

Finish re-opening the borders.... then we need a Plan

Fast-tracking the re-opening of domestic borders and re-birthing the next long-term tourism plan should be immediate priorities to help aid recovery of our beleaguered tourism industry.

ATIC said today's release of national domestic tourism data for August, and ongoing significant suppression of COVID community transmission across the country, reinforced the need for action.

Tourism Research Australia's August tourism analysis showed national Visitor Spend (down 53%), Visitor Trips (down 40%) and Visitor Nights (down 39%) for August 2020 against August last year.

In the 2020 calendar year to August, domestic visitation across Australia fell 42% and visitor spend a dramatic 47%, hard reflecting the massive impact of the COVID pandemic and bushfire crisis.

ATIC Executive Director Simon Westaway said with the nation proving its collective suppression of the virus, remaining State and Territory border blockages simply needed to be timetabled to lift.

"The impact of COVID-19 and the earlier bushfire crisis have delivered terrible domestic visitor spend and travel activity outcomes this year and recovery won't be easy," Mr Westaway said.

"The latest domestic tourism numbers cannot be sugar coated and reflect the serious state of our industry, yet one now admirably trying to recover and sustainably re-build in a COVID safe way.

"Fully re-opening all State and Territory borders to all Australians is the number one, immediate priority for our tourism regions and will best support tens of thousands of businesses and jobs.

"A fully re-opened Australia to Australians is the best message we can send, giving confidence for a COVID safe return to travel amongst us, be it to holiday, visit family and friends and for business.

"Despite slow, but positive progress on domestic borders, including the soon re-opening between NSW and Victoria, the economic fallout from COVID will drag on if remaining border closures stay.

"A new national tourism and visitor economy strategy and plan, beyond the completed *Tourism2020*, also must now be expedited, including a sharp focus on sustainable recovery.

"ATIC calls for the re-boot of activity for a new tourism plan, *Tourism2030*, one that incorporates immediate actions to help best position Australian tourism within the new COVID economy."

(Latest TRA data is at <https://www.tra.gov.au/domestic/monthly-snapshot>)

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