



Hon. George Souris M.P
Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing
Minister for the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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TOURISM VITAL TO REGIONAL NSW

Tourism is the lifeblood of many of the State's regional towns and the NSW Government was committed to promoting tourism in the regions, Minister for Tourism and Major Events, George Souris, told a Budget Estimates hearing today.

"In regional NSW, the value of tourism is more than \$8.9 billion in overnight visitor expenditure, based on nearly 18 million overnight visitors," Mr Souris told the hearing.

"The NSW Government is committed to supporting events that create local jobs and provide a boost to regional economies even further".

Mr Souris said that under the Regional Flagship Program, one-year grants of \$10,000 or grants of \$20,000 each year for three years are provided to successful campaigns and activities to support the marketing and advertising of events.

"Events supported through this program are run by the local community and involve local producers, artists, craftspeople, sportspeople and musicians".

Mr Souris told the hearing that the 2012 Regional Flagship Event Funding round received 118 Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from events across the State.

The Assessment Panel invited 54 events to submit a detailed application.

He said this year's recommendations include support for events in every region of NSW except for Lord Howe Island, which did not submit any events for the 2012 Regional Flagship Event Program. Twenty eight events throughout regional NSW will receive an annual one-off grant of \$10,000 in 2012, while four events will receive funding of \$20,000 a year over three years.

"This Government is committed to growing regional tourism and has delivered on its election promise of additional funding, for regional NSW," Mr Souris said.

He said the three-year *Regional Tourism Partnership Program* provides \$5.133 million per calendar year to Regional Tourism Organisations or RTOs and to the Forum of Regional Tourism Organisations (FORTO).

“Funds from this Program are used to assist RTOs with operational costs and funding for the marketing of regional NSW matched dollar-for-dollar by the tourism industry.

“In addition, Destination NSW and Tourism Victoria worked together, along with representatives from industry and local government, to create the Murray Regional Tourism Board, which will manage the marketing and development of tourism along the Murray River.

“The new \$5 million *Regional Tourism Product Development Program* – officially opened for applications on 28 September 2011 and closes this Monday.

“The overall goal of the program is to create, grow and enhance tourism products available across regional NSW, which in turn will help to attract more visitors.

“The NSW Government also continues to develop and invest in year-round marketing campaigns to promote destinations and key experiences in regional NSW to keep it high on the list of preferred holiday destinations.

“Through Destination NSW the Liberal and Nationals Government supports the development of visitor numbers through the regional calendar of events and we look forward to adding to this bumper crop in 2012.

“We are committed to supporting events that create local jobs and provide a boost to regional economies,” Mr Souris told the hearing.