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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **NSW's BUMPER LONG WEEKEND OF MAJOR EVENTS**

The October long weekend was an economic boon for Sydney and regions, with hotel occupancy at record levels and more than 1.4 million people flocking to the city to enjoy a spectacular line-up of world-class events.

Minister for Tourism and Major Events, George Souris said the celebrations and shows in NSW across the weekend included:

- The International Fleet Review
- NRL Grand Final
- Spring Carnival Racing, featuring the Epsom Handicap at Royal Randwick
- Parramasala Festival at Parramatta
- Performance by Bollywood superstar Sharukh Khan
- Three performances by super group One Direction
- EB Games Convention
- Manly Jazz Festival
- Deniliquin Ute Muster – two days of entertainment
- Murrumbateman Moving Feast – the region's best food and wine festival

“These events attracted an unprecedented influx of visitors, making it one of the busiest periods since the 2000 Olympics.

“With so many people descending on the city to revel in the events, hotels across Sydney experienced record high occupancy levels. According to Tourism Accommodation Australia, occupancy levels in the CBD reached 98.7 per cent on the Saturday night, higher than during New Year's Eve, with revenue averaging 39 per cent higher across Friday and Saturday night.

“In Greater Sydney, occupancies were above 90 per cent on Friday and Saturday night. That's an average growth of 17 per cent in occupancy year-on-year across the two nights and 52 per cent growth in revenue.”

Mr Souris said the visitor economic impact of the busy long weekend of events for Sydney and NSW was estimated at more than \$50 million and the 184 events secured by the NSW Government over the past two and a half years has boosted the State's economy by about \$1.2 billion.

“This is a fantastic result for our hotels and tourism businesses across NSW and the long weekend's events brought a bumper number of overnight visitors to our city. It proves that our strategy of boosting tourism through major events is having a very positive effect on business and employment”.

It wasn't only Sydney hotels, which enjoyed a very busy long weekend – restaurants, attractions and retail outlets also reported an influx of patrons as well as out-of-town regions.

“Destinations outside Sydney, including Hunter Valley, Blue Mountains and the South Coast, also saw an increase in visitors, as people extended their weekend to explore the city’s surrounds,” Mr Souris said.

Tourism Accommodation Australia’s NSW Director Carol Giuseppi said: "As an industry we welcome the major event strategy of the NSW Government. The flow-on effect across the broader economy is significant and makes Sydney and NSW a great place to visit and stay and the best place in the world to live."

Over the October long weekend, several hotels including, Park Hyatt, Rendezvous, Marque, Mantra 2 Bond Street and Mantra on Kent, reached 100 per cent occupancy on Saturday and Sunday. Accor’s Pullman, Sebel, Novotel, Mercure, ibis and MGallery hotels were also at a record average occupancy level, while The Aspire Hotel reported its busiest ever Saturday night, bigger than New Year’s Eve with revenue increasing by 52 per cent.

Destination NSW CEO, Sandra Chipchase said: "With a strong line up for NSW in Summer, hotel bookings for other major event periods are already looking strong for exclusive Sydney events such as Corroboree Sydney, Sydney International Art Series’ double bill of Yoko Ono’s *War Is Over! (if you want it)* and *America – painting a nation* and the landmark, *The Lion King* musical”.