

MEDIA RELEASE

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Tourism Accommodation Australia gives tick of approval for NSW Government's \$6 million regional conferencing strategy

The pledge today by NSW Deputy Premier, Troy Grant, that the Government would spend \$6 million implementing a regional conference strategy has been warmly welcomed by Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA).

The Deputy Premier said that the Government – under the auspices of Destination NSW – would develop a Regional Conference Strategy in consultation with the tourism and hospitality industry that was expected to be finalised by May 2015. Under the Strategy, a new business unit would be formed with the aim of attracting more business events – conferences, meetings, exhibitions – to regional centres to across NSW.

The announcement of the Regional Conference Strategy was a commitment of the Visitor Economy Taskforce Action Plan. TAA played a key role in the Action Plan with the publication of two reports. Including 'Addressing the poor performance of the accommodation sector in regional NSW', which showed that regional NSW's share of the State visitor nights had fallen to 45% in 2012-13 (from a traditional base of around 50%) and was predicted to decline to 40.2% by 2022-23 without stimulus measures being introduced to boost regional tourism.

TAA (acting) CEO, Carol Giuseppi, said the Premier's announcement was a very positive step for hoteliers and tourism operators in regional NSW.

"The NSW Government has demonstrated clearly that it is both a friend of tourism and understands the specific issues that are affecting regional destinations," she said.

"While many towns are doing well on weekends, the decline in business travel – and particularly meetings – over the past three or four years has affected many regional towns mid-week, and the aim of the Regional Conference Strategy is to encourage companies and organisations to hold their meetings and events in regional NSW.

"Regional centres are well-serviced by airports and in many areas have outstanding facilities – such as the new Hunter Valley Conference & Events Centre – and we believe that with greater promotion and support that these destinations can attract many more major conferences.

"There is a need to attract more overnight visitors to regional NSW. Conferences are an excellent way of achieving that, and can have a significant multiplier effect for the wider regional economy.

"Investment in regional destinations will be essential if NSW is to reach the 2020 tourism targets, and – even more importantly – help grow employment and economic development."

Ms Giuseppe said that with lower fuel prices and the higher Australian dollar, there will be greater interest in Australian destinations as an alternative to overseas venues, so the NSW Government's proposed investment in the business events sector was well timed and to be applauded.

Further information:

Carol Giuseppe,
Chief Executive (acting), TAA
Tel: +61 2 8218 1816
Mob: 0403 452 177
Email: carol@tourismaccommodation.com.au

Peter Hook
Communications Manager, TAA
Tel: +61 407 462213
Email: peter@tourismaccommodation.com.au