

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 27 July 2017

INDUSTRY STARS RECOGNISED AT ACCOMMODATION AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Staff are the backbone of any great hotel and last night the best people in NSW accommodation venues were acknowledged at the 2018 Tourism Accommodation Australia (NSW) Awards for Excellence.

A record crowd of more than 800 political, industry and business leaders – including NSW Tourism and Major Events Minister Adam Marshall – were on hand at the Star Events Centre, Sydney to see the accommodation industry’s hard-working stars recognised.

The “people categories” form a vital part of the annual awards, which this year saw a record breaking 320 nominations received from 82 NSW hotels across 34 categories.

One of the most hotly contested was *Hotel Industry Rising Star*, which had more than 20 nominees. The rising star for 2018 was Amelia Benjamin of the **Hilton Sydney**, with Chelsea Logan of the **Intercontinental Sydney Double Bay** highly commended.

Another sought after award of the night - *Chef of the Year* – went to Nancy Kinchela of **Emirates One & Only Wolgan Valley**, while the prestigious title of *Concierge of the Year* went to Jonathan Fambart of the **Park Hyatt Sydney**.

Jeremy Metzroth of the **Ovolo Woolloomooloo** beat 19 other hopefuls to win *Food and Beverage Talent of the Year*, Melinda McCrone of **Crowne Plaza Terrigal** was named *Marketing Talent of the Year* and Gerri Harrison of **Rydges Newcastle** was crowned *Housekeeper of the Year*.

Anura Yapa of the **Shangri-La Hotel** was inducted into the Hall of Fame after being named *Engineer of the Year* in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

TAA NSW chair Peter Tudehope said staff are the greatest asset of any hotel – no matter the size or location of the venue.

“It is the quality of staff that really make or break a hotel,” said Mr Tudehope.

“Well-trained, attentive staff are the difference between a routine hotel stay and a unique experience that will be enjoyed, remembered and talked about for years to come.”

“I would like to congratulate all the nominees and all the winners on the work they do each and every day to provide a premium experience to all guests in our hotels – you really do make a difference,” he said.

Other TAA (NSW) Award winners in the “people” category include:

- *Sales Talent of the Year:* Lachlan Harris, **The Langham**
- *Conference and Events Talent of the Year:* Mary Dolmas, **Hyatt Regency Sydney**
- *Finance Talent of the Year:* Helen Ip, **Holiday Inn Sydney Airport**
- *Engineer of the Year:* Craig Cavers, **Hilton Sydney**
- *It Talent of the Year:* Howard Phung, **Fraser Suites Sydney**
- *Revenue/Yield Talent of the Year:* Kate Watt, **The Star Sydney**
- *Rooms Division Talent of the Year:* Leigh Salas, **Fairmount Resort, Blue Mountains**
- *Employee Excellence in Service:* Max Monning, **Sheraton on the Park**
- *Human Resource Talent of the Year:* Judith Mackenzie, **The Star Sydney**

For a full list of TAA NSW Award winners visit: www.taanswawards.com.au

Media Contact: Craig Vaughan 0423 796 382