



AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Australia's top hotels recognised by AHA

The new Wolgan Valley Resort and Spa has emerged as the star performer at the Australian Hotels Association's National Awards for Excellence presented in front of 500 industry leaders last night at the Westin Sydney.

The luxury resort, owned by Emirates airlines and located in the NSW Blue Mountains, was the biggest winner with three awards on the night. In its first year of competition after opening in 2008, Wolgan Valley took out the awards for *Best Deluxe Accommodation*, *Best Environmental Practice* and *Best Overall Accommodation Hotel*.

AHA National CEO Des Crowe said Wolgan Valley had raised the bar for luxury accommodation in Australia:

"The standard of the facilities at Wolgan Valley are world class and these prestigious awards are well deserved. The resort has clearly set a new standard for luxury hotels in this country and provides a truly unique experience for both domestic and international visitors."

The other major winner was The Breakwater in Perth, which took out two awards for Best Restaurant (Metro, General Division) and Best Overall Hotel (General Division).

Mr Crowe said "the AHA National Awards are contested by the winners of awards from every state and territory, so there is tough competition in all categories. The Breakwater was up against finalists from other states with significant gaming operations, so to be named Overall Hotel of the Year is a fantastic accomplishment."

Another highlight of the evening was the induction in the AHA's Johnnie Walker Hall of Fame of its National Accommodation Division President Patrick Griffin OAM. Mr Griffin, who manages The Observatory Hotel in Sydney, is retiring at year's end and was acknowledged for his almost 50-year career in the hotel industry.

"Patrick has long been one of Australia's leading hoteliers and the AHA has been very fortunate to have someone of his stature in the industry as our Accommodation Division President for so many years", Mr Crowe said.

"His service to the AHA is in itself deserving of recognition, particularly on his coming retirement, but Patrick has also maintained a world-class standard of excellence at The Observatory which has itself been the recipient of numerous industry awards over the years."

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