



**George Souris MP**  
Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing  
Minister for the Arts  
Minister for the Hunter

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Sunday 23 March, 2014

### **MLB Success Signals NSW's Tourism and Major Events Dominance**

More than 100,000 people have attended the four days of baseball at the re-configured Sydney Cricket Ground, with more than 25,000 arriving from interstate or overseas, Minister for Tourism and Major Events, George Souris, announced today.

"The enormous success of the Major League Baseball Opening Series being played in Sydney, combined with an unbeatable calendar of major events, is proof that the NSW Government's policy has successfully re-established NSW as the major events capital of Australia," Mr Souris said.

"The L.A Dodgers and the Arizona Diamondbacks each played Team Australia, before playing each other yesterday in front of a sell-out crowd and at least 150 million television viewers worldwide.

"It was an economic boon for Sydney and NSW with the direct impact worth at least \$13 million and many millions more in flow-on benefits. It was also a publicity coup for the Harbour City with television commentators," he said.

"Major League Baseball officials and players all praised the facilities, the passion of the fans and the city's friendliness and natural beauty.

"Work begins tomorrow on returning the SCG to its normal state and I am told it will be ready to host the Swans home game on 13 April.

Mr Souris said since establishing and funding Destination NSW three years ago, the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government had secured 89 major events out of a total of 224 events for NSW - fulfilling an election commitment to help rebuild the NSW economy through tourism and major events.

"In the year 2000, Sydney hosted the greatest Olympics of all time. It should have led to a tourism boom, but thanks to the inaction of previous Labor Governments, we failed dismally to take advantage of the situation and tourism in this state simply stagnated," Mr Souris said.

"Local tourism operators spoke of the missed opportunities and a lost decade for tourism.

"Labor presided over Sydney and NSW losing market share to our interstate rivals, particularly Victoria, but this Government has reversed that trend and made NSW the top state for tourism growth," he said.

"Domestic overnight visitors to NSW contributed more than \$42 billion into the NSW economy over the last three years. In the year ended September 2013, NSW welcomed three million international visitors, compared to 2.1 million for Queensland and 1.9 million visitors for Victoria.

"In year ended September 2013, international visitor expenditure in NSW totalled \$6.6 billion, compared to \$4.7 billion for Victoria and \$3.97 billion for Queensland to year-end September, confirming NSW as the number one Australian destination for international visitors and visitor expenditure - proving our strategy is working.

"Major events such as the MLB Opening Series are important for the general public and for supporting tens of thousands of jobs by luring millions of visitors to our city and State."

Mr Souris pointed out that tourists travelling to NSW over the past week could enjoy events such as the Major League Baseball, Australian exclusive production of Lion King, Hana Opera on Sydney Harbour, BMW Sydney Racing Carnival, Biennale and our world class arts and cultural institutions.

"Other upcoming major events on the NSW calendar include, the World Premiere of Strictly Ballroom The Musical, exclusive visit of Juventus FC, Socceroos v South Africa farewell match before 2014 World Cup, 2015 Asia Cup Final, Australian Premiere season of Matilda The Musical, State of Origin Game II and the Australian Open of Golf - just to name a few," Mr Souris said.

"The NSW Government is highly committed to maintaining the momentum and boosting the NSW economy and creating jobs through the continued implementation of its highly successful tourism and major events policies."