



Dissenting Report—The Hon Kelvin Thomson MP (Deputy Chair), The Hon Melissa Parke MP, Senator Sue Lines, Mr Tim Watts MP, Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig and Senator Glenn Sterle.

As members of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT), we dissent from the majority view of JSCOT and do not support the proposal to withdraw Australia from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).

Summary Overview

Australia has been a member of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) since 2004, joining 156 member countries to promote responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism.

The UNWTO values tourism as a driver of economic growth, working to assist member countries to increase competitiveness and promote sustainable tourism development.

UNWTO membership provides Australia's tourism industry, which employs nearly one million Australians, with the ability to gain essential industry-related knowledge through access to valuable world tourism data, and allows Australia the opportunity to develop its international reputation, standing, and influence within the sector through participation in key international tourism meetings.

Specific Areas of Concern

Australia's \$107 billion tourism sector has experienced significant budgetary cuts to the domestic tourism market with cuts to grants and marketing by the Australian Government, in addition to losing dedicated executive supervision and representation through the removal of a specific Minister for Tourism, and the

abolition of the Survey of Tourist Accommodation (STA), the Tourism Industry Regional Fund (TIRF), and the quality accreditation framework (T-QUAL).

Withdrawing from one of the world's biggest international tourism fora could further damage Australia's competitiveness in our key markets, limit access to research and statistics, undermine Australia's aid and development agenda in the Asia Pacific and weaken Australia's international reputation, causing another serious blow to an industry that Australia relies on as a driver for economic growth and employment, particularly over the next 20 years.

It must also be noted that the National Tourism Alliance, the Australian Tourism Export Council, and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council, all key industry stakeholders, are opposed to the decision to withdraw Australia from the UNWTO, and that no stakeholder was willing to publicly support the withdrawal during the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade consultation.

Withdrawing Australia from the UNWTO would not be in Australia's national interest; the better approach would be for Australia to continue to be active and prominent on the international stage by remaining a member of the UNWTO and advocating for reform to better engage industry with the international organisation. The benefit of this approach would be that Australia continues to uphold its growing international reputation, as well as assisting our tourism industry to remain globally competitive through the development of the high-quality and sustainable Australian tourism product that is at the heart of our distinctive offer.

The Hon Kelvin Thomson MP
(Deputy Chair)

The Hon Melissa Parke MP

Senator Sue Lines

Mr Tim Watts MP

Senator the Hon Joe Ludwig

Senator Glenn Sterle