BOARD DIRECTOR ELECTION**


Candidate profiles and policy statements


NOTE:


***The listed order of candidates replicates the ballot paper
and occurs following random selection***

Candidate	Vanessa Green	Membership	Cliftons
	Professional history		Policy statement
	<p>Vanessa Green is CEO of Cliftons, a global conference and event management solutions company. Vanessa has vast experience running venues and events across multiple countries and has worked in management, market development and growth strategy for event, hospitality, media and technology companies across Asia Pacific.</p> <p>Previous experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCG Design Group, Executive Director • Apples + Pears Entertainment Group, Chief Executive Officer • Crimson Cartwheel, Managing Director • AVIA (Asia Video Industry Association), VP Operations <p>Vanessa has post graduate qualifications in Business Communications and Organisational Psychology and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors with current and past board director experience. She also holds professional accreditations from Vinitaly International (Italy), WSET (London), AWRI (Australia) and is a member of the Commanderie de Bordeaux and Ordre des Coteaux de Champagne. When time permits, she judges at wine shows and provides wine education.</p>		<p>Now based in Sydney, Australia, after working in global roles based in Hong Kong, I believe I can bring diverse regional experience to MEA. I am passionate about innovation in the events industry and committed to supporting and developing our local industry and talent. With many years on both sides of the industry – as an event organizer, and a venue and event services provider – I understand the challenges and opportunities we face as we rebuild our post pandemic businesses and perhaps reassess career directions.</p> <p>I would love the opportunity to further support our rebounding events industry community in this exciting time of change, as we re-imagine what is possible. I am a big believer in lifelong learning and giving back to our communities through mentor programs and fund raising and support a number of not for profits and charities. If you would like to get to know me a little more, you can access Cliftons quarterly CEO letters and my contact details here.</p>


Candidate	Thomas Staunton	Membership	SoldOut Events
	Professional history		Policy statement
	<p>I am the CEO of one of Australia’s leading event management agencies, SoldOut Events, specialising in major international sports, entertainment, and business experiences. I have achieved over 15yrs’ of executive leadership experience across an annual calendar of 400+, public and private sector events nationally. However ‘event management’ is truly in my DNA, as I have been ‘on site’ for over 35yrs, growing up in the second-generation, independent, Australian family business – SoldOut Events, which I now lead.</p> <p>Called on as an executive advisor to corporations and governments, I deliver reputable strategic leadership on policy, governance and commercial project outcomes. I have demonstrated experience advising and overseeing the successful production of large-scale, multi-day, multi-venue, complex projects of every scale, up to and including, for 7x Olympic Games and 3x Commonwealth Games, and have an established network at the highest levels.</p> <p>I have led SoldOut to be recognised as a National and State Industry Award winner on ten occasions, and International Industry Awards winner on four occasions.</p>		<p>Highly skilled at collaborative communication, building trusted relationships, and creating measurable value, I am an effective and respected leader in the industry and the boardroom.</p> <p>With a commitment to excellence, transparency and accountability, I see our industry through a contemporary, inclusive, and diverse lens, and work to efficiently maximise strategic opportunities and empowering all members with the tools, resources and support required, to produce the world’s best events.</p> <p>I will ensure the ethics, dedication and professionalism required of the MEA Board Director are a constant, and have a demonstrated record of abiding by the highest ideals including the Olympic Charter and International Olympic Committee Code of Ethics.</p> <p>I have great enthusiasm for, and belief in, furthering MEA’s fantastic work through an effective strategic plan with clear actions that engage the whole member-base, so that it remains a world-leading association, creates valued member connections, promotes industry collaboration and ensures the association members grow in profile while further building a sustainable, well-governed organisation.</p>

Candidate	Benjamin Ferry	Membership	Crowne Plaza Sydney Coogee Beach
	<p style="text-align: center;">Professional history</p> <p>I am a driven, loyal, and personable hospitality executive who over the past 17 years has united high performing teams behind a common purpose to maximise sustainable long-term performance.</p> <p>I am passionate about colleague development, bringing a corporate vision to life and challenging the status quo and have been able to convert these passions into tangible performance improvements across roles in Australia, Asia, The Middle East, and The South Pacific.</p> <p>I have a very strong understanding of the Global Meetings and Events industry which has enabled me to continually drive success in my businesses and think as strategically as possible.</p> <p>LinkedIn Profile</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Policy statement</p> <p>There are three key areas where I can contribute to the MEA Board that in turn will positively impact the Australian Events Industry and the MEA membership community:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My passion in challenging the status quo has continuously been an asset over my career, more recently assisting the recovery of my hotels post pandemic. This would help in ensuring MEA continues to remain relevant and we are able to maximise our effectiveness. 2. High performing teams I have led over the years have been built on a foundation of education, development, and an elevated focus on leadership competencies. I would be able to build upon the MEA success in this space. 3. Lastly, I am strong believer in the benefit that diversity of opinion brings to an organisation. With a thought process incorporating the hotel point of view, I believe this would add to the MEA board a valuable perspective.

