



## **Ireland's Visitor Attractions 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference Takes Place Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October**

- **Conference title: “Re-thinking the Future – Towards Sustainable Recovery”**
- **Free Registration for Tourism Professionals at <https://bit.ly/3AG7811>**

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual AVEA (Association of Visitor Experiences and Attractions) National Conference 2021 is scheduled to be broadcast live from the Guinness Storehouse on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> October from 2pm-5pm. The theme of the conference is ‘*Rethinking the Future – Towards Sustainable Recovery*’ and it will be opened by Minister Catherine Martin, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media.

Over the course of the afternoon, delegates will hear from keynote speaker David Harland, CEO Eden Project Cornwall and Dundee, international guests from Camera Obscura & World of Illusions Edinburgh, the National Museums of Northern Ireland, as well as a host of other panellists who will discuss and debate the opportunities facing the sector as we move into recovery following the Covid 19 pandemic. Speakers will focus on their experiences and learnings in putting sustainability and responsible tourism at the forefront of their visitor’s experience as well as inspire attendees with their hands-on lessons learned in the past 18 months when business innovation and agility came to the fore.

Tourism professionals from across the island of Ireland are invited to register for free to join the event which will be hosted by Mary Kennedy, RTE broadcaster and host of Nationwide. With her strong tourism credentials, Mary will moderate a Leadership Panel on the ‘*Recovery Strategy for Irish Tourism: A Leadership Perspective*,’ with participants Paul Kelly, CEO of Fáilte Ireland, Niall Gibbons, CEO of Tourism Ireland, John McGrillen, CEO of Tourism Northern Ireland, and Eoghan O’Mara Walsh, CEO of ITIC (Irish Tourism Industry Confederation.)

Bringing an international perspective to the topic of ‘*Key Learnings for Inspiring Innovation: delivering experiences in the new future*’, AVEA is delighted to welcome feature Andrew Johnson, CEO of Camera Obscura & World of Illusions in Edinburgh, Kathryn Thomson, CEO of the National Museums of Northern Ireland, and Catherine Toolan, MD of Guinness Brand Homes in Ireland.

Waterford City and County has a strong track record in driving demand and sustainable tourism practices and will be the focus of the next session: ‘*A Sense of Place: Deepening VEA Experiences in Destinations*.’ This case study will focus on the role of VEAs in a destination with CEO of Waterford Council Michael, Walsh, Richard Hurley, GM of the Granville Hotel, and Denise Brophy of Dublinia.

Keynote Speaker, David Harland, CEO of the Eden Project in Cornwall, will speak on how this extraordinary success story in sustainable tourism successfully delivers on a 'triple bottom line' – financial, social and environmental.

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