

australian international furniture fair

MEDIA RELEASE

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Inspired by Design at AIFF 2009

Despite the flat economy, the **Australian International Furniture Fair** ended last week with brisk business written from 6,300 buyers from Australia and overseas keen to glimpse the next wave of trends and order products from Australia's leading furniture manufacturers and wholesalers.

The three day show, held 4-6 February at the Sydney Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour is the first furniture Trade Fair on the 2009 Asia Pacific calendar. Australia's next generation of ground-breaking designers was unveiled at **The Edge** Design and Innovation Showcase, whilst the Fair provided a backdrop of the latest furniture and furnishings launching in Australia this year. 2009 also saw the return of the **Hotel + Hospitality** showcase.

Marie Kinsella, Managing Director, Australian Exhibitions & Conferences Pty Ltd said "The number of visitors and new exhibitors at the 2009 Fair have shown that the furniture, decoration and design industries in Australia are stronger than ever - several of this year's 250 exhibitors were new. We were thrilled to welcome exhibitors such as Diane Bergeron Interiors, Café Ideas and Sunlounges Online for the first time, and to see the return of favourites such as La Maison, Hermon + Hermon and Perfect Pieces".

The Edge Design and Innovation Showcase again proved the world class standard of our emerging local talent. Featuring over 30 designers competing across Student, Commercial and Concept categories, 2009 also saw the introduction of the new Green Award category. The winner for the Student category was Jacob Wong from Lidcombe Tafe with *Table and Seats*, an elegant, compact product made from GVA White Birch Plywood, foam and fabric. Kristian Aus took the Commercial award with his versatile and cleverly named *Metal Petal Table Lamp*, made from powder coated steel. Luke Leenders received the Concept Award for his Stack-It-Stool, a modern and environmentally efficient stool constructed from salvaged off-cuts. Green Award winner Wilma van Boxel's Zeopod 0.1 was acclaimed for its use of an exciting new biodegradable material, and its potential to be developed into further biodegradable products.

"This year's winning entries were all linked by their versatility, compact nature and readiness to be marketed. Environmental efficiency also continues to be increasingly important, and our judges were very impressed by the number and exceptional calibre of entries using sustainable and eco-friendly materials" said Curator Uli Hasel.

This year's **International Industry Seminar Series** welcomed international expert Jennifer Castoldi, founder of Trendeaze, the Paris-based online design and style publication. Jennifer's talk on Global Trends and Future Furnishings gave visitors a glimpse of the furnishings, lighting, textures and colours that will influence furniture and interior design in 2009 and beyond.

Taking place over three days, the Seminar Series also welcomed Michelle Adams, creator of New York textile label Rubie Green. Australian experts included Meryl Hare - Principle of Hare + Klein Interior Design; Bree Leech - Founder of Texture and Mary-Anne Kyriakou - Director of Meinhardt Light Art.

Co-located with the Australian International Furniture Fair was the interiors fair, **Decoration + Design Sydney**, the country's premier exhibition of soft furnishing and interior products. Decoration + Design Sydney also featured **Eco-Luxury**, challenging six acclaimed architects & designers to furnish small rooms as luxury microcosms - using sustainable products.

"Eco Luxury was chosen as a theme to reflect the ongoing importance of sustainable style, coupled with an increased demand for eco-friendly furnishings that don't compromise on personal style and comfort", said Eco-Luxury organiser Toni Briggs.

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For further information please contact **Sally Cutler at Australian Exhibitions & Conferences on 03 9654 7773, or email sally@aec.net.au**