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ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP DEMONSTRATES VALUE OF BIG EVENTS

The findings of a new report analysing the economic impact and benefits of this year's **ICC Cricket World Cup** demonstrate the value and importance of Australian tourism backing large scale events, according to Australia's national tourism organisation.

The tourism benefits of the tournament to Australia included:

- 770k in total attendance at the Australian matches;
- 370k visitors, including 100k from overseas;
- \$325m in international visitor spending;
- 1.5m bed nights, including 815k for international visitors

John O'Sullivan, Managing Director of Tourism Australia, said large scale events – particularly blue ribbon sporting tournaments - were a significant driver of visitor demand and expenditure, something which came out strongly in the report.

"Beyond increased visitor numbers and tourism spending, these high profile events also help to showcase our country to huge television audiences in some of our most important international markets," he said.

"By the time 2015 draws to a close, Australia will have hosted the **AFC Asia Cup 2015**, the **ICC Cricket World Cup** and the **Netball World Championships** – and we've still got the **Rugby League World Cup** in 2017 and **Commonwealth Games** on the Gold Coast to come, in 2018.

"These are all events which typically attract international visitors who stay longer, travel further and spend more. That's a real sweet spot for any national tourism organisation and why we're so focused upon developing a targeted event strategy to maximise the tourism potential and economic return of Australia's year round calendar of top quality events," Mr O'Sullivan said.

Mr O'Sullivan said that the publication of the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) report was timely, coming just days after the launch of the Australian Government's 'sports diplomacy' strategy at Parliament House.

He said Tourism Australia would continue to work closely with event organisers, state and territory tourism partners and its own overseas offices to identify and promote those events which it believed appealed mostly strongly to consumers in its target inbound markets.

The Australian Government's sports diplomacy strategy aims to bring together government and sporting organisations to leverage Australia's sporting skills, facilities and knowledge to promote Australia and help strengthen international relationships with countries around the world.

A key element of this sports diplomacy strategy is to highlight Australia's excellent track record in hosting major sporting events like the ICC Cricket World Cup, and the opportunity they provide to showcase Australia more broadly and generate long-term economic, diplomatic, tourism and community benefits.

The release of the PwC report comes just days after international arrivals data from the Australian Bureau of Statistic (ABS) revealed a 46% spike in visitor arrivals from India during the month of March, coinciding with their team's appearance in the semi-final of Cricket World Cup.

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