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MEDIA STATEMENT

Australian Tourism Industry Council backs Morrison Government's renewed focus on developing our tourism regions

The Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) and its 8000 plus tourism business member base has strongly got behind today's renewed focus by the Morrison Government of backing the drivers and opportunities that will expand the nation's tourism regions and their visitor appeal.

Today's release of the long-anticipated Tourism Research Australia (TRA) commissioned research into regional visitor dispersal by Deloitte Access Economics and its call out that Australian tourism's next long-term visitor economy strategy – *Tourism 2030* – will have regional tourism at its centrepiece – is welcome news to industry.

Federal Assistant Minister for Regional Tourism, Senator the Hon. Jonathon Duniam, today in Devonport outlined the Federal Government's latest research and strategic principles to sustainably build upon Australia's largest services export and \$150 billion, 1 million job industry sector. As industry knows tourism now represents a major economic pillar for many of our regions.

Mr Westaway said ATIC had been consistently calling for a sharper focus and deliberative policy intent to develop greater regional visitor dispersal and beyond day trip travel from capital city gateways, despite consistent record domestic and international visitor figures and the great appeal of Australia's regions in terms of visitor's desire to experience.

He said the "*Understanding Regional Dispersal of Australian Tourists*" report was an important document for industry and policy makers, laying out the facts and the stark realities of what was before our industry, to truly capture the opportunities and benefits of a major, sustainable and growing industry to many more parts of the country.

"Australian tourism enterprises had been saying three words to both government and our wider industry – of the need to better address 'regional visitor dispersal'. It is wonderful to see this renewed commitment to take such a course of action through today's Federal Government announcements," Mr Westaway said.

"*Tourism 2020* has been a tremendous success across a range of measures, but visitor dispersal into our regions, of genuinely getting both domestic travellers and international visitors into and through our regions, has been a regrettable laggard of where we sit a decade on from this tourism policy and strategy set-piece.

"Whilst 43 cents in every visitor dollar is now spent in Australia's regions still over 90 per cent of this spend comes from Australians seeing Australia. And arguably less than two-handfuls of defined regions or regional centres are only experiencing meaningful or sustained growth in visitors. We must work together to address the fact most Australian regions do not reap benefit from Australia's massive visitor economy!

"Where regions such as the Blue Mountains, the Hunter, Great Ocean Road and Margaret River have clearly benefited from the injection of visitors and the concerted effort to develop our visitor economy, the significant decline of iconic regions such as Kakadu and the missing opportunities in Broome and regions greater than a few hours from our capitals, requires redress through this new strategic intent and approach.

"ATIC will be working constructively with all-of-government and will look to see industry have a constructive and cohesive voice towards the final make-up of *Tourism 2030* and sustainably driving our region to even greater heights."

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