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Minister for Tourism
Martin Ferguson MP

Minister Assisting on Tourism
Senator Nick Sherry

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TOURISM MINISTERS EMPHASISE THE ‘LONG GAME’

The Minister for Tourism, Martin Ferguson AM MP and the Minister Assisting on Tourism, Senator Nick Sherry, have today affirmed the importance of a long-term approach to improve outcomes for Australia’s tourism industry in the face of new challenges – including the strengthening Australian dollar.

Ministers Ferguson and Sherry attended the Tourism Ministers’ Council in Sydney today. In welcoming the latest report on the National Long Term Tourism Strategy, Ministers agreed to the planned expenditure of the additional \$6 million allocated by the Australian Government towards the Strategy’s implementation.

The Ministers highlighted several areas where progress has been made to assist the growth of the industry and the marketing of Australia to international visitors. These initiatives include:

- The imminent release of a National Online Strategy, which will be the blueprint for the States and Territories to work together and to market Australia globally;
- Addressing industry concerns regarding labour and skills shortages, with work advancing on a profile of Australia’s tourism workforce across the professions;
- The selection of the Flinders Ranges, Cairns and Townsville to pilot research which identifies their most appealing tourism experiences for visitors to Australia; and
- The preferential treatment in marketing efforts of accredited tourism businesses.

“The Strategy focuses Government’s actions towards long term micro-economic reform of the tourism industry. This is an industry which is constantly buffeted by factors beyond its control. Last year it was the Global Financial Crisis and now it is the strong Australian dollar,” Minister Ferguson said.

“The Australian Government is maintaining the budget for Tourism Australia over the coming years and more than \$500 million dollars will be spent by Governments on marketing Australia’s tourism industry this year alone. Tourism Australia is working with State Tourism Organisations and the private sector to ensure they get the best outcome from each marketing dollar they spend.

“The Oprah Winfrey project is a good example of where a \$1.5 million spend by Tourism Australia has already generated the equivalent of \$17 million in advertising.

“Tourism marketing efforts need to be complemented with long term changes so that the industry is better equipped to handle external impacts.”

“The high Australian dollar is a challenge for all of Australia’s export industries including the tourism industry,” Minister Sherry said.

“The tourism industry has weathered the highs and lows of the Australian dollar since it was floated in 1983. Despite this and other impacts over the last thirty years, the number of inbound visitors to Australia has steadily increased over that time from just under a million arrivals in 1983 to 5.6 million visitors in 2009.

“More than 90 percent of the tourism industry is small business. That is why the Australian Government is committed to providing small businesses with an immediate write-off of assets up to \$5,000. This will assist with their cash-flow and encourage investment in capital to improve workplace productivity.

“The Government is also helping small businesses go online by providing \$14 million to improve e-commerce capabilities, enabling them to take up the new opportunities offered by the National Broadband Network.

“The objective of the Australian Government's National Long-Term Tourism Strategy is to unlock more investment in tourism. We aim to remove barriers to investment in hotels, airports, conference centres and other infrastructure to lay the groundwork to ensure a productive and prosperous future for our \$33 billion industry,” Senator Sherry said.

Click [here](#) for the Tourism Ministers' Council Communiqué and [here](#) for the National Long Term Tourism Strategy implementation plan.

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