



MEDIA RELEASE *EMBARGO – MIDNIGHT FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2016**

Glittering line up of winners revealed at the Canberra Region Tourism Awards

Leaders of the Canberra and Region tourism industry gathered on Friday 11 November to celebrate another year of success at the annual Canberra Region Tourism Awards. Guests soaked up the breathtaking views over Canberra at the National Arboretum, while eagerly awaiting announcements of winners at the prestigious event.

In the glittering line-up of winners were Questacon - the National Science and Technology Centre, which won the award for the Tourist Attractions category, and the National Museum of Australia who took home the Major Festivals and Events award for their *Encounters* exhibition.

“Each year the Canberra region’s attractions and businesses continue to build on offering unparalleled tourism experiences and services, which is evident in the recognition of well-deserved winners in 2016,” said Craig Whelan, President of the National Capital Attractions Association.

“This is a pivotal point for Canberra’s major attractions and key businesses of the region as the city further engages broader international audiences and in doing so, heightens our reputation for tourism excellence on the international stage,” continued Mr Whelan.

One of the event’s stars was the Specialised Tourism Services winner, Canberra Airport, which is now a serious contender for the Hall of Fame at the National Awards to be held in Darwin in February. This potential win will add another feather to Canberra region’s Hall of Fame cap which currently boasts leaders in tourism excellence, the Australian War Memorial and Old Bus Depot Markets.

Jamala Wildlife Lodge won the Unique Accommodation category, and for the first time will compete at the national award level. The Royal Australian Mint collected an impressive three awards – for Cultural Tourism, Tourism Visitor Education and Visitor Experience.

Successes of 2016 also included several initiatives such as the addition of a pilot category - International Ready. The winner, Australian Sports Commission – *Experience AIS*, is the first to be recognised for delivering first-class international-ready tourism product in the Canberra region.

Brian Weir, Chair of the Canberra Region Tourism Awards Steering Committee commented the International Ready category has come at a critical and exciting time with international flights from Singapore and New Zealand bringing new tourism business to the city.

“We are delighted that the Canberra region is ready for such exciting, new categories which in this case acknowledge our world-class offering for international tourists,” Mr Weir said.

“Initiatives such as this and our partnership with the University of Canberra facilitating student involvement with entrants, provide opportunities to support our young, bright leaders of the future and to facilitate sector sustainability,” Mr Weir concluded.

The full list of award winners can be supplied on request. For more information on the awards, visit <http://canberratourismawards.com.au/> For more information on the National Capital Attractions Association, visit <http://www.nationalattractions.com.au/>

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES:

What: Canberra Region Tourism Awards

Media Opportunities:

Some media may be able to attend to publicise the event and award winners. Please advise as per contact details below if you wish to attend in this capacity. Tickets are strictly limited.

When: Friday 11 November 2016

Where: National Arboretum, Canberra

Time: 7.00pm

For more information, images or to arrange an interview, please contact Lauren Griffiths at Threesides on 0417 409 264 or lauren.griffiths@threesides.com.au