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## **BUDGET DOESN'T TAKE A BREAK FROM TOURISM**

Canberra Business Council (CBC) welcomes the strong investment in tourism the ACT Government has made in its 2011-12 Budget.

“Tourism is a vital foundation of our local economy as it brings in \$1.5 billion a year and is responsible for employing around 13,000 people,” Canberra Business Council CEO, Chris Faulks said.

“The ACT Government has recognised the importance of having a vibrant tourism sector with funding of over \$10 million allocated in this Budget for events, facilities and promotion of Canberra.

“We will be celebrating our Centenary in just two short years and this is a huge opportunity to imprint Canberra as the National Capital on the minds and hearts of Australians and overseas visitors.

“Significant investment is needed to ensure this opportunity is fully exploited and we tell as many people as possible about all the ACT has to offer and entice them to visit.

“While the Council commends the ACT Government on the \$1.8 million it is providing to promote the Centenary, it believes the Commonwealth Government has a very clear and urgent responsibility to fund the celebrations. I hope we see the type of investment this event deserves in next week’s Federal Budget, which CBC thinks should be in the order of \$20 million.”

The Masterpieces exhibition in 2009-10 was an unrivalled success, drawing in 470,000 visitors and injecting \$94 million into the ACT economy.

“This showed the impact blockbuster exhibitions can have on ACT tourism and it is great to see the ACT Government setting up a \$2 million fund to support and market similar future events.

“The Budget also includes \$1 million for the Canberra Convention Bureau to position Canberra as a business event destination. Canberra should be a leading site for business tourism, but needs to have a world class convention centre like the proposed Australia Forum. The Government has committed \$1 million to support the development plan and infrastructure for the West Basin Precinct, incorporating the Forum.

“There is significant funding to allow Canberra to host Asian Cup matches in 2015, which will attract thousands of football fans and beam television coverage of our beautiful city into millions of homes around the world.

“Something, I am very excited about is the \$100,000 to investigate the potential for direct international flights to Canberra. The Council believes the ACT is a wonderful destination for overseas tourists but more importantly could be a supplementary airport for Sydney.”

The Budget also includes investment in sporting and recreation venues that will help attract more major events to Canberra in the future.

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