

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Indian Pacific celebrates 40 years as an Australian icon

The Indian Pacific is celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2010, a train acclaimed not only as an Australian icon but as one of the world's greatest train journeys.

History was made when forty years ago the Indian Pacific departed Sydney Central Station on the first continuous transcontinental rail journey in Australia. Tens of thousands of people lined the track to witness what was said to be a symbol of nationhood; the first solid connection between the cities of the east and the isolated west coast.

Since then, several million people from Australia and around the world have taken the journey to experience the vastness and beauty of the Australian outback onboard the Indian Pacific, and the train has earned a reputation as one of the world's great rail journeys.

Chief Executive of Great Southern Rail, Tony Braxton-Smith, said; "Travelling across Australia on the Indian Pacific is the journey of a lifetime. Our guests see some of the country's most breathtaking scenery and experience a rich tapestry of Australia's dramatic landscapes."

On its journey through New South Wales, the Indian Pacific winds its way through the stunning Blue Mountains and the rolling hills and farmlands beyond, then crosses into outback New South Wales to the famous mining town of Broken Hill for a whistle-stop tour.

Crossing into South Australia, it skirts the Flinders Ranges and the Spencer Gulf on its way to Adelaide. After the fertile Adelaide Plains, it crosses open forest and desert dune country to reach the start of the Nullabor Plains and the longest straight stretch of rail track in the world.

After a stop at Cook, population four, in the middle of the Nullabor the journey continues on to reach the Western Mallee and the gold-mining city of Kalgoorlie for a whistle-stop tour. On the final leg, the train crosses the West Australian wheat-belt, then descends the picturesque Avon Valley to reach Perth.

Tony commented, "There is no better time to travel on the Indian Pacific than during its 40th year and the most spectacular time of the year to travel to Western Australia is the wildflower season."

People come from all over the world to behold over 12,000 species of wildflowers carpeting the rugged landscape of Western Australia during the annual wildflower season (September – December).

Great Southern Rail has just launched a range of new packages allowing travellers to combine the holiday if a lifetime aboard the Indian Pacific with a tour of the West Australian wildflower regions.

Travelling in the comfort of Gold Service, guests save up to \$400* per person on the rail fare. Wildflower packages include hotel accommodation and tours of either northern or southern WA or the central Perth area.

Media contact: Jessica Playford on 0419 848 507 or jplayford@gsr.com.au



To avoid missing out on this fantastic offer, or the Indian Pacific, contact Great Southern Rail on 13 21 47 or www.gsr.com.au or contact your licensed travel agent.

*Save up to price is based on the standard adult Gold Service twin share per person fare. Offer is valid for bookings made between 1 May and 31 August 2010 for travel from 1 September to 31 December 2010.