

## **AITTC Newsletter**

### **Issue No: 11 – Sep- Oct 2014**

*“It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end.”*  
— Ernest Hemingway

While continuing with blossoms of spring and looking forward to nice and breezy summer, we welcome readers to another issue of our bulletin with several inspiring news on the Australia-India Travel & Tourism front.

India as a destination currently is gaining worldwide popularity for wildlife safaris. Deep in the nation's wilderness, the majestic tiger prowls in greater numbers than anywhere else in the world, and rare beasts like greater one-horned rhinoceroses and sloth bears coexist with countless species of birds. The infrastructure and facilities have improved dramatically in the recent years making it a comfortable vacation option for visitors from round the world.

To update the industry on the latest, we have organized a presentation on “Wildlife in India” to be held on 28 October at the India Tourism office in Sydney. The keynote speaker is Reena Tory a passionate soul seeking traveller, conservationist and the founder of Mantra Wild Adventures. With a degree in science specialising in Zoology and further studies in wildlife management with communities that involves them in the process, Reena has a love for Indian wildlife, especially the Royal Bengal Tiger! Huge response received so far pledges to make this event a grand success.



In December we are planning to have our usual Christmas function. We will soon advise the details and it will be great if you can join us to make it a success again.

We have slowly begun to progress with Medical Tourism. Hemani Thukral, our Director for Medical Tourism will be speaking and presenting a paper at the Medical Tourism Summit to be held in Melbourne in November. Interests are being expressed from various industry stakeholders like medical insurance companies and related travel operators on opportunities for Medical Tourism in India and we have started responding by introductory discussions with them.

Trade agents were enchanted and educated recently when Kerala Tourism hosted three city roadshows across Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland from 20 to 23 October. The events showcased the

stunning Indian state, which has been ranked in the top 10 paradises in the world by National Geographic, and highlight why it is the ultimate destination for travellers from Australia and New Zealand. Chairman Sandip Hor joined by Treasurer Phillip Boniface had a meeting with Suman Billa, Secretary Kerala Tourism to brief on AITTC objectives. The event was organized by GTI Tourism.



As regards AITTC events for 2015 we invite our members and stakeholders to make suggestions on subjects/matters that may be beneficial to the industry. Opportunities for sponsoring any of our events are available, so if interested to contribute then please do not hesitate contact us.

Our membership numbers are increasing incrementally. We are proud to advise that Air India has become a corporate member of AITTC.

We request others who are considering to join us to please submit their application forms which can be obtained from our website [www.aittc.net.au](http://www.aittc.net.au)

Social media is a now a powerful tool for mass communication. So we are in Facebook and Twitter and request our readers to follow us. Links to both of them are

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Australia-India-Travel-and-Tourism-Council/234962370030875?ref=hl> and [https://twitter.com/\\_AITTC](https://twitter.com/_AITTC)

We conclude looking forward to receiving your continued support and cooperation to make our journey forward together.

**Provided below is some more industry news that may be of importance to you:**

#### **Tourists from India to Australia**

There were 14,500 visitors from India during August 2014, bringing the total for the eight months to August to 126,200, an increase of 19.3 per cent relative to the same period previous year.



### **Minister flags Australian visa review**

It's reported that Australian Federal Immigration Minister Scott Morrison has confirmed a major review of visas and other border taxes and charges, with a view to making the system work more efficiently. Any changes will be "revenue neutral," Morrison said, but the review will "provide the opportunity to align the border fees, charges and taxes regimes with the practices of business resulting in more secure and efficient borders". The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service will work together with the departments of Immigration and Agriculture on the review, which will also involve extensive industry consultation. "We want to hear from those who travel and trade across the border on how we could improve the current charging regime," Morrison said.

### **Record Australian trade representation at India Travel Mission**

Almost 50 Australian trade industry representatives attended the 12th edition of Tourism Australia's India Travel Mission in August setting a new record. The delegation met with 81 Indian travel agents and, for the first time, Gulf buyer delegates. A highlight of the event was the launch of the 'Restaurant Australia' campaign and the agents were trained on Australian food and wine experiences. Another highlight was the opportunity presented by the upcoming ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 co-hosted by Australia. Participants included representation from an eclectic mix of attractions, hotels, inbound tour operators (ITOs), convention bureaux, regional tourism boards and airlines, amongst others. Four State Tourism Organisations (STOs) participated including Tourism and Events Queensland, Tourism Victoria, South Australian Tourism Commission and Destination New South Wales. The event also saw strong airline industry participation with the presence of Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, Virgin Australia, and Etihad Airways. The profile of the India Travel Mission 2014 was raised by the presence of the Hon. Jay Weatherill, Premier of South Australia, and Mr Ian Turland, Economic Counsellor from the Australian High Commission. Glenn McGrath, ace Australian cricketer and the guest of honour at the team-building game of box cricket, encouraged the delegates to send down more Indian fans to Australia for the Cricket World Cup 2015.

