



**Hon. George Souris M.P**

Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing

Minister for the Arts

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Friday 25 May, 2012

### **Minister Welcomes Projected Tourism Growth**

Minister for Tourism and Major Events, George Souris, today welcomed new official figures showing anticipated growth in international visitation to NSW in the next two years.

State Tourism Forecasts, compiled by the Commonwealth Government, which were released today, predict visitors nights to NSW will grow by 2.8 per cent for 2012 and 4.1 per cent for 2013.

“Despite the adverse international financial conditions, the current short-term outlook is for moderate growth in overseas visitors to NSW which shows that this Government’s strategy in promoting and encouraging tourism as a major plank in our economic recovery, is working,” Mr Souris said.

“All indications are that international visitors to NSW will continue to grow, although more slowly than over the last decade and the emerging Asian markets – chiefly China – will continue to spearhead growth.

“The international visitor nights forecast for NSW in 2012/13 at 4.1 per cent is above predictions for Victoria, Queensland and Australia as a whole.

“NSW is expected to continue its strong resurgence in business travel and events worth more than \$224 million to the State’s economy this calendar year”.

Mr Souris said that the effects from economic turmoil in Europe, with rising unemployment, the strong Australian dollar and low consumer confidence have all influenced tourism to the entire country.

“Despite this, NSW welcomed 26.8 million overnight visitors during 2011, pumping \$19.3 billion into our economy, which was \$620 million more than the previous year.

“Surveys and forecasts have consistently shown that China will grow strongly to be our most valuable inbound tourism market – and continue to go from strength to strength in coming years.

“There were 303,000 visitors to NSW from China in 2011, spending a record \$1.2 billion.

“Chinese visitors were number one for visitor nights in NSW, at over 10.7 million, as well as showing a 7.7 per cent growth in visitor numbers.

“China has grown to be NSW’s third largest source market and was the highest spending international market to NSW,” Mr Souris said.