



**2023 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	Craig Watson	Membership	Sydney Props Group
	<p align="center">Professional history</p> <p>I have been in the events industry for the last 15 years and currently hold a role as the General Manager of the Sydney Props Group; supplying props, theming, table applications (including linen and centrepieces), custom-made props and set builds, as well as AV-components to the Sydney market. I also manage our nine film and photographic studios.</p> <p>Previous to my current role, I was in the fashion industry for 29 years, the last 4 of which I lived and operated an office in Shanghai China, also as General Manager for an Australia textile company. In this role, I was a senior member of AUSTCHAM (Australia Chamber of Commerce) and attended and ran many expat networking events on a large scale.</p>	<p align="center">Membership</p>	<p align="center">Policy statement</p> <p>Having previously been in the Australian fashion industry for nearly 30 years and being closely involved within industry boards both locally and overseas, I am always keen to promote what I believe in.</p> <p>In saying this, the events industry that I've worked within the last 15 years is way more exciting and dynamic, and I am so much more passionate about helping promote the future, especially with younger people coming into the industry.</p> <p>Having been the General Manager of the Sydney Props Group for the last 7 years, I've established a great team who are ready to have more responsibility in our business, freeing myself personally to have more involvement at an industry level. I would particularly like to represent the industry at a supply level that my company provides.</p> <p>I will now have more time to dedicate myself to our industry at a wider level, being a Sydney-based business, I would love the opportunity to play a part of a wider national industry.</p> <p>I believe my management and networking skills would be an asset to MEA and would love to be considered as part of the Board.</p>

Candidate	Nicolette Hughes	Membership	Individual
	<p align="center">Professional history</p>		<p align="center">Policy statement</p>
	<p>I have 30+ years' experience in particularly large-scale international events including hybrid and virtual events strategy and execution. My clients are predominantly associations and not-for-profits, with strong leadership exposure reporting directly to the CEO, Managing Director and Board level.</p> <p>I have diverse industry exposure with strong capabilities to build on the execution of strategic goals, campaign management, and events across multiple platforms throughout Australia and the Asia Pacific advising on business planning, policies, risk identification, mitigation strategies, and privacy.</p> <p>I am regularly asked to present at events both locally and internationally on even strategy, and I have won numerous MEA Awards, including Event Manager of the Year, Corporate Sustainability and Association Events.</p>		<p>The last few years during and post-Covid have been transformative where we have all grown and excelled as event professionals. We have pivoted and matured. Four Cs come to mind: change, challenges, clients, and competition.</p> <p>I truly believe what we do here is world-class best practice, and if I become a Board member of MEA, I will help drive our industry to the next level and create skills and experience across the industry that would make us all feel even prouder! I am committed and ready to make a huge difference and help the Australian events industry shine further!</p>

Candidate	Tamara Haddow	Membership	Black Diamond Agency
	Professional history	Policy statement	
	<p>I embarked on my career in the events industry in 2006 and have since accumulated a wealth of experience spanning various facets of this dynamic field.</p> <p>Commencing my journey as an event staff and event manager, I later transitioned to roles on the venue side, serving as a Sales & Event Manager and Venue Manager. In these roles, I oversaw the execution of corporate and private functions at various establishments including clubs, pubs, and function centres throughout Sydney.</p> <p>In 2010, I established Black Diamond Agency, a distinguished event staffing agency renowned for its commitment to excellence. Presently, Black Diamond Agency boasts a workforce comprising 650 dedicated casual event staff, who are actively engaged in supporting clients at events across Australia.</p>		<p>I am honoured to apply for the Board Director position at Meeting & Events Australia. Representing suppliers in the industry, I bring a unique perspective and unwavering commitment to advancing the Australian meetings and events sector. Having successfully navigated my company through the challenges of the pandemic, I understand the critical issues facing our industry. I will leverage this experience to champion resilience, innovation, and economic growth.</p> <p>With 17 years of experience and a deep industry understanding, I am committed to driving growth, innovation, sustainability and diversity.</p> <p>My vision includes advocating for supplier interests, fostering industry collaboration, and promoting sustainable practices. With your support, I will actively contribute to Meeting & Events Australia's mission, making our industry more innovative, sustainable and inclusive.</p>

