

# EVENTS **IN** FOCUS

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE EVENTS DIVISION OF THE HIRE AND RENTAL INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION LTD



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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 44 President's Message – Why we should be facing the disruption challenge head-on
- 46 The Australian Weighting Guide – how does it really stack up? Tom O'Dowd talks us through a US/Australian comparison
- 47 Cleaner generator power is here



# president's message

## Rewind the Never Ending Story



When the kids were little our Saturday night treat was to go to the video store and pick out a video, this would become the evening's entertainment. We were not unique, we were doing what most families did; a movie and a big shared bowl of microwave popcorn was the norm. We must have watched "The NeverEnding Story" 20 times.

Video shops were part of our lives and they were big business. Movies made over half of their take from video sales and rentals. Economic migrants to Australia had to invest \$500k in a business and the video store fitted the bill nicely. At one stage a video store a week was opening somewhere across Australia. There was the Australian Video Rental Retailers Association (AVRRA) and each year there was also a conference, this was a vibrant industry that confidently predicted it would drive cinemas out of business within a short period of time.

However as with all things times change, "The NeverEnding Story" did end. The internet, Foxtel and then Netflix combined with piracy all made impacts into the video stores and the way we enjoyed weekend family entertainment.

The video industry first countered the threats with a lower cost offer, then a multi deal offer. In the end most stores were offering the product at around 30% of the price they started with, this had little to no effect on the market. The market place had changed and for one reason or another, they did not see it coming.

On the 25th of October last year the

AVRRA closed its doors for the last time, signalling the end of the video rental industry. In this is a lesson for us all, no industry is immune to change.

We don't have to look far to see the changes in our lives and the way business is done. The taxi industry is under pressure from the ride sharing services like Uber. In turn Uber itself is now under pressure from drivers who wish to be classed as employees and not contractors, see the same issue for Deliveroo. Test cases are being run at the moment in the UK and USA. Restaurants and takeaway food outlets are under pressure from services like Homecook and there are plenty more examples.

It seems like every service you can think of will be offered by private citizens, who will theoretically have lower overheads than conventional bricks and mortar establishments. The model will vary in each case, however generally a company will offer the service online and the fulfilment of service will be by private individuals, registered with the online provider.

This challenge is already in our industry but is set to grow over the next short period, the business model is simple; who

has the thing I need, at the best price, closest to me?

In event hire we have seen the back yard market diminish dramatically as people move into smaller size lots and venues offer free room hire. The market place as with entertainment, has not necessarily disappeared but has changed shape and direction. Major events are very budget driven, there is constant pressure to drive down the prices and find a more efficient way of doing the job.

Most of the events businesses I have visited run a pretty lean ship and have already squeezed out the most efficient way of doing the job. Cutting prices is therefore not the answer to the problem; the shortfall can't be made up by simply pretending that we will do it smarter. The cost of compliance will continue to rise and this should also be considered as a major part of your budget.

Costs should not be absorbed in silence; they must be passed on if we are to take advantage of the fact we are meeting all regulations. Who would you rather deal with; a company with insurance, service history, maintenance plans and solid OH&S practices, or just get a cheap price? It will be our compliance, stock

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offerings and our service that will set us apart from the private citizen. We need to make this apparent to all prospective clients and target our marketing to highlight our strengths.

The increase in safety awareness has been a great boon to our industrial hire industry. There is an ever increasing number of access machinery available. However as a counter to this, there is virtually no hire for small electrical hand held tools, because it's often cheaper to purchase them; again a changed market place.

We have to look at what we offer as a way of setting our business apart from the others:

- What is our unique selling proposition?
- What's better about us?
- Why would the customers beat a path to our door?
- Are we relevant to our market place?
- Do we have what the customer wants?
- Do we have control of our costs?
- Are we analysing the trends?
- Is our business ready for sale?

If your answer to all of this is 'we are cheaper than our competitors, so no need to worry' then you might want to look up "The NeverEnding Story", it was about a young warrior trying to stop a dark storm from engulfing the world he lived in.

We need a strong business plan and a vibrant association to survive change and remember: change is not always bad. Our association works hard to maintain relevance to its members, and as with any association, it relies upon the members being involved. Apathy breeds apathy but strength comes from the passion of the members.

