

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 4 August 2017

NEW CONFERENCING STRATEGY A BOOST FOR REGIONS

Australia's peak tourism accommodation body, Tourism Accommodation Australia, has welcomed today's release of the NSW Regional Conferencing Strategy and Action Plan, saying the State Government's \$6 million investment would provide a much-needed boost to regional areas.

NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro and Minister for Tourism and Major Events Adam Marshall launched the new initiative - which aims to secure more conferences, conventions and business events for the regions - in Tamworth this morning.

"The business events sector represents a great growth opportunity for regional centres right across NSW," Ms Giuseppi said.

"While weekend and holiday tourism has remained strong in many regional centres, business events provide an excellent opportunity to fill the mid-week troughs.

"Regional NSW has an abundance of rich tourism attractions and quality hotels, and we believe with greater promotion and support these destinations can attract more major conferences, which 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.

"With the release of its Regional Conferencing Strategy and Action Plan today, the State Government has shown it truly understands the issues affecting regional destinations.

"A new dedicated, centralised regional conferencing unit and website portal in particular, means the industry will be in a position to provide corporates and other conference buyers with an extensive number of professionally presented choices for conferencing in regional NSW for the first time."

Ms Giuseppi said the Strategy and Action Plan would bolster a conferencing industry which was currently worth about \$145 million annually to regional NSW.

"It's important to remember regional visitor nights account for about 46% of all NSW visitor nights and are an essential contributor to the growth of the NSW tourism economy," she said.

"Growing regional tourism – particularly by targeting the business sector on weekdays – is important if we want to promote more sustainable investment in commercial accommodation across NSW. This new strategy from the Government will help do exactly that."

Media Contact: Jason Bartlett, 0433 95 46 57