



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **'NATIONAL LANDSCAPES' PROGRAM TO INCLUDE AUSTRALIAN ALPS**

The Australian Government today announced the Australian Alps will be included in Tourism Australia's National Landscapes program and will feature prominently within Australia's future international tourism marketing.

The National Landscapes program highlights the visitor experiences offered by Australia's distinctive natural and cultural environments and is aimed at attracting Tourism Australia's key target market - 'experience seekers' - who are travellers of all ages who share a passion for experiencing new adventures and destinations which enable them to engage with a local culture.

Minister for Tourism, Martin Ferguson AM MP told the ACT Tourism Industry Council: "The program is to promote Australian landscapes which will be major drawcards for international visitors because of their natural and cultural values.

"This initiative will package an elite set of distinctively Australian natural experiences which can now be marketed on the international stage. The regions included in this unique program are set to develop an international profile which will attract high-yielding, long-stay, visitors.

"The program provides a foundation for regional tourism businesses, local governments and national park authorities to collaborate in developing and enhancing quality accommodation, food, art/craft, information and experience-based products, services and infrastructure that capitalise on the natural and cultural attractions of these unique Australian regions.

"Regional tourism businesses have a great opportunity to benefit from Tourism Australia's marketing of the National Landscapes program.

"By the same token, we need their innovation and cooperation to make the program a real success.

"The Australian Alps region has been included as it is one of Australia's most unique natural areas, covering 1.6 million hectares of protected wilderness. Our alpine and sub-alpine environments are a dramatic contrast to the well-known images overseas of the Australian Outback and the region offers a tremendous variety of visitor experiences and possesses a rich Indigenous and European cultural heritage, an abundance of natural diversity, and spectacular wilderness.

"They are also home to Australia's greatest ever engineering project – the Snowy Hydro – which was built by migrants from all over the world – those migrants are responsible for the rich diversity of Australia's music, food, art, religious and cultural traditions today."

Minister for the Environment, Heritage, and the Arts, the Honourable Peter Garrett said: "Australia is home to some of the greatest natural wonders and the national Landscapes Program provides us with an opportunity to celebrate them with the world.

"Nearly two thirds of inbound tourists seek an Australian nature experience and the National Landscapes program demonstrates how properly managing and taking care of our environmental and cultural assets can bring enormous long-term economic benefit to these regions and the broader economy.

"Australia's national parks play a vital role in the future health of our tourism economy as so many of our world-renown tourism experiences are provided within their borders."

For further information on the National Landscapes Program, visit [www.australia.com](http://www.australia.com).