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MEDIA STATEMENT

Australian tourism industry eyes ‘transformational’ next decade tourism strategy with latest ABS international visitor data

The Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) has welcomed the unprecedented and sustained record international visitor volumes to our shores as clear endorsement of the all-of-government and industry alignment to a national tourism strategy that’s working!

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 ago proven its worth and was further vindicated by the latest ABS tourism data release on *Overseas Visitor Arrivals*.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) said for the year to July 2019 short-term international visitor arrivals were a record 9.3 million, growing 272,000 over the prior year and 3.8 million more visitor arrivals than ten years ago.

China (1.43 million), New Zealand (1.40 million) and the US (812,000) continue to lead Australia’s tourism export markets, followed by the UK (719K) and Japan (484K) rounding out the top five.

ATIC Executive Director Simon Westaway has repeated the call-out for industry to get behind the next decade’s conceptual national visitor economy strategy – a *Tourism 2030* strategy – and has welcomed the latest process of engagement being led and now underway through Austrade.

Mr Westaway said Australia’s \$140 billion and 1 million job tourism sector would work with government towards ‘*transformational*’ outcomes including a focus on expanding visitor experience and visitor access to stimulate greater international and domestic volumes into our nation’s regions as well as a sharpened domestic strategy including business events.

“Australia’s tourism industry performance in the past decade has been very strong and repeated record international visitor volumes are testimony to a working strategy that sought to best capitalise on Asian markets which are headed by China,” Mr Westaway said.

“The current national tourism strategy has achieved amazing success including rebooting domestic tourism and delivering higher yields for many operators. But industry well knows we need to far better capitalise on the opportunity to sustainably bring more international visitors into our regions, including over and beyond day trip journeys out of the Sydney and Melbourne gateways.

“The stark fact is only a handful of regions such as the Hunter, Yarra Valley and like destinations on the reachable fringe of our great cities have reaped the true benefit of record international visitor flows. Now’s the time to get serious to grow and better share tourism’s economic pie!

“Too few Australian regions have received the ripple effect of the wave of international tourist arrivals and our next long-term national tourism strategy must better address regional dispersal.

“Industry is now brimming with ideas to best counter any potential future plateauing or tapering in the international visitor cycle. This needs to include greater focus on regional tourism and non-capital city air gateways, to the role of international students and the growing value of domestic tourism also enabled by a lower Australian dollar.”

Mr Westaway pointed to both the Australian Government and Opposition bipartisan backing of future infrastructure support investment for a number of Australia’s *Tourism Icons*. This includes infrastructure support for incredible tourism assets as Kakadu National Park, Cradle Mountain, the Wangetti Trail in far North Queensland, the Great Ocean Road and WA’s Rottnest Island.

Further Details:

Simon Westaway

Executive Director, ATIC

M: 0401 994 627

www.qualitytourismaustralia.com