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MEDIA STATEMENT

Support needed to sustain Australian tourism's 'open for business' mantra

Today's Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) release of another record set of international visitor arrival numbers (for the year to November 2019) mustn't inhibit the strong, necessary response by government and industry to counteract the stark anticipated falls in overseas visitors as a result of the devastating fires and the unprecedented negative global coverage they have received.

ABS Overseas Visitor Arrivals data for the year to November 2019 grew a further 2.5 per cent achieving 9.4 million annual arrivals. These are a great set of numbers, past and present supported by a substantive national tourism strategy jointly endorsed by government and industry.

The Australian Tourism Industry (ATIC) backs thousands of our small and medium sized businesses which closely reflects the make-up of our industry.

ATIC Executive Director Simon Westaway said:

"ATIC is proudly aligned with our greater tourism industry and its iconic players within the \$150 billion visitor economy that directly employs 1 in 13 Australians and is amongst our largest regional economic contributors with 43 cents in every visitor dollar spent in our regions.

"Now is the time for clear and demonstrative actions that Australia's tourism industry – in practice and in perception – is open for business! It requires substantive investment because the early signs around international visitor demand, including cancelled bookings to Australia, is concerning.

"Action includes a return role for the Federal Government in domestic tourism marketing, as well as the clear activities it undertakes, including through Tourism Australia on the international stage. Our State and Territory Governments who equally promote their own appeal to domestic and international audiences must also get on board.

"ATIC stands as one with our industry that strong and measured responses in both demand and supply side support is required by whole-of-government to ensure a continued, sustainable Australian tourism industry. Industry must also play an important role.

"In attending national industry meetings convened by the Federal Government during this week, ATIC have welcomed their proactive efforts to date to convey the right messages to Australians and the world that our country remains a highly attractive and welcome place to visit and travel through.

"With tourism now being Australia's largest services export we look forward in anticipation to the next phase of proactive responses in the days ahead."

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