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MILLIONS OF VISITORS TRAVELLING TO NSW FOR PACKED CALENDAR OF MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS

NSW's packed calendar of sporting events is attracting millions of tourists to NSW, with more than 3.5 million domestic and international overnight visitors travelling to NSW in the past year to participate in or attend a sporting event.

On the final day of the Australian Tourism Exchange, the figure provides insight for travel agents, hotel operators and other industry providers into the motivation of domestic and international travellers to Sydney and NSW.

Destination NSW Chief Executive Officer Sandra Chipchase said these latest National and International Visitor Survey figures show significant growth of overnight and day-trip visitors to NSW for sport with the trend expected to continue as NSW rolls out an even bigger calendar of events for 2017.

"Sport has always been a significant driver of visitation to the State, yet the latest numbers show that year-on-year growth in this travel sector presents a strong opportunity for our State's operators," Ms Chipchase said.

"In 2016, the millions of international and domestic overnight visitors, and day-trip visitors that came to the State to participate in or watch sport, represented a rise of almost 7 per cent on the previous year's figures.

"These visitors stayed in NSW for 2.6 million nights, and contributed more than \$909 million to the local visitor economy. This is a fantastic result and means more heads on beds for NSW hotels, increased restaurant reservations, and visitors to our State's attractions and in Sydney and rural and regional NSW.

"There are still plenty of great sporting events on the 2017 calendar with three of the biggest sporting events to be staged in NSW in the coming months.

"English Premier League giants, Liverpool FC will make a return to Sydney on 24 May to take on A-League winners Sydney FC, preceding Arsenal FC who will travel here for the first time to play two almost-sold-out matches against Sydney FC on 13 July and Western Sydney Wanderers on 15 July at ANZ Stadium. The College Football Sydney Cup is also returning with Stanford University taking on the Rice University at Allianz Stadium on 27 August.

"NSW will also host game one of the Rugby League State of Origin series matches, Rugby Union's Bledisloe Cup between Australia and New Zealand, Rally Australia in Coffs Harbour, the inaugural Supercars Newcastle 500, the Australian Open of Golf, AUS-X Open, L'Etape by Le Tour de France Cycling Race in the Snowy Mountains,

the FIP World Polo Championship in the Hawkesbury, the Port to Port Cycling Classic and many more,” she said.

All of these events are set to contribute to another stellar year of domestic and international visitation to NSW, maintaining the State’s spot as Australia’s number one major events and tourism destination, and providing ample opportunity for our State’s tourism operators and industry providers to capitalise.

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