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## VIVID SYDNEY DELIVERS TOURISM BONANZA

Vivid Sydney has once again dazzled visitors from across the globe with a record 2.31 million people attending this year's festival.

Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events Stuart Ayres said more than 2.31 million people attended the world's biggest festival of light, music and ideas - an increase of 35.4 per cent on last year's attendance of 1.7 million.

"Vivid Sydney 2016 is officially our biggest year yet with a record 2.31 million visitors. That's on par with the population of Brisbane and demonstrates the momentous growth and enduring popularity of this world-class festival," Mr Ayres said.

"A standout area of growth this year has been the number of visitors travelling to NSW on specific Vivid Sydney travel packages, with a remarkable 88,300 international and domestic packages sold, up an incredible 104 per cent on 2015 figures."

Destination NSW CEO and Vivid Sydney Executive Producer Sandra Chipchase, said travel packaging continues to increase visitation to the festival and on to regional NSW.

"Since the creation of Destination NSW in 2011, visitation to Vivid Sydney has grown by over 320 per cent and this has been driven by great programming, exceptional marketing and partnership initiatives such as the introduction by Destination NSW of dedicated Vivid Sydney travel packaging – that promotes the festival through our travel trade partners in both domestic and international markets.

"This year we have seen impressive growth in international visitation with more than 44,100 international travel packages sold including 17,827 visitors from China (up 55.7 per cent), and increases from Singapore (up 242.1 per cent) and Japan (up 346.9 per cent).

"The take-up of domestic travel packages was also impressive with more than 44,200 packages sold; an increase of 160 per cent over 2015 figures."

The results have been welcomed by the tourism industry with many operators reporting significant growth during Vivid Sydney.

Chief Operating Officer of Australia's largest hotel group, AccorHotels, Simon McGrath, said "What an exciting time to be in Sydney the past few weeks, for locals and visitors alike during Vivid Sydney 2016. We congratulate Destination NSW and the NSW State Government on the decision to extend the programme by five nights this year and to continually expand the festival outside of Sydney's CBD, driving business into areas like Chatswood. We are pleased to report a healthy 34%

increase in rooms sold, compared to last year's event, which we attribute to the extended programme, during a traditionally quieter period."

Anthony Haworth, General Manager Captain Cook Cruises said, "We have experienced one of the strongest years since the Vivid Sydney festival started. The extension of five days enabled us to provide additional capacity and choices which has seen a growth in our core product offering and set a record for our business during this period. Destination NSW should be congratulated on pioneering this extension in a traditionally very soft period of the year. We fully support that this be continued for the following years as this has helped us maintain job and economic growth for our business."

Patricia Forsythe, Executive Director Sydney Business Chamber said, "The exceptional growth in visitation numbers to Vivid 2016 including from overseas has meant that the reputation of Sydney as being quiet for tourism in winter is a thing of the past. Business loves the Festival and its promotion of Sydney as a city of business innovation as well as fun."

Ms Chipchase said Vivid Sydney is committed to delivering an event that is inclusive and accessible for all and offered a number of services to assist guests to visit and enjoy the festival.

"This year more than 1300 visitors took advantage of the pre-booked accessible drop off and parking for disability services, aged care and community groups with many guests citing they could not have attended the festival without this important service.

"All of the Light Walk installations offered an accessible experience with 32 lighting installations and projection icons being audio described and 70 installations incorporating text-to-talk functionality. Many of the Light Walk installations also provide a range of sensory, tactile, auditory and visual interactivity designed to ensure all guests enjoy an interactive and immersive experience.

"In addition, Auslan interpreters participated in all four Vivid Ideas Game-Changer events and we're delighted to see our access and inclusion initiatives were so well-received throughout the festival.

"The Destination NSW team is immensely proud of Vivid Sydney 2016 and the crowd numbers speak for themselves. We look forward to doing it all again next year with more light, art and music that will dazzle people from all around the world," Ms Chipchase said.

Vivid Sydney is owned, managed and produced by the NSW Government's tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW.

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