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Canberra Business Council Applauds Government Foresight

The ACT Government's announcement of a \$350 million Sports Mecca has been applauded by the Business Council's Tourism Sports and Arts Taskforce Chairman David Marshall.

Mr Marshall said 'the foresight shown by the ACT Government in announcing potential options for upgrading Canberra Stadium and Manuka Oval shows great vision. This initiative coupled with the investment in the International Arboretum, the ongoing development of Stromlo Forest Park, the feasibility study into a new permanent site for Floriade, and the earmarking of new hotel sites in civic, Stromlo and North Canberra, demonstrates the importance the Government places in the tourism, sports and arts markets.

'The funding of a winter campaign and the joint marketing initiatives now being mounted with the National Institutions spearheaded by Australian Capital Tourism and the National Capital Attractions Association were outstanding examples of how Canberra's tourism industry is approaching the challenges of promoting our city around Australia'.

Tourism drives over \$1.2 billion dollars into the ACT economy and employs just under 14,000 people. It is one of Canberra's largest industries and a major employer of young people.

Mr Marshall said 'The new terminal at the Canberra International Airport, the expansion of the National Gallery of Australia, a new Gallery at the National Museum, the construction and improvements at the National Library of Australia as part of the development of the Science and Humanities Precinct, the National Capital Authority's \$7 million Menzies Walk improvements, all combine to show how the Nation's Capital is expanding its tourism products and general amenities for locals and visitors alike. These are very significant projects and are applauded by the tourism, sports and arts industry'.

The ACT Government has also earmarked \$5 million for the establishment of a new autumn event. Whilst the Business Council's Tourism Sports and Arts Taskforce welcomed this additional commitment to the funding of events in the city, Mr Marshall felt providing additional funding to existing autumn events may have been a very wise investment.

Mr Marshall said 'The ACT Government, in particular the Chief Minister Jon Stanhope and Tourism and Sports Minister Andrew Barr were showing great leadership in the investment and planning initiatives outlined above. ACT Treasurer Katy Gallagher had also addressed the Tourism Sports and Arts Taskforce meeting recently and had been very supportive of the industry and acknowledged the great economic benefits it has for Canberra'.

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