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MEDIA STATEMENT

Tourism Australia's strategy 'overhaul' to reboot domestic tourism is endorsed

The Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) strongly endorses the flagged strategy shift by Tourism Australia towards future promotion of domestic travel destinations to local audiences due to the diabolical impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Responding to commentary in today's *Australian* newspaper that our global-leading national tourism agency will 'overhaul its current strategy' directly towards encouraging Australians to travel to and through their country; ATIC Executive Director, Simon Westaway, stated this was a major development for industry and would hopefully prove a catalyst to help enable anticipated recovery of the visitor economy in time.

Mr Westaway said ATIC's consistent policy position that Tourism Australia both regain and continue to retain and play a renewed role in domestic tourism marketing as well as partnership and supply side engagement with industry is now excitingly on the horizon.

Domestic and intrastate tourism continues to deliver around 70% of Australia's approaching \$150 billion tourism and visitor economy and remains firmly the backbone of the economic sector.

He said with dedicated funds and driving important coordinated approaches such as regional visitor dispersal initiatives, the national oversight and targeted activity that Tourism Australia can bring is timely given no part of our industry has been spared from the major impact of coronavirus.

"Australian tourism, one of the true pillars of our economy, has been flattened by impact after impact since the beginning of 2020. The reality is COVID-19 has struck our industry hard and perhaps like no other," Mr Westaway said.

"We know sadly for many tourism enterprises and tens of thousands of those once employed across the sector that there may be no tomorrow when we look towards any future removal of state and territory border restrictions and less onerous social distancing to get things moving again.

"The position to be taken by Tourism Australia is not just the right thing to do, but it will also be symbolically important. We firmly believe such a decision can reignite the spark of many in our great industry to start future rebuilding our Australia's visitor economy from within."

Mr Westaway said Tourism Australia's strategy and operations had achieved success by previously accommodating both international marketing, trade and B2B engagement with global reach alongside a strategic role involving direct investment and coordination of targeted domestic tourism marketing and industry partnerships activity.

"The massive blow the sudden loss of the rising international tourism market to Australia has had on so many tourism businesses across our cities and region, particular many SMEs who attract overseas tourist visitors, isn't immediately replaceable. But with international borders to remain firmly shut for the foreseeable future this approach has to be undertaken to help assist an industry reboot," Mr Westaway said.

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