### **Singapore Airlines India campaign grows bookings**



Tourism Australia, Destination New South Wales, Tourism and Events Queensland and Tourism Victoria, teamed up with Singapore Airlines on a promotional campaign during August to entice Indian travellers Down Under. The tactical campaign showcased Australia's world class food and wine experiences across key Indian print and digital platforms. Singapore Airlines recorded a 40 per cent growth in bookings to Australia during the promotion period. Singapore Airlines enjoys the highest airline market share for travel from India to Australia supported by their large network and superior connectivity and is a key aviation partner in India.

### **India- Australia Cricket Series**

Commencing in December, Indian cricket team will be touring Australia to play four test matches followed by the one day series. Test matches will be played in Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, pledging to enhance visitor numbers from India.



### **ICC 2015 Cricket World Cup**

The ICC Cricket World Cup is the centrepiece event of men's One Day International (ODI) cricket and is contested in a 50 over format. 14 nations, including hosts Australia and New Zealand, England, West Indies, Australia and current champions India, will fight it out for the world title. The tournament opens on 14 February with Australia in group A while India in group B. India will open account playing arch rival Pakistan at the redeveloped Adelaide Oval on 15 February 2015. It's expected that fervent fans from other parts of Australia and even from India and Pakistan and other corners of the world, particularly where the sub-continent diaspora is strong, will be travelling to Adelaide to watch the game live and subsequently boost tourism to South Australia, recognised as the wine capital of Australia.



### **Sydney Named as World Festival & Event City Five Years in a Row**

Destination NSW Chief Executive Officer, Sandra Chipchase has announced that Sydney has once again been named as a world's best festival and event city. It is the 5th time Sydney has been bestowed the International Festivals & Events Association (IFEA) World Festival and Event City Award, announced at this year's IFEA 59th Annual Convention and Expo in Kansas City, Missouri, USA. "This award is a source of great pride for Sydney and demonstrates the Harbour City's position as one of the world's leading destination for tourism and events," Ms Chipchase said. "Securing major events has been a priority for Destination NSW, the Government's tourism and major events agency, as we work towards achieving our goal of doubling overnight visitor expenditure by 2020."



### **UNINDIAN to be shot in NSW**

Destination NSW Chief Executive Officer Sandra Chipchase made announcement recently in Sydney's Harris Park of the making of the film UNINDIAN starring Australian cricket legend Brett Lee and internationally acclaimed Indian actress Tanisha Chatterjee.

"I am thrilled to announce that UNINDIAN will be filmed exclusively in NSW and that Destination NSW's Indian tourism campaign, Jhappi Time will feature in this exciting production," Ms Chipchase said. "UNINDIAN will put Sydney and Regional NSW in the spotlight, not only to audiences in India but across the world. It's fantastic that our successful Jhappi Time tourism campaign is going to star in such a prominent feature film." "The Jhappi Time (Hug Time) campaign has already boosted numbers visiting Sydney and we hope that UNINDIAN will see even more Indians visit our beautiful Harbour City and regional surrounds," she said.

Assistant Minister for Tourism and Major Events Katrina Hodgkinson said: "India is a key inbound tourism market for NSW, with Sydney the top Australian destination for Indian visitors in the year ended June 2014, contributing \$182 million to the NSW economy.

"The NSW Government is proud to support the production of UNINDIAN through our tourism and major events agency Destination NSW, which will showcase many of the wonderful attractions in Sydney and NSW through this film," she said.

Directed and produced by Anupam Sharma who also directed Jhappi Time, UNINDIAN is a romantic comedy which explores the life of Indian expatriates and the complexities of wooing another from a different culture.

### Luxpeience in Sydney a grand success

Feedback following this year's Luxperience tourism exchange in August has again been overwhelmingly positive, with exhibitors, buyers and media all agreeing that the event was the best one yet. A total of 228 exhibitors attended this year, an increase of 53 per cent on last year's event, and they were given the opportunity to meet with a pool of over 470 hand-picked specialist luxury and experiential buyers from both Australia and key global inbound markets. Buyers and visiting media were impressed with the range of luxury and experiential product on display not only from the region but from around the world and exhibitors were equally impressed with the quality of leads generated at the event. 96 per cent of exhibitors said that they felt the buyers were of a high quality, with over 85 per cent saying they are likely to return next year. There were several exhibitors from India.

