

MEDIA RELEASE

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VISITATION FIGURES PROVE NSW IS AUSTRALIA'S NUMBER ONE REGIONAL DESTINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC VISITORS

NSW is the number one State in Australia for total visitor nights, visitor numbers and visitor expenditure in both the international and domestic stakes with Regional NSW far ahead of its rivals in visitor numbers.

In the year ended December 2015, Regional NSW received 689,700 international visitors who stayed 14 million nights in the State and spent \$914 million, according to Tourism Research Australia's International Visitor Survey.

Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events Stuart Ayres has welcomed this announcement pointing out that NSW was the clear winner in regional tourism within Australia.

"It's pleasing to see the whole State benefit from Regional NSW's thriving visitor economy. Best of all these figures represent an increase on the previous year ended December 2014, with Regional NSW experiencing 8.5 per cent more visitors, 15.1 per cent more nights and 30.2 per cent more visitor expenditure," said Minister Ayres.

Regional NSW outperformed Regional Australia which experienced growth in nights of 9 per cent (compared to NSW's growth of 15.1 per cent), and where expenditure grew at 14.4 per cent (compared to NSW's growth of 30.2 per cent).

"The international appeal of regional NSW destinations including Byron Bay on the North Coast and the World Heritage-listed Blue Mountains have encouraged significant growth in international visitor numbers, with the unspoilt South Coast and famed wine producing Riverina region also recording growth from international markets," said Minister Ayres.

The research also showed that Regional NSW recorded increases from domestic travellers including 54.3 million overnight and daytrip visitors, an increase of 6.2 per cent. These travellers stayed 66.3 million nights in Regional NSW and spent \$13.2 billion.

Destination NSW Chief Executive Officer Sandra Chipchase said "From pristine beaches to snowfields, and rainforests to the awe-inspiring Outback, NSW is Australia's most geographically diverse State and offers international visitors an experience like no other. Combine that with a world-class calendar of regional events and you have the complete visitor experience."

These results reflect the success of ongoing campaigns from Destination NSW, the State Government's major events and tourism agency. Designed to stimulate consumer action and attitudinal change, Destination NSW's marketing and advertising programs work closely with Regional Tourism Organisations to promote Regional NSW destinations and events.

The agency combines regional events, marketing and publicity campaigns to drive domestic and international visitation to achieve the NSW Government's targets of doubling overnight visitation by 2020 and positioning the State as the number one tourism and events destination in Australia.

Since March 2011, the NSW Government has won or re-secured 86 major events for Regional NSW, featuring some of Australia's most unique and successful home-grown events including the Tamworth Country Music Festival, the Deni Ute Muster, Parkes Elvis Festival and the IRONMAN Australia Port Macquarie. In 2016, Destination NSW will support 36 regional events through the NSW Government's Regional Flagship Events Program.

Successful campaigns have included the award-winning Destination Marketing campaign for NSW's South Coast (2015 NSW Tourism Awards) which took an innovative approach to utilising an 'always on' digital presence resulting in an 8.2 per cent year-on-year increase in South Coast international and domestic visitor numbers (overnight and daytrip) and 16.4 per cent increase in visitor nights in the region for the year ended December 2015.

Destination NSW has continued its highly successful media familiarisation program with more than 360 media visiting Regional NSW in 2016 year to date. Media visits have seen Vogue China visit the Central Coast, US magazine Food & Wine and prestigious Monocle Magazine visit Byron Bay, Chinese TV program Travel with Superstar journey down the South Coast, and USA Today visit Australia's oldest wine region, the Hunter Valley.

For more information on events, attractions and experiences in Regional NSW visit www.visitnsw.com

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