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MEDIA STATEMENT

Tourism industry baseline now set with latest international and domestic visitor data

Today's release of important but backward facing visitor economy data around national and international visitor statistics for the December 2019 quarter provides context against what is today a very different scenario facing Australia's \$150 billion tourism and visitor economy.

The latest National Visitor Survey (NVS) and International Visitor Survey (IVS) highlighted that domestic overnight spend again rose by double digits (+12% to \$80.7 billion) for the year to 31 December 2019 with overnight stays similarly up 12%. Record international spending rose 3% on an annualised basis to \$45.3 billion supported by 275 million visitor nights to the end of 2019.

Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) Executive Director Simon Westaway said the quarterly industry snapshot for domestic and international tourism activity delivered by Tourism Research Australia remained critical analysis and sets a standard that few other countries replicate globally.

"Australian tourism enterprises, wider players in our industry and governments continue to rely and engage around this detailed quarterly research which tracks both domestic and international tourism within Australia. This data delivery sets continual benchmarks and now policy makers have the representative statistical baseline right before the dual impacts of bushfires and COVID-19 which transpired from the beginning of 2020 from which to help industry address future recovery," Mr Westaway said.

"The reality is Australian tourism has rapidly moved into its lowest ebb with the wrecking balls of the major bushfire impacts and now COVID-19 which are not captured by this latest data release.

"ATIC continues its historic callout for a more strongly equipped and resourced TRA to be able to also procure and deliver additional real time data and insights that complement these quality quarterly releases and assist the tourism industry, our people and our investors to best face the uncertain future ahead.

"The how and when to eventually pivot out of the COVID-19 induced and necessary international and in-country travel restrictions will soon come into greater focus. Today's data release alongside the final furlong of *Tourism2020* strategy outcomes must now truly inform government on why ongoing, practical and targeted support for Australia's tourism and visitor economy is in everyone's mutual interest and can play its role in our eventual rebuild."

ATIC represents thousands of local tourism enterprises, where a feature of our industry is over 90% of 300,000 still registered tourism businesses are small to medium enterprises and sole traders that collectively employ 1 million people.

ATIC's 2021 Federal Pre-Budget submission has an outline for a new direction for Tourism Research Australia amongst a short list of common sense and practical reform insights.

"For our industry to again prosper to its only recent lofty heights we need to get on top of COVID-19. But we also need a tourism industry still with oxygen in its veins to effectively pivot and seize the genuine future opportunity the visitor economy presents for our nation. Tourism is an economic pillar of a future Australia and industry will need to rally over coming months to ensure we are not seen more as a pariah despite our undisputed social and economic value," Mr Westaway said.

Further Details:

Simon Westaway

Executive Director, ATIC

M: 0401 994 627

simon.westaway@royce.com.au

swestaway@qualitytourismaustralia.com

www.qualitytourismaustralia.com