Candidate	Benjamin Ferry	Membership	IHG Hotels & Resorts
	Professional history	Policy statement	
	<p>Working throughout the hospitality industry for almost 20 years has seen Benjamin build multiple high-performing teams that are united behind driving sustainable long-term performance.</p> <p>He is passionate about colleague development, crafting a meaningful vision and bringing it to life as well as challenging the status quo. He has converted these passions into tangible performance improvements across commercial leadership roles in Australia, Japan, The Middle East, and The South Pacific.</p> <p>He has a very strong understanding of the Global Meetings and Events industry which has enabled him to continually drive success in his businesses and think as strategically as possible.</p>	<p>There are three key areas where I can contribute to the MEA Board that 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. Recently I have used this skill to positively impact talent development as well as financial performance. 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 MEA's success in this space. 3. I am a strong believer in the benefit that diversity of opinion brings to organisations. With a thought process incorporating the hotel point of view, I believe this would add to MEA a valuable perspective. 	

Candidate	Angela Smooker	Membership	Novotel Melbourne Preston
	<p align="center">Professional history</p> <p>I am honoured to present my professional journey, showcasing my readiness to contribute as a Board Director for MEA.</p> <p>Current Employment: 2018 - Present: Board Member for the International Association of Conference Centres (IACC). 2023 - Present: Board Member for the Australian for the Institute of Office Professionals (AIOP). 2023 - Present: Director of Sales and Marketing at Accor's Novotel Melbourne Preston</p> <p>Previous Employment: From 2014 - July 2023: National Sales and Marketing Manager at Karstens Conference Venues</p> <p>Noteworthy achievements: MEA Victorian Business Development Manager of the Year Award 2014 Finalist for AIOP's Office Professional of the Year Award 2023.</p>		<p align="center">Policy statement</p> <p>As a prospective Board Director for MEA - Meeting Events Australia, I am dedicated to leveraging my diverse experience and knowledge to enrich the Australian meetings and events industry. My extensive background as a Board Member at the International Association of Conference Centres (IACC) and the Australian Institute of Office Professionals (AIOP) has equipped me with a nuanced understanding of industry dynamics and the ability to formulate strategic initiatives.</p> <p>I firmly believe in fostering collaboration and innovation within the industry, driving growth and resilience. Through my role as Director of Sales and Marketing at Accor's Novotel Melbourne Preston and previous positions at Karstens Conference Venues, I've honed skills in leadership, strategic planning, and relationship-building.</p> <p>I am dedicated to upholding MEA's values. My commitment to education and professional development aligns with MEA's mission, and I'm eager to contribute by advocating for knowledgesharing, enhancing industry standards, and nurturing emerging talent</p>

Candidate	Oliver Sheer	Membership	Be Challenged
	Professional history	Policy statement	
	<p>I am currently Managing Director and Co-owner of Be Challenged. Since 2011, Be Challenged has grown from 3 FT @ \$840K revenue to 40 FT @ \$7.3M revenue.</p> <p>Additionally, I am a Leadership Team member of Catalyst Global, a network servicing 82 countries. My industry knowledge is enhanced by my experience as a Duty Manager in a hotel and as a Sales Manager at a PCO. I relished exciting experiences in Europe, including working as a deckhand on a 50-metre super yacht.</p> <p>My industry awareness is supported by my Bachelor of Business and Bachelor of Arts in Sport and Exercise Management.</p>	<p>My life goal is to empower individuals to believe in themselves and to achieve their unique goals.</p> <p>This passion for improving the happiness, well-being and confidence of people in turn creates better teams, homes and communities. My broad range of career experiences in the Meetings and Events Industry, particularly in relation to my leadership role with Catalyst Global, allows me to draw on Meetings and Events industry trends and insights from other countries.</p> <p>Managing a national business, with offices in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, and Gold Coast enables me to contribute local knowledge and market feedback at both a macro and micro level.</p>	
		<p>Having attended MEEA events since 2009, I have a strong knowledge and understanding of the goals and values of this association. My business management experience, mindset and passion for the Meetings and Events industry provides me with the capability to give back, further develop and support MEEA.</p>	