

# Our role to play in saying G'day

**Paul Nicolaou**



**W**hen it comes to the visitor economy, Sydney still cannot escape the “tyranny of distance” despite high-speed travel and direct international flights.

For many international travellers, we are still a long way from anywhere, and that means having to try harder to woo visitors to our shores.

It's not good enough to expect the city's icons – the Sydney Opera House, Harbour Bridge and Bondi Beach – to keep them coming, and coming back.

“Been there, done that” is the last thing we want to hear from potential visitors who could find our city so attractive that it requires multiple visits to enjoy it all.

This is why the focus of our tourism leaders has shifted to an

experience-based offering that takes visitors beneath the surface of the iconic images. Destination NSW recently held a forum devoted to the state's \$52.9m a year visitor economy, much of which is generated right here in our fair city.

The Destination NSW forum dealt with the nuts and bolts of the visitor economy, highlighting big goals including increasing its annual value to at least \$65bn by 2030, and increasing the visitor economy workforce from the current 300,000 to 450,000 by 2035.

Arts, Night Time Economy and Music Minister John Graham backs the experience-led tourism strategy. “Many of you have seen the experiences that light people up, the moments that create memories that last a lifetime,” he said.

The focus on an experience-led strategy is overdue. So are the

efforts by TAFE NSW and others to improve training opportunities to build a skilled workforce.

It might sound strange to say it, but we should never underestimate the value of attracting international dentists or defence industry delegates to Sydney for major conferences. They contribute a lot.

But here's the message for Sydneysiders. We can all contribute to boosting the visitor economy by living up to Sydney's status as the world's best international destination.

And we can do that by going out of our way to welcome our visitors. A friendly G'day or help with directions will always be remembered as a great visitor experience.

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