Candidate	Emma McDowell	Membership	Saxton Speakers Bureau
	<p style="text-align: center;">Professional history</p> <p>Over 25 Years in the Events & Tourism Industry. Working across a National & diverse events portfolio with a proven track record in developing teams and exceeding targets. An analytical team player with strong collaborative skills, the ability to use influence and negotiation skills in a high-pressure environment.</p> <p>A Self-motivated individual, dedicated to maintaining high standards, results orientated, a problem solver who works well under pressure, adapts to change. Passionate about the events industry, particularly through education and working towards its recovery after the pandemic.</p> <p>A deep commitment to the business events industry. That not only generates billions in impact each year but also enables Australia to showcase its intellectual, scientific and creative credentials to the rest of the world.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Policy statement</p> <p>I believe I have a matched skill set to join the board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education: I recognise the importance of national education due to my work at Saxton, working with various market segments, and providing ongoing educational opportunities. 2. Strategy: Currently, I form part of the leadership team and develop the future strategy (long and short term) for all the business. 3. Finance: Key to my role is Finance and budgeting for the organisation. I oversee the budgets of all the sales team and am ultimately responsible for the sales targets being met. <p>As well as the above, I would bring to the MEA Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic thinking to position MEA for short and long-term success • Comprehensive reporting promptly • Stakeholder Management • A conscientious willingness to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of the directorship • Proven leadership skills and business acumen • A history of commitment to MEA

Candidate	Alicia Thomas	Membership	Royal international Convention Centre
	Professional history		Policy statement
	<p>A passionate Hospitality and Sales professional, Alicia has been involved in the hospitality and events industry for over 25 years. Wanting to understand the industry in its entirety & from the ground up, Alicia started her career in the industry in the banquets departments, working her way up to Senior Business Development Manager.</p> <p>For the past 13 years, she has dedicated her time to learning everything about the events industry & has held roles in both reactive and proactive sales capacities.</p>		<p>Alicia brings o MEA a true passion for the industry, wanting to exceed the expectations of her industry colleagues/members of MEA. For the past 5 years, Alicia has been actively involved with MEA & is the current Branch Chair for the Queensland Branch.</p> <p>Alicia believes if she is elected as a Board Director for ME, she can use her passion for MEA & the industry to continue to reunite our industry & support their recovery.</p> <p>Alicia knows all too well how tough our venues, hotels, suppliers etc have had it over the past 2 years & wants to give back where she can to an industry that has always supported her.</p>

Candidate	Regina Lysaught	Membership	VEE Agency
	Professional history		Policy statement
	<p>I am the Founder and Director of VEE Agency which was established in Melbourne and operates nationally. My career comprises of over 20 years of experience in corporate events, marketing and advertising, not for profit sponsorship and events, fundraising, Government, hospitality management, business consulting, HR, grant applications and business events in Australia, UK and South America.</p> <p>I am currently teaching events management at Australian College of the Arts to students across the country.</p>		<p>My diverse background brings with it a range of useful experience and tools which would benefit the MEA board. I am a team player, I am passionate, I am a changemaker, a great communicator, a decision maker and most of all I am passionate about leading the industry and representing the industry.</p> <p>If elected I will bring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diverse range of skills from both within the event industry and from brands which work with and use the event industry • Strategic approach to growth and industry development • Sponsorship, grant and funding opportunities to support MEA • Innovation in the industry • Leadership to represent the industry • Strong commitment to support the industry

Candidate	Mike Schrafft	Membership	VMS Event & Conference Logistics
	Professional history		Policy statement
	<p>Mike Schrafft has been a partner in VMS Event & Conference Logistics (formerly Venue Marketing Service) for 30 years, working the last fifteen years alongside Libby Schrafft. As the industry has evolved so has VMS covering difficult periods from the GFC to the recent COVID challenge.</p> <p>An extensive general management career and director of multiple businesses, both local and international, including Executive Director of the NSW Rugby Union. Served on the board of the St George & Sutherland Shire Community College for 10 years and recently was appointed Chairman of ShireBiz, a local business organisation advocating for economic development of the Sutherland Shire.</p>		<p>It became apparent that during the recent COVID challenge that our industry bodies were too focussed on the larger event venues and organisations with the primary goal of securing funding from government. Unfortunately, while necessary the limitations and complexity of funding benefited few. The future will not be the same as the past.</p> <p>The industry's challenge is to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have better continuous direct contact with both levels of government to enable businesses to operate in challenging times by influencing the shape of any future restrictive protocols. 2. Be more flexible and innovative in the supply and promotion of services or events. 3. Work more collaboratively with our stakeholders (event centres, accommodation, transport, 3rd party suppliers and event organisers) to have a better understanding of each business while developing more flexible arrangements. 4. Provide education fit for purpose. 5. Ensure we maximise government funding for development and expansion. 6. Have cohesive representation to government.