



EMIRATES INVESTS DHS 142 MILLION TO BUILD LUXURY CONSERVATION RESORT IN AUSTRALIA

DUBAI, UAE, 22nd June 2005 – Emirates, the Dubai-based international airline, will invest Dhs 142 million (approx. US \$38.8 million) to build a luxury conservation resort in Australia's Blue Mountains - its first such hospitality development outside of U.A.E

HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum, Chairman of Emirates, and the Hon Sandra Nori MP, New South Wales' Minister for Tourism, today announced the resort's development plans at a media conference in Sydney.

Using the same philosophy as Emirates' acclaimed "Al Maha" desert resort and reserve in Dubai, the new conservation project will be one of Australia's most environmentally sympathetic developments, and will provide world-leading hospitality facilities and services to guests.

The project is located in the Wolgan Valley of the Blue Mountains, where 3,600 acres of freehold land will be incorporated into a conservancy reserve. The site is currently farmland that borders the Gardens of Stone National Park, in an area where there are many threats to wildlife and conservation. Guest facilities will occupy less than two per cent of the total land.

Sheikh Ahmed said: "We want to take this beautiful, but sadly distressed rural farming site and turn it into a sanctuary to further showcase Australia to the world."

He added: "Emirates' plan is to protect this site and enhance its environmental values, starting with the removal of invasive plants and feral fauna that has placed pressure on indigenous wildlife. Working closely with environmental and government agencies, we even hope to reintroduce some threatened species to this conservancy. We want this project to gain the same recognition for Australia that we have received for Al Maha and the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve in Dubai."

The resort is expected to have all final government approvals in place in the next few months with opening planned for 2007.

NSW Minister for Tourism Ms Nori said the Blue Mountains resort would be a welcome addition to nature-based tourism and a major draw card for international visitors.

She said: "Few global cities can boast a pristine, World-Heritage listed attraction like the Blue Mountains, on their door-step, just over an hour from the centre of Sydney. This conservation resort will show there's no place in the world like Sydney."

She added: “The resort will also generate jobs – from environmental guides to hotel staff. And of course, local businesses in the region also stand to benefit.”

Emirates has already engaged in hundreds of hours of consultations with government and community organisations in Australia to ensure the project will meet and exceed standards for environment protection and quality hospitality. It will also become a corporate member of The Australian Wildlife Conservancy, whose expertise is well known in the conservation area. Along with National Parks & Wildlife Service and local conservation groups, their knowledge and experience will be invaluable during the creation of the Wolgan Valley project.

Local Wolgan Valley species already identified as under pressure that will be encouraged to expand within the sanctuary include koalas, spotted-tailed quolls, yellow-bellied gliders and brush-tailed rock wallabies.

Emirates is not new to the hospitality industry. It owns, manages and operates the Al Maha Desert Resort & Spa, a conservation-based resort set in a 225 square kilometre nature reserve. Winner of National Geographic’s World Legacy Award 2004, and judged ‘The Best Resort in Africa/Middle East 2002’ by Condé Nast, Al Maha offers 40 ultra luxurious suites in the heart of the desert.

In May this year, Emirates announced that it will build a new 5-star, Dhs 800 million (US \$218 million) luxury hotel in Dubai. The 70-storey, 350 metres high building will be among the world’s five tallest hotels, and also one of the largest in the U.A.E.

Emirates also owns the 218-room Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort, situated on a superb stretch of the private Al Aqah Beach, in the picturesque emirate of Fujairah. The resort is particularly popular as a family holiday destination.

Photocaptions:

HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum, Chairman of Emirates and the Hon Sandra Nori MP, New South Wales’ Minister for Tourism today announced the resort’s development plans at a media conference in Sydney. Also pictured are Emirates cabin crew members Jessica Oakes and Bianca Dambitis.



HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum, Chairman of Emirates, pictured next to a project model of Emirates' new conservation resort in Wolgan Valley, Blue Mountains, Australia.



An artist's impression of Emirates' new conservation resort in Wolgan Valley, located in Australia's Blue Mountains.



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