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## POSITIVE FUNDING INITIATIVE FOR REGIONAL NSW

Dispersal of visitors to regions will be enhanced by the NSW Government's new "Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund", according to the accommodation industry.

However, the industry said there are still shortcomings in regional tourism which, if addressed, have the potential to create higher levels of employment outside of metropolitan areas.

"The NSW Government's regional tourism fund is a worthy initiative and the Accommodation Association will be actively encouraging its members to tap into this new resource," said the Chief Executive Officer of the Accommodation Association of Australia, Richard Munro.

"There are many operators of small accommodation businesses in regional and rural NSW who will be very pleased about this initiative – and rightfully so.

"Average hotel occupancy in regional Australia continues to lag well behind occupancy in our capital cities and therefore, efforts – by all stakeholders – to improve dispersal of visitors to country areas must constantly be made.

"According to Austrade's "Tourism Research Australia State of the Nation 2016 Report", occupancy in Australia's capital cities in 2016 was 76.6 per cent compared to just 53.9 per cent in the regions.

"There are so many iconic Australian attractions located in regional areas, but without adequate transport options, quality infrastructure – notably roads – and effective marketing, many visitors – particularly those from overseas – will not travel to these regions."

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