



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 21 September, 2012

SYDNEY AND NEWCASTLE WIN INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

Minister for Tourism and Major Events, George Souris, today announced that both Sydney and Newcastle have been selected as 2012 World Festival and Event Cities by the International Festivals and Events Association (IFEA).

“This is another vote of confidence in the Harbour City and a real boost for the nation’s largest regional city. It puts Sydney and Newcastle in an elite gathering of global cities that are recognised by the international festivals and events industry,” Mr Souris said.

The announcement was made at the IFEA’s 57th Annual Convention & Expo in Denver, Colorado – the criteria being ‘community leadership and ongoing, concerted efforts and support to provide a positive local environment that encourages the success and growth of festivals and events’.

IFEA is the premier association supporting and enabling festival and event professionals worldwide.

“The establishment of major events is a pillar in the NSW Government’s plans to help rebuild the economy through tourism. We are committed to securing major sporting and cultural events that appeal to a variety of international, interstate and local audiences,” Mr Souris said.

“Sydney will host a number of exclusive events and premieres over the coming year including, *Alexander the Great: 2000 Years of Treasure* at the Australian Museum, the Australian Premiere of *Legally Blonde the Musical* and the *2014 FIFA World Cup Asian Qualifiers*.

“It is pleasing to see that not only does Australia’s premier events city, Sydney, continue to receive international awards, but now the NSW Government’s commitment to securing and developing events in Newcastle and the surrounding Hunter region is also being recognised.

“This is evident from figures showing that Newcastle and the Hunter are reaping the benefits of events and festivals, worth about \$700 million to the local economies over the past 12 months.

“The NSW Government, through Destination NSW, has established an annual calendar of events for Newcastle and the Hunter that includes international surfing competitions, international rugby, World Cup Soccer qualifiers, many other top sporting events and the nation’s biggest international country music festival,” Mr Souris said.

Member for Newcastle, Tim Owen, said: “This is a fantastic recognition of the hard work that the NSW Government and the City of Newcastle have put into transforming Newcastle into a world-class event destination.

“I know that the Government will continue to promote Newcastle and the Hunter region, which will be a boon to both the local economy and lifestyle,” Mr Owen said.

Destination NSW will continue to attract and retain major events in Sydney and Regional NSW as a part of its strategy of achieving the NSW Government’s target of doubling overnight visitor expenditure in the State by 2020.