### Starwood relocates global headquarters to India

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide will relocate its global headquarters from the USA to India in March 2015 for a month-long immersion. The company's CEO and senior leadership teams will conduct day-to-day business out of Delhi and Mumbai for the month, in a move that is said to reflect the importance it gives to its third largest market.

### Medical tourism in India to reach US\$ 3.9 billion in 2014



The medical tourism market in India is projected to hit US\$ 3.9 billion mark this year having grown at a compounded annual growth rate of 27 per cent over the last three years, according to a joint report by

consultancy firm KPMG and industry body FICCI. The report says inflow of medical tourists is expected to cross 320 million by 2015 in comparison to 85 million in 2012. The western markets, the SAARC countries have been an important source of medical tourists for India. This is because the cost of treatment in India is considered to be the lowest in Asia, much lower than Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and Hong Kong, the report stated. The report, however, adds that India has a fragmented approach where individual hospitals have been promoting themselves. It adds that the country needs to also work on increasing efficiency at the immigration, better infrastructure in terms of highways and roads, affordable hotels, and availability of language interpreters.

### **Tourist visa to India**

It's reported that Indian Government is launching its electronic visa (ETA) soon. There are about 30 countries including the US, Japan and South Korea where the facility will be extended first while Germany, Israel and Russia are under consideration.

Once implemented, this will allow foreign travelers to apply for a visa and receive an online confirmation within three to five working days. ETA will be available for a 30-day period from the date of the tourist's arrival in India. The government plans to establish a separate website to extend the facility to foreigners intending to visit India as tourists. To get the visa, they would need to apply through the designated website along with the required fees.

The government has been encouraged by the good response to the visa on arrival scheme to extend ETA to the 12 countries. Between January and September 2014, 19,290 visas on arrival were issued compared to 13,859 during the same time last year, reflecting an increase of 39.2%. The countries that already have visa on arrival scheme include Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia, Finland, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Luxembourg.

### **Implementation of Biometric Data Collection in Australia for all types of Indian Visa.**

The Government of India is rolling out Biometric Data Collection for Indian Visa globally and has already implemented this in several countries. This is part of the larger IVFRT (Indian Visa and Foreigners Registration and Tracking) Programme. At this stage, as per information available it's proposed that with effect from December 2014, submission of all applications including Visa, port, OCI and Miscellaneous Consular services will require an appointment to be made online at [www.vfsglobal.com/region/australia](http://www.vfsglobal.com/region/australia) along with the online application process. Applications will no longer be accepted from walk-in applicants and all applicants will need to have an appointment made prior to submission of applications. Further, for visa applicants, Biometric Data collection, including fingerprint data and facial imagery, will be a mandatory requirement. As a result, all visa applicants will need to be physically present (mandatorily) at a visa application centre, by appointment, for submission of visa application and biometric data enrolment.

### **Air India: Change of country head**

After successfully launching the operations of Air India in Australia, Ravi Bodade has moved back to India as one of the national airline's General Manager at their corporate office in New Delhi. AITTC wishes him all the best on his new appointment and welcomes Madhu C Mathen as his replacement.

## **Jet Airways adds international links from regional India**

Jet Airways is launching its first ever international services from four regional Indian hubs – Ahmedabad, Goa, Lucknow and Pune. In a major expansion plan, the Indian airline will capitalise on its partnership with Etihad Airways by launching brand new routes to Abu Dhabi from the four Indian hubs. Direct flights to Abu Dhabi from Ahmedabad, Goa, Lucknow and Pune all start on 14 November 2014. And from Abu Dhabi, travellers from these Indian regions will be able to connect to multiple global cities via Etihad's network.

## **China and India poised to take over air travel by 2034**

Over the next 20 years India will follow China and USA in third spot with 367 million annual passengers, 266 million more than today, overtaking the UK from its current position in third place

The latest data released by International Air Transport Association (IATA), reveals that by 2034 China will carry 2.9 billion travellers, with the US expected to move 1.4 billion.

The report, which analyses passenger movement, forecasts passenger numbers using three key demand drivers: living standards, population and demographics, and price and availability, according to a skift report.

China will also command the fastest growing domestic market at 5.6% per year followed by the US, India, Indonesia and Brazil.

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News items has been sourced from various media releases