

15 October 2019

MEDIA STATEMENT

Australian tourism industry has 3 words – regional visitor dispersal

The release by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) of another record number of international visitor arrivals is strongly welcomed by the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC).

Representing over 8000 Australian tourism businesses across all states and territories, ATIC said the remaining period of the *Tourism 2020* national tourism strategy had long proven its worth and was again vindicated by the latest *ABS Overseas Visitor Arrivals* data for the year to August 2019.

Short-term international visitor arrivals were a record 9.3 million.

ATIC Executive Director Simon Westaway said it must not be forgotten that these figures are the result of continued levels of investment in tourism product, as well as in marketing, transport and accommodation infrastructure and streamlining access, and are underpinned by industry and all-of-government backing of a cohesive, national tourism strategy.

He said the Australian tourism industry will strongly get behind the future unveiling of the next decade's national visitor economy strategy – *Tourism 2030* – but it must prioritise achieving greater levels of regional visitor dispersal – for a more sustainable, future-proofed sector.

“It's simplistic but the great future opportunity beyond keeping Australia front and centre as one of the globe's most appealing long haul holiday, events and business destinations, is to have more international visitors travel in greater numbers and stay longer in our regions,” Mr Westaway said.

“Its three words – regional visitor dispersal – but if we can achieve a greater outcome here over the next decade – the impact of our visitor economy and for jobs in our regions – will be immense.

“Whilst 43 cents in every visitor dollar is spent in Australia's regions – beyond our all-critical capital city gateways – still over 90 per cent of this spend comes from Australians seeing Australia.

“Our tourism industry is increasingly becoming as one in how we better tackle the problem – and deliver the opportunities – so that more visitors to our shores see, experience and taste what makes the complete Australian experience and an unmatched global holiday proposition.”

Mr Westaway said ongoing investment in regional tourism 'icons' and product, the way we authentically deliver our offering to international visitors (and done so by more Australians), enhanced and perceived easier access into the regions and more effective marketing of them appeared key approaches. These four areas collectively form the basis for industry's ongoing engagement with all stakeholders in Australian tourism around the opportunity which over 9 million annual international visitors provides.

ATIC said China (with 16 per cent of visitors), New Zealand and the US continue to lead Australia's tourism export markets, followed by the UK and Singapore out the top five.

Excitingly the steady re-build of the Japanese visitor market as well as steadily rising numbers from India, Malaysia, Indonesia and Hong Kong pointed to future growth opportunities as the Chinese visitor market remained strong but was maturing.

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