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IT'S ON IN NSW: MASSIVE YEAR OF MAJOR EVENTS AHEAD

NSW has further solidified its place as the major events capital of Australia by securing a raft of blockbuster events in 2016 including Vivid Sydney, the world's largest festival of light, music and ideas - now just weeks away.

Destination NSW Chief Executive Officer, Sandra Chipchase encouraged visitors from around Australia and the world to make their way to the State to take advantage of this incredible calendar.

"NSW has an amazing variety of major events over the coming months, with something to suit all ages and tastes," Ms Chipchase said.

"Vivid Sydney is less than two weeks away, and has established itself as the largest festival of its kind in the world, attracting a record 1.7 million people in 2015. More than 112,000 international and domestic overnight travellers specifically visited NSW to enjoy last year's Vivid Sydney, an increase of 25 per cent on 2014. With the festival expanding to 23 nights, we look forward to seeing these strong results continue in 2016."

"We also have a huge calendar of world class major events coming up, including the College Football Sydney Cup, Games 1 and 3 of Rugby League's State of Origin Series as well as its Grand Final match, the Australian premiere of Disney's Aladdin the Musical, the Rugby Union Bledisloe Cup, the Sydney International Art Series, AUS-X Open Supercross and many more," she said.

Destination NSW also has an extensive calendar of events in Regional NSW, with highlights including motorsports' Rally Australia Coffs Harbour, the Deni Ute Muster, L'Etape Australia by Le Tour de France in the Snowy Mountains, Dungog Festival and Rugby Union's Central Coast Sevens.

Since 2011, the NSW Government has secured 430 events for regional NSW (until January 2016) that have generated \$2.4 billion in intrastate, interstate and international visitor spend in NSW.

In 2015 NSW was recognised as Australia's number one State for major events with Sydney, Newcastle and Coffs Harbour each bestowed the International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA) World Festival and Event City Awards.

"Destination NSW will continue to work to attract world class events to our State, and ensure we remain as Australia's number one destination. With so many top class events coming up in 2016, I look forward to seeing the growth of the NSW visitor economy as we build towards the target of doubling overnight visitation by 2020," Ms Chipchase said.

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