

20 YEARS OF CELEBRATING AEROSOL EXCELLENCE 'DOWN UNDER'

In 1994 the Aerosol Association of Australia held its first Aerosol Awards event to celebrate the aerosol package and the innovation and customer focus which are critical to its consumer acceptance.

Fast forward twenty years to April 2014 and over 270 executives from the aerosol industry throughout the Asian region are gathered in the heritage-listed 'Luna Park' fun park under the shadow of Sydney's iconic Harbour Bridge to recognise and reward excellence and innovation in the regional aerosol industry.

Opening proceedings, Aerosol Association President John Bigley welcomed the sell-out crowd and noted that the imperatives that led the Association to launch the awards in 1994 were just as relevant in 2014 as they were in 1994.

Innovation and sustainability were the key messages of the awards and the evening's Master of Ceremonies, Australian television personality James O'Loughlin drew upon his experience hosting a popular programme celebrating local inventors as winners in a number of categories were announced.

The **Award for Sustainability** went to local can maker Ardagh Group and its Taree aluminium aerosol plant for its sustained commitment to operational improvements.

The judges noted that Ardagh Group had demonstrated a sustained commitment to ongoing improvements and their submission identified significant environmental improvements and through these, economic benefits.

In 2011 Ardagh Group was the recipient of the Association's Environmental Achievement Award for its Taree site waste water installation and since then it had undertaken a number of further initiatives to reduce its spoilage, significantly improve water usage and address the quality of used water entering the town waste water system, as well as reducing energy use and greenhouse emissions.

A Highly Commended awards in the category was presented to MTi Group for its 'Blast Bag ZERO™'.

The judges were impressed by MTi Group's commitment to continuous improvement in their blast bags in terms of safety, design, efficiency and reduction of impact on the environment.

From its pioneering use of the Honeywell Solstice® HFO propellant to its solar reflective packaging and temperature sensitive thermo-chromatic indicator, the judges noted that the new Blast Bag ZERO addressed environmental, economic and workplace safety issues with innovation and thoroughness.

MTi Group's 'Blast Bag ZERO™' also won the **'Award for Innovation - Process'** with the judges being impressed by its patented two stage trigger with horizontal activation and the two different sized orifices which offered two speed filling of the gas bag whilst also addressing user ergonomics and facilitating single hand operation.

The **'Award for Innovation - Package Design'** was won by Dy- Mark for its REVOLUTION™ Enamel Paint product.

The judges noted that the product's internationally patented cap design provided a visual point of difference for the consumer while offering a range of advanced features.

These included an ergonomically designed finger grip to eliminate hand and finger fatigue; dual trigger points located at the front and top of the cap; a rotatable fan spray insert allowing users to spray at any angle and a lockable trigger to prevent accidental actuation.

Working with the Precision Valve R&D team and Ralpet Plastics, Dy-Mark, they noted, had produced a design which not only looked good but which also offered consumer benefits in terms of usability, ergonomics and safety.

The important **'Award for Developing New Aerosol Markets'** went to Unilever for its Vaseline® Spray & Go™ Spray Moisturiser, a new product which took the popular and high profile skin protection brand into the aerosol space.

The judges noted that the product highlighted the unique advantages of the aerosol format while its Bag-on-Valve technology and compressed air propellant ensured that it was as good for the environment as it was for consumers' skin.

The product also went on to win the evening's premiere accolade, the **'Aerosol Product of the Year'** Award.

In the words of the entry criteria the category aims to *"salute that 'stand out' product which champions the potential and appeal of the aerosol package and thus 'raises the bar' for the entire industry."*

The judges noted that Vaseline® Spray & Go™ Spray powerfully illustrated how continued developments in aerosol technology were introducing new applications, new categories and new consumers to the convenience and functional benefits of the aerosol package.

With its recyclable aluminium cans produced by Ardagh Group in Taree, environmentally friendly compressed air propellant, Aptar actuator and bag on valve (distributed though Salient Asia Pacific), and filling by Pax Australia, they noted that it also highlighted the team effort and inter-relationships which were key to the continued development and prosperity of the Australian aerosol industry.

Noting that they had a very strong field of contenders for the category, the judging panel also took the rare step of awarding a 'Highly Commended' to Dy- Mark for its REVOLUTION™ Enamel Paint.

Dy-Mark and its technology partners Precision Valve and Ralpet Plastics, they noted, had produced a premium product which powerfully illustrated how innovation, strong design and a team effort can deliver a superior functional product which stood out in the marketplace and 'raised the bar' for the spray enamel category.