

## Boost for Tourism Businesses to Welcome Chinese Visitors

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Australian tourism businesses will have access to new funding support and training to meet the needs of the growing number of Chinese visitors to Australia.

A consortium led by training company AVANA has received a \$600,000 Australian Government grant to provide training and support programs to tourism businesses to increase understanding of Chinese visitor demands and develop products to suit them.

The grant was awarded under the *Welcoming Chinese Visitors* program which is one of four Strategic Tourism Investment Grants so far awarded under the four-year, \$40 million T-QUAL Grants program.

Through this program the consortium will raise the level of Chinese cultural awareness in the tourism industry through a nationally recognised training curriculum, a national system of trainers, an online academy and research and promotion activities to ensure awareness of the program.

"China is Australia's most important tourist market at a current value of about \$3.5 billion,"

Minister for Tourism, Martin Ferguson AM MP, said.

"Tourism operators will need to work hard to realise a projected doubling in this figure by 2020, when more than a million Chinese travellers are expected to visit Australia.

"These new training opportunities will assist tourism operators and are based on extensive research conducted within China working with major tour operators and members of government.

"*Welcoming Chinese Visitors* aims to reach at least 11,000 Australian tourism industry employees in its first round, with an emphasis on training key decision makers."

The program will be project managed by AVANA together with assistance from the Western Sydney Institute of TAFE, which will provide trainers and facilities.

China based company China Ready and Accredited, will be responsible for leading the research in China and Australia, and creating the program content to ensure its relevancy and accuracy for the Australian tourism industry. Through their links, China Ready and Accredited (CRA) will communicate and promote the program to the relevant industry, government and media bodies in China.

The Australian Tourism Export Council will create recognition of the program among its 1000-strong membership, along with support from the Accommodation Association of Australia and Eco-Tourism Australia.

Bidding to deliver *Welcoming Chinese Visitors* began earlier this year after comprehensive scoping by the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism and the University of Canberra, including consultation with more than 60 key tourism stakeholders.

The program will complement a 15 per cent increase in Tourism Australia's marketing activities within China this year, to a value of \$13 million

**Media Contact:**

Cathryn Tilmouth – 0401 222 941