At your state meetings we will be surveying what you believe you need from the association, gathering feedback and working on providing continued improvements to what the HRIA can offer to you. It is vital everyone gets involved in this and gets behind the opportunity to bolster the way the association can continue our commitment, assisting you to grow your business.

The power of an association is in harnessing the collective intelligence and energy of its members. There will always be challenges, but we know our industry. Challenges create opportunities. A strong association in tune with members' needs is a valuable asset to all. Collectively we are more likely to see trends and solutions than individuals working alone.

You have the knowledge, the imagination and a vested interest in securing your future; do you have the will to get involved? We can't stop change but we can certainly be part of it.

**Tom O'Dowd**  
National President - Events

## Updated Weighting Guide

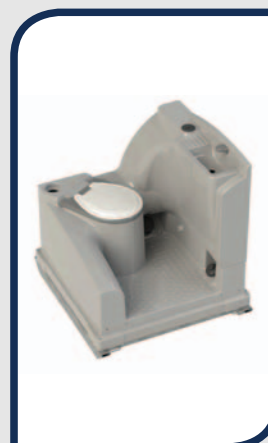
An updated version of the HRIA Weighting Guide is now available on the HRIA website ([www.hireandrental.com.au](http://www.hireandrental.com.au)). The association offers thanks to Events President, Tom O'Dowd, for consulting with industry on the guide and producing a revised document complete with tables and photographic examples of marquee configurations. This is a great resource for the industry and members are urged to get online and take a look.



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# Revising the weight on our minds

By Tom O'Dowd – National President – Events

The HRIA recently updated the revised weighting guide; this was an update from the guide's launch in May of last year. The revised guide adds a number of explanatory photos and a new addition to the tables providing an option for a lower wind speed.

It would be fair to say the guide sparked a lot of fairly passionate debate and in some cases vehement opposition. This was to be expected; we were changing a guide that had been in place for nearly five years and in some cases recommending over double the requirement.

It was therefore interesting to read the fantastic article written by Maura Paternoster in the American Rental Association (ARA) August 2016 edition of *Rental Management*. Maura is the risk manager for the ARA and the article was an in depth study of how companies approach weighting and hold down of tents/marquees in North America.

An interesting observation in the first section of the article really caught my eye: "It is only luck that improperly secured tents and the people and property around them, survive without incident, but every time it happens it reinforces a false sense of confidence and perpetuates a risky practice borne from inexperience."

This is a very powerful statement and my agreement is total, however I would go even further. It is human nature to rely on past experience. No one willingly wants to do the wrong thing however each time we get away with something we learn bad habits. Every time we unknowingly or wittingly underweight, even if luck is on our side, we move a step closer to disaster.

As indicated the article looked at the various methods for holding a tent/marquee in place, exploring the accepted practice and providing reasons why erectors adopt this practice.

In summary the rule of thumb for them (in the US) is 10lbs (4.5kg) of weight for each square foot (0.09m<sup>2</sup>) of fabric. It should be noted this is for a weekend only. If the tent/marquee is in place for longer, the rules change to 15lbs (6.8kg) per square foot.

This is very interesting and it shows our Australian guide compares very favourably. Since the article in the ARA

magazine only looked at a marquee or tent with all walls open (no side walls) we can compare this to our HRIA guide in the following study.

For comparison we have used the LBS per square foot model and then converted the end result to express the ballast in kilograms.

## USA

10ft x 10ft = 100ft<sup>2</sup>  
x 10lbs per ft<sup>2</sup> =  
1000lbs. This is 450kg  
for all four legs.

(10ft x 10ft is  
equivalent to a 3m x  
3m).

20ft x 20ft = 400ft<sup>2</sup>  
x 10lbs per ft<sup>2</sup> =  
4000lbs. This is  
1,812kg for all six legs.

(20ft x 20ft is equivalent to a 6m x 6m).

## HRIA

3m x 3m = 9m<sup>2</sup>. Our guide calls for (all walls open), 90kg per leg x 4 legs = 360kg. If we have one or more wall open then the force is multiplied by the factor of the walls and we call 460kg per leg.

