MEDIA RELEASE

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REGIONAL NSW PUTS ON MAJOR EVENTS THIS EASTER

Regional towns and cities across NSW, from Lightning Ridge to Deniliquin and Byron Bay to Griffith, are hosting numerous major events that not only make them great places to visit this Easter, but help boost the local economies, Minister for Tourism and Major Events, George Souris, said today.

“Events held in NSW towns drive tourism to the regions, increase overnight visitation and visitor expenditure, and create a positive economic impact for the whole State. The NSW Government is committed to supporting regional events to build their profile among Australian and international visitors,” Mr Souris said.

“Major events over the Easter weekend are taking place all over the State including, the South Coast, The Hunter, Central West, New England, Riverina and the North West.

“With the Easter and Anzac Day long weekends falling in succession this year, it’s a great opportunity to take an extended break to experience some of the most interesting events on the NSW Calendar and explore a destination you may not have otherwise visited.

“More than 51 million overnight and day-trip visitors came to regional NSW in the 12 months to September 2013, contributing almost $13.7 billion in visitor expenditure and the Liberals & Nationals Government wants this figure to increase.”

Mr Souris said the regional events taking place over Easter (see list of events below) provide a snapshot of the huge variety of festivals and celebrations on offer across NSW all year-round.

“Anzac Day the following weekend sees ceremonies and celebrations in just about every rural and regional community in NSW so the week from Easter to Anzac Day is a great time to take a trip to the regions.

“The NSW Government directly invests in more than 90 events and supports many others with marketing and publicity programs," Mr Souris said.

“Destination NSW CEO Sandra Chipchase, said the aim was to promote, attract and nurture events across the State.

“I encourage people to go to the visitnsw.com website to view the full calendar of events and plan an Easter trip with a difference, to visit one of our State’s enchanting regional towns and festivals,” she said.

For a full list of events, please go to visitnsw.com
Some of the unique events expected to deliver significant population growth in NSW towns over Easter:

1. **Ulladulla Blessing of the Fleet Festival, 20 April:** With fishing a very important element of Ulladulla's economy, the Blessing of the Fleet is an honoured tradition kept alive by the area's descendants of the original Italian fishing community.

2. **Go For Gold Easter Festival Nundle, 19-20 April:** Nundle comes alive during the Go for Gold Chinese Easter Festival, which celebrates the village's rich gold mining history and the many Chinese who were drawn there to seek their fortune.

3. **Bathurst Motor Festival, 18-20 April:** This three-day event has run since 1938 and asks punters to donate a bank note upon entry, with all proceeds going to Legacy.

4. **Lightning Ridge Easter Festival, 18-20 April:** One of Australia's quirkiest towns comes alive with horse races, talent quests, buskers and Easter egg hunt.

5. **Tullamore Irish Festival, 17-20 April:** This festival celebrates Tullamore's historic Irish family connections with Irish music, dancing, singing, history displays, art, films and the incorporation of traditional Easter observances.

6. **The Deni Blues and Roots Festival, 19-20 April:** On the site of the famed Deni Ute Muster, this year’s line-up includes John Mayer, Elvis Costello, and Michael Franti and Spearhead.

7. **Bluesfest Byron Bay, 17-21 April:** Australia's largest international festival of blues and roots.

8. **Lake Light Sculpture, 18-21 April:** There is strong enthusiasm for this year’s event which welcomes sculptures to the shores of Lake Jindabyne.

9. **The Man from Ironbark Festival, 19 April:** The festival at Stuart Town kicks off with a street parade and continues with a billy boiling completion, poetry in the pub and bush dance.

10. **La Festa Griffith, 19 April:** This event is now in its thirteenth year and still gaining momentum. La Festa is Griffith's annual multicultural festival which celebrates cultural diversity with a showcase of authentic live entertainment and premium food and wine.

11. **Canowindra Balloon Challenge, 22-27 April:** Enjoy the spectacle as dozens of colourful balloons take to the skies and the pilots try to drop their markers as close to the targets as possible.

12. **Fuelarama, 26-27 April:** A family event on the Newcastle foreshore that celebrates Newcastle’s love of its Harbour and car culture, including the first round of the Australian Offshore Superboat Championship.

13. **Gresford Billy Cart Derby and Easter Fair, 19 April:** Billy cart racing, market stalls, vintage car displays, children's activities, cake stalls, chocolate wheel.

14. **The 10th Australian 4WD Gathering, Dungog, 18-21 April:** Brings together four-wheel drivers from across the nation in Dungog to participate in four-wheel drive tours, trade displays, guest speakers.