

WINNERS AT THE 2017 INDEPENDENT CINEMAS CONFERENCE

Sydney: 5 May 2017

Independent Cinemas Australia (ICA) announced the 2017 winners of the Lifetime Achievement Award and the Mark Sarfaty Award For Outstanding Service to Independent Cinema at their 22nd annual conference this week.

“We were delighted to return to Dendy Opera Quays in Sydney with an exciting line up of industry firsts, distributor presentations, and professional business sessions focused on *The New Customer Equation* for growing the cinema audience. We bestowed honours on two very worthy independent cinema owners, Andrew Ward and Benjamin Zeccola.” Said Scott Seddon, President of ICA

Industry members gathered for the Gala Dinner at The Establishment Ballroom on the last night of the conference and cheered Andrew Ward who was presented the *ICA Lifetime Achievement Award* by Mike Bosworth Managing Director of Christie Gold Sponsor of the ICA Conference and Gala Dinner.

Andrew is the Cinema Co Director at Box office promotions who own three multiplexes - Odeon 5 in [Orange](#) and [Forum 6](#) in Wagga Wagga and Tamworth.

Allan Stiles, Managing Director of Grand Cinemas, was MC for the night and interviewed Andrew Ward on his remarkable life in independent cinema which included Andrew’s chance meeting with Alby Mangles. Andrew was managing working at the Dendy Cinema chain in Melbourne, owned by his family, a man dropped in and asked if he could use their projector to clean some film, Andrew agreed. After a couple of hours Andrew went up to see how he was going and saw some of the footage and offered his experience and involvement in Filmways Australasian Distributors to help get the film reedited and to the screen which became the ‘World Safari’ adventure travel films from the 1970s and 1980s.

“I’m very humbled to receive this award, I didn’t expect it, my life in film has been a big buzz and I wouldn’t choose any other industry to be in.” Said Andrew on receiving his award.

The CEO Award for Outstanding Service to Independent Cinema was awarded to Benjamin Zeccola who encapsulated his feelings of the award and ICA by saying “Thank you, this means so much to me, but it’s a team effort. The thing I’ve loved about joining ICA is the connection we have to each other. Realising that there are so many other family business faced with the similar challenges relieved the burden somewhat. So when I look around this room I see mentors, Friends and competitors who are actually pretty friendly and COMPETITION IS GOOD. The better our competition is, the better our businesses will also be.”

Benjamin is CEO of the Zeccola family owned [Palace Cinemas](#), known for their quality ethos with bars, cafes and healthy olive oil popcorn, Connoisseur Choc Tops, luxury seating with side tables and glamorous foyers as exemplified by Cinema Como in Melbourne. Palace Cinemas will add to their 21 locations with a 13-screen cinema in the Central Park Mall, Chippendale which will include three lounges and bar areas.

Benjamin is also overseeing the building of a 15-screen complex in the heart of Pentridge, the massive former prison in Coburg in 2019. The new development will be part of a new shopping centre, hotel and bar and restaurant-ringed piazza.

A member of the ICA Board from 2009 to 2016, and a continuing director of ICAA Services Pty Limited, Benjamin also acted as Vice President of the association and was instrumental in securing the Independent Cinemas Virtual Print Fee program to facilitate the digital transition..

ICA Lifetime Achievement Award and Mark Sarfaty CEO Award for Outstanding Service to Indie Cinemas Previous recipients

Year	ICA Lifetime Achievement Award	Mark Sarfaty CEO Award for Outstanding Service to Indie Cinemas
2016	Allan Stiles	Denis Parkes
2015	Russell Anderson	Bob Parr
2014	Leo Catalano	Robert Reeve
2013	Antonio Zeccola	Kieren Dell
2012	Robert Ward	Ross Entwistle & Barry Peak – Inaugural Award
2011	Lorna Wallis	
2010	Natalie Miller	
2009	Andrew Pike	
2008	Denis Parkes	

For more information or images contact:

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About ICA

Independent Cinemas Australia (ICA) [previously known as Independent Cinemas Association of Australia] represents independent cinema exhibitors and has [members in every state and territory in Australia](#) including large and small businesses such as Reading, Palace, Grand, Wallis, Dendy and iconic cinema sites such as the Hayden Orpheum and Cinema Nova. ICA represents over 80% of regional cinemas – mostly small family businesses.

Independent cinemas comprise 25% of the 1991 cinema screens in Australia and 32% of cinema sites – with ICA representing the owners and operators of 674 cinema screens across 162 cinema locations ranging from rural areas through to metropolitan multiplex circuits.

For more information contact:

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