

SE News
HD Missing out on Chinese wealth
WC 419 words
PD 31 May 2014
SN Gold Coast Bulletin
SC GCBULL
ED GoldCoast
PG 86
LA English
CY © 2014 News Limited. All rights reserved.
LP

AUSTRALIA'S tourism industry must lift its game if it is to capture the prize of China's new class of globetrotting travellers, Crown Resorts chief Rowen Craigie said.

The number of Chinese people travelling overseas has grown tenfold to 100 million since 2000 and this figure is expected to double again by the end of the decade, the head of the gaming company, which also has interests in Macau casinos, said.

TD

But the federal and state governments and private sector needed to do more to capitalise on that growth, he said.

"If Australia doesn't get its act together it won't capture a market share it otherwise would," Mr Craigie said at yesterday's Australia in China's Century Conference at Crown's Melbourne casino complex.

Foreign minister Julie Bishop told delegates the Chinese middle class was now the world's most influential tourists and would drive the global industry for years.

Despite the broad perception that Australia was a regional destination for the Chinese, Mr Craigie argued the tyranny of distance was keeping them away.

Hong Kong, a Chinese special administrative region, and Singapore were favoured by Chinese travellers, he said.

Crown owns about one third of Melco Crown Entertainment, a casino business in another Chinese special administrative region, Macau.

The Melbourne-based group, chaired by major shareholder James Packer, wants to boost its share of China's high-end tourist and high-roller gaming market through a planned casino and luxury hotel in Sydney.

Mr Craigie said Australia's travel visa system had to be made simpler for Chinese travellers. Among potential initiatives, application forms should be printed in Mandarin and put online, he said.

Australian airport arrivals areas were not world-class and neither was training for the tourism industry, while state government gaming regulatory and tax settings should be made more "competitive," he said.

Mr Packer – appearing via a video link – was among other speakers at the event hosted by The Australian, which is published by Gold Coast Bulletin parent News Corp Australia.

The billionaire businessman said he was keen to do more business in China, possibly with Seven Group executive chairman Kerry Stokes.

Other speakers at the event included News Corp Australia chief Julian Clarke, Business Council of Australia head Jennifer Westacott, Australian Super chairwoman Heather Ridout and ANZ China head

Charles Li. Mr Packer is one of Australia's biggest investors in **China** through his **stake** in two Macau casinos, with a third being built.

CO crncas : Crown Resorts Limited

IN itourm : Tourism | i97912 : Gambling Industries | ilea : Leisure/Arts/Hospitality

RE china : China | austr : Australia | apacz : Asia Pacific | asiaz : Asia | ausnz : Australia/Oceania | bric : BRIC Countries | chinaz : Greater China | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | easiaz : Eastern Asia

PUB News Ltd.

AN Document GCBULL0020140601ea5v00006