



Hon. George Souris M.P
Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing
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MEDIA RELEASE

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CHINESE NEW YEAR A BOOST FOR NSW TOURISM

Minister for Tourism and Major Events, George Souris, today welcomed the start of the Chinese New Year tomorrow; pointing out that Sydney's celebration of the Year of the Dragon is the largest outside Asia.

Mr Souris said Sydney's Chinese New Year Festival and Sydney Airport's 'Red Ambassador' initiative, welcoming arriving Chinese visitors during the festival period are important not only to the local Chinese community, but for tourism to NSW.

"In 2012, we celebrate the Year of the Dragon, one of the most powerful and a lucky sign in the Chinese zodiac and it coincides with an expected 150,000 visitors from China and Asia to NSW over the next six weeks.

"Sydney Airport's initiative, the 'Red Ambassador' program, will operate with Mandarin-speaking volunteers providing directions and information to arriving visitors. This is a great way to warmly welcome the huge number of visitors who are visiting Sydney at this very special time," Mr Souris said.

"The Chinese New Year Festival is a great summer family event with free markets, displays and exhibitions, entertainment and cultural activities.

"Visitors from mainland China and Hong Kong is the largest group of international tourists to Sydney (14 per cent) and the third largest to the State as a whole which includes regional areas".

Mr Souris said tourism from China alone was worth \$1.2 billion to the State's economy and was expected to grow even further during this decade and therefore, it was important to understand more about Chinese culture as we welcome more visitors and students from China and Hong Kong to NSW.

"The NSW Government is working to maximise opportunities for boosting tourism from China and Hong Kong through a number of marketing campaigns and promotions which position our State as the holiday destination of choice," Mr Souris said.

Destination NSW projects include:

- A major campaign with partners China Southern Airlines and Tourism Australia to promote Sydney and NSW to consumers in Mainland China during 2012.
- A similar campaign with China Southern Airlines generated passengers to visit NSW on itineraries of two nights in Sydney and one night in regional NSW, which was particularly popular for group tours.

- Sydney will feature as a 'must visit destination' in the February edition of China Eastern Airlines' in-flight magazine.
- In February, Destination NSW will partner with Tourism Queensland for a joint trade mission to China, to promote Sydney and NSW as a great holiday destination to Chinese travel agents.
- Destination NSW is also running a joint marketing campaign with China-based tour operator, Shanghai Bus Tours, promoting the Legendary Pacific Coast touring route. Shanghai Bus Tours has recently launched this holiday package which includes overnight breaks in Port Stephens and Port Macquarie.
- Destination NSW is partnering with Virgin Atlantic and Opera Australia to promote the Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour event which opens in March 2012, and the Royal Easter Show to Hong Kong consumers.

Destination NSW Chief Executive Officer, Sandra Chipchase, said the growing Chinese economy and direct airline routes from several Chinese cities to Sydney presents exciting new opportunities to promote Sydney and NSW to international visitors.

"China's outbound tourism market continues to expand with an annual growth rate of 13.5 per cent between 2006 and 2010, and a stronger increase of 20 per cent in 2010. More than 289,000 Chinese visitors came to NSW in the year ending September 2011 – up more than 4 per cent on the previous year.

"Destination NSW is working with our tourism partners, Sydney Airport, Tourism Australia, and individual airlines to position Sydney as an exciting events and lifestyle city to consumers in Mainland China and Hong Kong," Ms Chipchase said.