

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Tourism Accommodation Australia welcomes NSW Budget's funding of 'engine room' projects to drive tourism economy forward**

**21 June 2016:** Australia's peak accommodation body, Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA), has welcomed the NSW Government's commitment to tourism, with its continued strong funding of tourism promotion, along with major investment in the 'engine room' of the industry – labour and infrastructure development.

TAA welcomed the allocation of \$175 million for Destination NSW as part of the Government's four year sustained commitment to tourism funding and, in particular, the continued dedicated budget allocation to boost regional tourism, as it is a major contributor to the State's visitor economy expenditure.

TAA also welcomed the support for specific arts, culture and events funding, with projects such as the Walsh Bay redevelopment, Art Gallery and Opera House upgrades, investment in Taronga and Western Plains Zoo and various parkland initiatives all key drivers of visitation, both internationally and domestically.

TAA CEO, Carol Giuseppi, said that, importantly, the 2016-17 NSW Budget recognised the imperative of supporting growth by significantly boosting the State's labour and training resources.

"NSW will experience the fastest-ever expansion of its tourism infrastructure over the next five years, with some 5000 hotel rooms scheduled to come on line in Sydney, the opening of the International Convention Centre, and a range of other tourism projects, and it is essential that we have the labour resources – particularly skilled labour resources – to meet the demand," said Ms Giuseppi.

"The funding increases for TAFE, the \$12 million for subsidised vocational educational and training fee-free scholarships, along with \$100 million for Smart, Skilled & Hired, a targeted youth unemployment program, and the \$190 million for Jobs for NSW, will all help develop a workforce to meet the future requirements of the industry.

"Tourism and hospitality offer NSW the greatest opportunity for the continuing transition from a mining and manufacturing based economy to a services based economy.

"The tourism and events sector is responsible for 159,000 direct jobs, including 67,900 in regional NSW, and with appropriate support from Government we can grow this figure substantially.

"The value of tourism to the NSW economy was highlighted in the latest National Visitor Survey figures announced last week, which reported that in the year ending March 2016, NSW received 28.6 million domestic visitors who stayed 92.1 million nights and spent \$16.4 billion. Regional NSW also performed strongly with a record 20.2 million overnight visitors, contributing \$9.6 billion in overnight expenditure.

"NSW also enjoyed record performances with international visitors, attracting 3,565,000 overseas visitors (up 9%) and \$9 billion in expenditure (up 20%) in the year to March 2016."

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