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MEDIA STATEMENT

ATIC response to Australian Tourism's 'State of the Nation'

The Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) has welcomed today's Australian tourism 'State of the Nation' report into its economic, employment and export contribution as reinforcement of our great industry's growing economic and social value and its positive impact on regional Australia.

ATIC represents Australia's state and territory tourism industry councils covering over 8000 small, medium and large tourism businesses nationwide, the majority based across our regions.

ATIC Executive Director Simon Westaway said another annual set of record-breaking Australian tourism data included visitor consumption (\$143 billion up 6.8%), local tourism employment (646,000 direct jobs rising 4.6%) and economic growth (3.1% of Australia's GDP, previously 3.0%). These results need to be heralded in terms of today's significance of our visitor economy.

Mr Westaway said Australian tourism employment growth of 4.6 per cent was a standout figure, continuing to soar above the national average of 3 per cent, with tourism jobs growth experienced across all States and Territories this past year.

"With direct and indirect jobs in tourism delivering around one million jobs in Australia today, our private tourism enterprises and businesses are strongly driving this future engine room of the Australian economy and possess strategic direction," Mr Westaway said.

"As a percentage of its State and Territory economy, the ACT and Tasmania have recorded the greatest surge in tourism employment growth in the last year, whilst Tasmania (7.8% of economic gross value add to the state) and Victoria (7.4%) headline sharp increases in the overall state economic contribution of tourism at levels generally mirrored across most of Australia."

Mr Westaway said that beyond the growth story for Australian tourism and the visitor economy which continues to outstrip national GDP performance, ATIC and its enterprise members would seek to continue to work with and partner with government and each other to maintain momentum.

"This includes full delivery by the Federal Government of its announced commitments to invest in the *Next Generation Australian Icons* of tourism that includes Kakadu National Park and Jabiru township, Cradle Mountain, the Wangetti Trail in far North Queensland and Western Australia's Rottnest Island," Mr Westaway said.

"Behind the hoopla of continued record growth in Australian tourism, pockets of our country are not feeling the full benefit or glow. Industry in Western Australia and the Northern Territory, which offer a compelling backdrop to the true Australian visitor experience, recorded declines in domestic visitor consumption and lower growth last year which industry is working hard to address.

"Continued focus on improving product offering and attractions for visitors, including better beds and enhanced nature based experiences beyond the capitals, must also be better aligned to enhanced transport access. All-of-industry and government working in effective partnership to try and capture more direct international flights as well as grow domestic air seats into regional air gateways requires renewed focus.

"Attracting and sustaining more air services and overall seat capacity such as into Broome, Darwin, Far North Queensland and hoped for emergent direct international flights to Hobart are priorities for our industry to prosecute and with hopes to future leverage.

"It is why ATIC is now calling for a reset of the *Beyond Tourism 2020 Strategy* that will unite our industry in striving for new and sustainable targets and create pathways for more effective engagement to prepare us to best respond to the opportunities and challenges ahead."

Further Details:

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