



Media Release

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AIR RACE LOSS LEAVES MASSIVE TOURISM VOID

The cancellation of the Red Bull Air Race will damage WA tourism jobs and businesses and highlights serious questions about the State's tourism agency's Board and its strategic direction, according to the Australian Hotels Association.

AHA (WA) CEO, Bradley Woods, said the cancellation of Western Australia's only high profile international event has left the tourism sector wondering what events have been developed to fill the void.

According to official Tourism WA figures, the event was worth \$14million to the State in 2007 and \$11million in 2008, but industry estimates that the flow-on effects with visitors travelling to regional parts of the State on holiday could see WA lose up to \$20million in business.

"The cancellation of the Red Bull Air Race has underlined a huge mistake in the way Tourism WA and Eventscorp attracted, developed and hosted events in the State," Mr Woods said.

"It is blatantly obvious that the TWA Board should have pursued an agenda of investing and developing unique, West Australian, home-grown events rather than relying solely on buying in a single overseas event that the State had no control of.

"The effect of this major event's loss to the State could not have come at a worse time for the tourism industry and no amount of sugar-coating will hide the fact that WA is left exposed with no major international events.

"While it mightn't be the Board's fault that the Red Bull Air Race is undergoing a significant restructure, it is their error in placing all their eggs in one basket, because now WA has no more eggs."

Mr Woods said that while the hotel and hospitality industry supports the overarching objective of the recent restructure of Tourism WA, concerns remain over the Board's ability to implement changes successfully.

"It is fantastic that finally we are going to see the State's tourism agency concentrate on marketing Western Australia as a destination, but we need to ensure that we have major and unique events to attract people to," he said.



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“Instead of decreasing the staff numbers at Eventscorp, we would prefer to see the introduction a research and development team that can produce, attract and host successful events in WA.”

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