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Chief Funster Finishes Best Job in the World as NSW Youth Visitor Numbers Hit Record High

New South Wales (NSW) Best Job in the World winner, Andrew Smith, will hang up his Chief Funster hat this week, after six months of promoting Sydney and NSW – just as new figures reveal youth visitor numbers to NSW have reached an all-time high.

As the NSW Chief Funster, Andrew has been journeying around the State, discovering why it is the most fun place on earth, and documenting and sharing his experiences with the world via social media.

Efforts of the Californian native, paired with broader Destination NSW campaign activity targeting the youth sector internationally, have delivered very positive initial results.

More than 12 million impressions were generated across digital and social media during the Chief Funster's six-month tenure, with more than 97,000 visits to the campaign website, www.sydney.com/workstudyplay.

One of the most popular Chief Funster videos, featuring a compilation of fun moments in NSW, has been watched by more than 103,000 people, while his posts and photos on Facebook received almost 240,000 likes, shares and comments.

Coinciding with the Best Jobs campaign, NSW received the highest number of youth visitors since the current International Visitor Survey (IVS) began in 2006, with a 5 per cent spike to 999,200 for the year ending March 2014, according to Tourism Research Australia.

The number of nights spent in NSW by youth travellers also increased by 5 per cent during the period, to 43.1 million – up by just shy of two million.

The key component of the Chief Funster campaign was The Funster Experiment – a challenge for Andrew to uncover 802,000 moments of fun, one for each square kilometre of the State, with a real-time tally tracking his progress:

<http://www.sydney.com/workstudyplay/guide/moments-of-fun>

Fun moments adding to the tally included: 2,105 steps taken while climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge; 1,500 stomped grapes in the Hunter Valley; two hot laps with The Stig at Top Gear Festival Sydney; 60 seconds of freefall skydiving in Wollongong; and seeing 18,000 Elvis impersonators at Parkes Elvis Festival.

The campaign also tied in major international partnerships with MTV to generate a series of short films and digital media content, and STA Travel to promote NSW work, study and play opportunities to youth travellers in USA, UK, Germany, Singapore and Japan.

Destination NSW CEO Sandra Chipchase congratulated Andrew on his success as Chief Funster, acknowledging his positive impact on promoting NSW to youth travellers around the globe.

“Andrew Smith was the perfect choice for the NSW Chief Funster role and a great life-long ambassador for youth travel to our State,” Ms Chipchase said.

“Ever energetic and entertaining, Andrew tackled the opportunity head on, not only reaching his goal of having 802,000 moments of fun in NSW, but exceeding it.

“His genuine enthusiasm, passion for travel and meeting new people, and knack for telling great stories really shone through in his engaging photos, videos, blogs and media interviews.

“Judging by comments from people following his every move via social media, the Chief Funster was the envy of many young travellers all over the world, as eager to experience the fun in NSW as he was.

“The good news is they can follow in his footsteps and discover the stunning array of unique events and enriching experiences in Sydney and NSW for themselves,” she said.

Looking back on his time as Chief Funster, Andrew said he was constantly astonished by the sheer size of NSW and the variety of experiences on offer.

“NSW is huge and truly has it all, from seriously nuts adrenalin adventures, crazy cute wildlife and fun festivals, to amazing art, authentic dining experiences and beautiful beaches. Every day, everywhere I went, I was blown away by the diversity,” he said.

“Calling Sydney and NSW home has been a dream come true. I’ve had an incredible time and would encourage anyone with a passion for travel and sense of adventure to come here for work, study and play. It’s a place that will positively change your life forever.”

The Chief Funster was the last of Tourism Australia’s six Best Jobs in the World winners to finish up his role, following on from the global competition launched in March 2013.

During their time in Australia, Best Jobs winners from all other states and territories made time to visit Sydney and NSW. The Chief Funster also hosted the group for a weekend in the city during Vivid Sydney (23 May-9 June).

The Chief Funster role was the most popular of the six jobs available across Australia, receiving 124,000 applications, the highest number of any state.

For more information on the many events, attractions, experiences and activities on offer to youth travellers, go to www.sydney.com/workstudyplay.

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