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Momentum Builds as Tourism Operators Enter New Season with Renewed Optimism

Australia's tourism operators are entering the new season with strengthening confidence, according to the latest national business sentiment survey from the Australian Tourism Industry Council, supported by state and territory Tourism Industry Councils.

Nearly 70% of respondents were open and trading as usual in the September quarter, reflecting a stable operating base, and more than a third reported stronger activity than the same period last year, driven by new experiences, improved digital presence and higher visitor spend. A South Australian respondent noted, "increased forward bookings for the next 12 months," while a Tasmanian respondent added, "Visitors generally are positive about their travel... our new experiences are picking up momentum and forward bookings. Increasing our prices does not seem to have had an effect on the number of sales."

Operators achieving stronger results highlighted new product development, enhanced online visibility and strategic pricing – signalling a proactive approach to growth supported by the [Quality Tourism Framework](#)'s capability tools.

While some operators experienced softer results, many said they are actively adapting. A New South Wales respondent explained, "Our focus over the past 12 months has been on friendly, personal service and keeping our property fresh. We promote during quieter months with special deals and encourage positive online reviews. Partnering with local attractions and businesses has also helped us strengthen demand and build steady year-round trade."

Cost pressures remain present and challenging across the industry. Many businesses adjusted rates to reflect rising costs while maintaining stable staffing levels across the period. A Victorian respondent said, "We were fortunate to have a good snow season,

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but it did not cover our basic expenses as it has in previous years. Rates and insurance costs have risen sharply, so we are working harder than ever and taking on more tasks in house to manage expenses."

Looking ahead, operators report a positive outlook for the October to December quarter, with two thirds of respondents expecting stronger bookings or stable bookings compared to the same period in 2024. Longer term, many operators also reported steady confidence in their future prospects, supported by clearer market signals and strengthened business capability. As one Victorian respondent said, "Strong regional tourism activity, new infrastructure projects, and growing local support have created confidence for the year ahead."

This growing confidence is further reflected in investment intentions. A total of 41.92% of operators plan to increase investment over the next 12 months, including new experiences, upgraded infrastructure, digital improvements and workforce development. With 45.2% feeling extremely confident about their business prospects, operators are actively positioning themselves for growth in the year ahead.

Across Australia, businesses continue to innovate, collaborate and elevate their offering, demonstrating strong resilience and readiness for future opportunities. With refreshed products, improved digital capability and renewed investment, operators are building momentum and looking ahead with growing optimism.

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