

12 December 2019

MEDIA STATEMENT

Latest international tourism numbers play into next national tourism strategy

Today's Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) release of yet another record set of international visitor numbers is strongly welcomed by the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC).

ATIC backs thousands of Australian small and medium tourism businesses as Australian tourism's largest member-based body,

ABS Overseas Visitor Arrivals data for the year to October 2019 grew a further 3.1 per cent achieving around 9.4 million annual arrivals based on industry's calculation.

ATIC Executive Director Simon Westaway said on the eve of the Christmas/New Year period and subsequent Chinese New Year travel influx in early 2020, at no other time has as many international tourists and overseas visitors come to Australia's shores.

Mr Westaway said Australia's tourism industry, the driver of the nation's \$150 billion visitor economy, never takes automatic, let alone consistently above national economic growth rates of international visitors to our shores as a future given.

He said industry views a strategically sound, but bold future **Tourism2030** national strategy as now a critical element to guide and future inform industry, investors and all of government as we head into year 2020.

"The time is right for government to effectively engage with industry and collectively set and establish the final strategic pillars and means to measure our next long-term national tourism plan," Mr Westaway said.

"ATIC is pleased to bring what we believe is a critical voice representing many small as well as larger Australian tourism enterprises and a strong voice for regional communities highly reliant on the visitor dollar.

"Regional visitor dispersal we understand is and will be one of the core strategic drivers from the next national tourism plan. This is applauded, not simply because of the immense benefits tourism delivers to many of our regions, but because a regional and rural experience is at the core of the quintessential Australian offering.

"Our regional tourism industry is at the ready to work with all tiers of government as well as collaborate in future partnerships to bring more international visitors into our regions – and for longer periods.

"The statistics continue to Australians are experiencing and exploring more of their own country than ever before yet only an estimated 10% of total regional tourism spending comes from international travellers. If we can raise the bar of 43 cents in every tourism dollar spent in our regions further towards 50 cents – or half of total overall visitor spending – the job, investment and economic impact will be immense."

Mr Westaway said ATIC's members were positive about the future direction of the Chinese inbound visitor market which remains the nation's largest tourism export market by value and volume, now representing 16 per cent of all visitor arrivals.

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