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IYE 2002 Patrons
 Hon Tim Fischer MP
 John Morse OAM
 Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue
 Sorrel Wilby

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Dear Tourism Industry Colleague

**Report by Ecotourism Australia
 on Australia's program for the
 International Year of Ecotourism 2002**

Attached please find a copy of the 'Report on Australia's Program for the International Year of Ecotourism 2002'. This report has accompanied

the acquittal of the grant from the Federal Government's Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (ITR) which enabled the IYE 2002 project to proceed.

ITR also provided an inaugural grant in 2001 for a process of consultation nationwide and the subsequent preparation of a strategic plan for IYE 2002. We wish to acknowledge the sustained support of Minister for Tourism and Small Business Joe Hockey and his departmental staff throughout the two years for their input and advice.

Australia's program for IYE 2002 was also made possible by major sponsors the South Australian Tourism Commission, Voyages Hotels and Resorts and the Nine Network, as well as Tourism New South Wales. All state and territory Tourism organisations were involved in the IYE 2002 program and coordinated initiatives vital to its success. The program also benefited from the appointment of four IYE 2002 Patrons - Professor Lowitja O'Donoghue, Ms Sorrel Wilby, Mr Tim Fischer and Mr John Morse - and we wish to thank these individuals for their much-valued contributions.

The IYE 2002 Program Manager Australia, Stephen Nelson, operated out of the Brisbane office of what is now Ecotourism Australia (the Ecotourism Association of Australia at the commencement of the project). During his 18 month contract he reported to both Ecotourism Australia and an industry advisory body called the IYE Partner Organisations. This group was comprised of representatives of the Australian Tourist Commission (ATC), 'See Australia', the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC), Aboriginal Tourism Australia (ATA), The Tourism Task Force(TTF) and the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (ITR). It met on an approximate quarterly basis in Sydney, throughout the project.

Australia's program for IYE 2002 was designed primarily to raise awareness about ecotourism, along with three specific objectives: to increase marketing, further education and encourage expertise development and exchanges in ecotourism. These aims were to be matched by the outcomes of a comprehensive list of initiatives in each state and territory, which arose from IYE workshops and planning sessions held before 2002 commenced.

There is no doubt that these objectives were met. The attached report includes a document showing the range and scale of initiatives carried out in 2002. Equally, there is no doubt that the Federal Government's \$200,000 core funding over two successive years was leveraged up most dramatically. We estimate that the combined effect of the direct project costs for individual initiatives, plus staff time and media coverage from the various STOs alone, take the overall spend for IYE 2002 to not less than \$5,000,000, nationwide.

The peak industry body which had stewardship of the IYE program underwent significant growth and change during 2002. Ecotourism Australia (EA) planned and presented Australia's first ever International Ecotourism Conference in Cairns (October 21-25), which has resulted in the Cairns Charter on Public/Private Partnerships in Ecotourism. It coordinated a high-profile presence at the World

Ecotourism Summit in Quebec (May 19-22) and was invited to send representatives to IYE-linked ecotourism conferences in Korea, Malaysia and Ecuador during 2002.

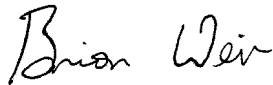
It also successfully launched the rebranding of both the association (as Ecotourism Australia) and its acclaimed 'Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program'(NEAP) before year's end. In addition, the NEAP system formed the basis of the world's first International Ecotourism Standard, which was launched in Cairns: the result of a partnership between Ecotourism Australia, the CRC for Sustainable Tourism and Green Globe 21 Asia Pacific.

In fact, it was the development and strengthening of international partnerships –with lead global ecotourism agencies such as UNEP, the World Tourism Organisation, Conservation International, the Rainforest Alliance and the International Ecotourism Society –that has led to the reinforcement of Australia's reputation as a leader in ecotourism, worldwide.

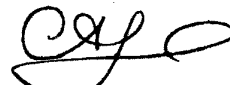
Ecotourism Australia recorded healthy increases in membership and a dramatic expansion in the numbers of NEAP-certified products during the year. Newly-appointed Ecotourism Australia CEO Stephen Pahl is dedicated to ensuring that the 'legacies' arising from IYE 2002 will be actioned and welcomes contact from any person or group interested in the development of Nature and Ecotourism in Australia.

In closing, we commend this report to you and thank all those individuals and organisations – patrons, sponsors, partners, operators, state and regional tourism bodies plus the coordinators of all the initiatives – who made IYE 2002 in Australia so successful.

Yours sincerely,



Brian Weir
Chair
IYE 2002 Partner Organisations



Clare McFarlane
President
Ecotourism Australia