

Wednesday, 12 December 2007

### **SA TAKES THE LEAD TO PROMOTE CLEAN, GREEN TOURISM**

South Australia is positioning itself as Australia's premier clean, green tourism destination.

The local tourism industry is taking the lead on national climate change initiatives to build on the State's reputation for protecting its natural environment.

Tourism officials attending today's Tourism Roundtable meeting in Adelaide will hear about and discuss ways the State can strengthen a credible 'green' message to tourists.

A new working group, bringing together the expertise of tourism industry professionals and State Government, was formed at the last Tourism Roundtable in August.

Tourism Minister Jane Lomax-Smith says the group is looking at ways clean, green tourism in SA can become a competitive advantage in selling the State as a holiday destination.

"As people become more aware of climate change's effects on the planet, they are looking for holidays that minimise their impact on the environment.

"Our State is already a leader when it comes to sustainable tourism, and the task of the working group is to find ways to continue to create a responsible tourism industry that takes care of the environment.

"It's also important that we find ways to develop and sell our authentic green credentials as a holiday destination to attract even more visitors from around Australia and the world."

Last month, it was announced that a world-first industry-led program to reduce the tourism industry's carbon footprint would be trialled first in South Australia.

"The State Government is demonstrating its commitment to sustainable tourism through its support for Ecotourism Australia's new Climate Change Certification program, which will allow the travelling public to identify accommodation and tours that are committed to reducing their carbon emissions.

"South Australia is already home to around 15% of the nation's Eco Certified tourism operators and more than 20% of South Australia is set aside as reserves for conservation – a greater percentage than any other mainland State.

"We will also be hosting the next National Ecotourism Conference in 2008, showing off our ecotourism experiences to more than 400 conference delegates from around the world.

"One of the big environmental challenges for South Australia's tourism industry is overcoming misconceptions that water levels in the Murray River are too low for tourism activities.

"The State Government has banded together with the industry to make sure sustainable tourism is supported on the river, where there is still plenty of water for houseboating and watersports."