

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS KEY TOURISM OPPORTUNITY

Australia's education industry has been spectacular successful and resilient, booming over the past decade, and it could open the door for Australia's beleaguered tourism operators.

The prestigious *Tourism Futures* conference being held in Brisbane next month (5–7 July) will spotlight this yawning opportunity to senior executive of the tourism and aviation industries, government policy-makers, destination managers, marketers, planners and developers of Australia's tourism industry.

"Australian tourism could be piggybacking Education, to leverage more visitations out of key markets such as India and China," said University of Queensland Associate Professor Stephen Craig-Smith.

"These international students and their families are already sold on Australia as a destination. They've signed up to spend significant amounts of money on education in this country, and will often stay up to three years here for their studies. Yet very little has been known about the travel intentions of the students or their relatives, until now.

Associate Professor Craig-Smith will present the finding of his research – the first to focus on this group, to the conference.

"It make sense that families will want to visit; they will want to tour around and many will strike out to visit some of our iconic attractions while they are here," says Associate Professor Craig-Smith.

“The industry should be take full advantage and ride the slipstream of Education, and hopefully my research will give them some insights into this market to base their strategies on.”

Tourism Futures convenor Mr Tony Charters agrees this is an important opportunity.

“The last ten years have been very tough for tourism, but this approach makes a lot of sense. It is just the sort of lateral thinking that we build into the *Tourism Futures* program, and hopefully it will provide a profitable lead for the pro-active members of the industry,” said Mr Charters.

Developing a competitive edge will be a core theme at this year’s *Tourism Future* which is looking to reinvigorate the industry.

Other streams will examine successful frameworks for indigenous tourism, sustainability, consumer trends and the latest in online marketing.

For a full conference program, visit www.tourismfutures.com.au

ENDS

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michelle Farquhar

Media & Communications

Tourism Futures

0432 334 994

Tony Charters

Convenor

Tourism Futures

0418 122 025