So in the case of a 3m x 3m with three walls (one wall open) based on the amount of fabric, looking at it from the USA perspective:

100ft<sup>2</sup> for the roof = 100ft<sup>2</sup>;

70ft<sup>2</sup> for each wall x 3 = 210ft<sup>2</sup>;

Total - 310ft<sup>2</sup> x 10lbs per ft<sup>2</sup> = 3100lbs.  
This converts to 1,404.3kg.

Divide this by four legs and we get 351kg per leg. Our guide calls up 460kg but is based on a minimum one week duration (this is clearly identified in the notes). The minimum that can be calculated is one



The HRIA recently updated the revised structures weighting guide

week in accordance with the Temporary Structures Standard. Adopting the USA rule of 15lbs per square foot they would use 4,650lbs or 2,106kg divided by four legs = 526kg per leg (66kg more than us).

6m x 6m = 36m<sup>2</sup> Our guide calls for (all walls open) 170kg per leg x 6 legs = 1,020kg. If we have one or more wall open then the force is multiplied by the factor of the walls and we call 640kg per leg. So in the case of a 6m x 6m with three walls on the amount of fabric, looking at it from the USA perspective:

400ft<sup>2</sup> for the roof = 400ft<sup>2</sup>;

140sq ft each wall x 3 = 420sq ft;

Total – 820ft<sup>2</sup> x 10lbs per square foot =  
8,200lbs. This converts to 3,714.6kg.

Divide this by six legs and we get 619kg per leg our guide calls up 640kg – again based on a one week duration.

I am sure by now some of you are thinking the winds in the USA are much greater than the suburbs of Australia. We

have seen the twisters on TV and we all remember the Wizard of OZ, however don't be fooled into thinking the USA rule of thumb is for worst case scenario, it's not. The article clearly spells out the rule is applicable to 45mph winds, this converts to 72.42kph.

We can conclude from this the practice in the USA is much the same as ours, in terms of weight required. It is also interesting to note in the article they discuss the practice of using water weights, in some part addressing the issues of sliding on hard surfaces.

The use of water weights seems to be a fairly hot topic, with two of the contributors Mike Holland, owner and president of Chattanooga Tent Co and Brian Richardson, President of L&A Tent Rentals, both clearly stating they won't use them.

Brian makes the point the attachment from the water barrels is at the top of the barrel rather than at the base; his indication this would reduce effectiveness "to about 25%" would seem to be very accurate.

While it would be helpful to see more information on how sliding is addressed in regards to USA practices, the issue is clearly dealt with in the notes of the HRIA guide.

It is refreshing to see Maura's well researched and in depth article about a really important topic. None of us want accidents or marquees failing. Every failure reflects badly on the industry as a whole regardless of the circumstances.

The article leaves us with a sage piece of advice: "Don't let your installation be one of those accidents waiting to happen, because one day it will".

## Smarter, cleaner, cheaper power

Viking Industrial recently assisted Hutchinson Builders to develop a plan to deliver innovation and cost savings to its internal generator fleet.

According to Viking Industrial's Director, Luke Rennie, Hutchies predominantly use generators to power its fleet of tower cranes.

"This can present a number of challenges including:

- light loading caused by intermittent crane use;
- glazing of generator causing excess emissions in built up areas;
- excess fuel consumption due to generator over sizing; and
- shortened lifespan of generator engines," Luke said.

"To overcome this, Viking worked with Hutchinson Builders Plant Yard personnel to develop a generator sizing plan for each of their different models of cranes and hoists.

"It was also specified Hutchinson Builders would only accept Tier 3 emission rating certified engines on their sites to ensure minimum disruption and inconvenience to residents adjacent to the sites.

"Viking also provided Hutchies with a summary of available engines in the various sizes required to ensure the most fuel efficient manufacturers were selected."

Hutchinson Builders Generators are now also fitted with Sumo 'Load Boy,' Plug n Play load banking switches.

"This enables a technician to quickly



Viking fitted Hutchinson Builders Generators with 'Sumo Load Boy', Plug n Play load banking switches to save money and time

attach a load bank to the generators on site, after hours to reverse the impact of any light loading that has occurred.

"This innovation saves Hutchinson Builders around \$1,000 per month in service and labour costs per site, significantly extends the operating life of the generator and ensures the engine does not produce any excess smoke or emissions," Luke said.

"The result is Hutchinson Builders now leads the industry in providing the cleanest, greenest and cheapest generators for high rise construction in Australia."

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