



# Robert Coombs MP

MEMBER FOR SWANSEA



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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### GLOBAL PROFILE FOR CAVES BEACH RESORT

The international spotlight is once again focusing on Hunter tourism, with Caves Beachside Resort in Lake Macquarie featuring as one of the world's *Best 20 Affordable Beach Resorts* in the March edition of *Travel & Leisure*, a leading US based travel magazine and website.

Member for Swansea Robert Coombs said the opportunity would provide fantastic exposure for the Resort and for tourism in the region.

"Caves Beachside Resort is a magnificent and beautifully designed resort that, combined with its ocean views, promises a fantastic experience for visitors to the region.

"The Resort's inclusion in a feature in the March issue of the popular US Travel and Leisure magazine will add further to the growing international interest in Lake Macquarie as a tourism destination.

"Lake Macquarie is one of the largest coastal saltwater lakes in Australia and home to the beautiful Watagan Mountains and the affordability rating is set to provoke even more interest in the US market.

Minister for the Hunter, Minister for Tourism and Member for Newcastle Jodi McKay said the magazine and online feature was the latest in a string of global opportunities for Hunter tourism.

"Last year was a stellar year for tourism in the Hunter, with the region attracting more than 7.4 million visitors, generating more than \$1.5 billion in economic benefit for the region.

"In the last few months alone, the international spotlight has been firmly on the fantastic tourism experiences available in Newcastle and the Hunter," Ms McKay said.

"In January, Newcastle was ranked in the top five destinations in Australia and New Zealand in Patricia Shultz's new book *1000 Places to See Before You Die*.

"In December, around 20 of Oprah's Ultimate Audience spent three days in the Hunter Valley, exploring wine country, enjoying amazing views from a hot air balloon and tasting the best food and wine the region has to offer.

"No one can forget the visit by David Beckham and his LA Galaxy in November when they played a fantastic exhibition match against the Newcastle Jets.

"In October last year Lonely Planet named Newcastle as one of the world's top ten must-see destinations in 2011 and we're already seeing more visitors to the city as a result.

"Our region is also capturing the imagination of Australian visitors, with the latest survey from online accommodation website Wotif.com ranking Newcastle second on the list of Australia's favourite NSW destinations and in 13th place overall on the Top 20 Destinations list," Ms McKay said.

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