

## TOURISM AUSTRALIA – OPENING STATEMENT

SENATE ESTIMATES – 25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2021

Good evening and thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

The last few times that we have met, I have relayed to you the challenges that have continued to face Australia's tourism industry as it endures the worst crisis on record.

Now, what we are witnessing in tourism is a two-speed recovery. Whilst some segments are doing well, others are struggling. Cities, experiences, and tourism destinations traditionally reliant upon international visitation are amongst those sectors doing it very tough, and until international tourists return, our industry will not fully recover. The longer international borders remain shut, the greater the economic dent it would make to the sector and the economy.

But as our industry continues to open up domestically and state borders hopefully remain open, I am buoyed by some of the positive trends that we've been seeing, along with the rollout of the COVID vaccine, and the positive impact that this will hopefully have on consumer confidence and travel more broadly.

Our job at Tourism Australia will be to continue to drive demand to those destinations that need it most. Our Holiday Here This Year campaign has been an agile, effective campaign platform for us for over a year now, in encouraging those Australians that have the means to, to take a domestic holiday. To date, over \$25 million has been spent on various iterations of the campaign, delivering 11.5 million room nights in tandem with our commercial partners.

We are also continuing to explore creative and practical initiatives to assist our industry. Just last week in Cairns, we launched a \$12 million national content creation initiative, which is the largest and most significant content initiative that we've ever embarked on as a marketing organisation. We will be creating a suite of high quality imagery of 1,800 tourism experiences from 57 regions across Australia, which will be provided to tourism operators for free to use to better promote their business, at a time when many do not have budgets to undertake any marketing. This will help to place Australian operators in the best position to capture international demand when borders reopen.

We are also keeping a keen eye on international markets and maintaining a visible marketing presence, so that when the world re-opens, Australia remains front of mind as a holiday destination. When international borders re-open, Tourism Australia will be ready to ramp up campaigns and initiatives, to drive demand and much needed international tourism dollars back to our sector.

I have no doubt that 2021 will continue to bring with it more unexpected challenges, but also some positive developments for our tourism industry. Ultimately, every Australian has a role to play in our survival and success. We need Australians to help shift the dial from COVID zero to COVID normal, and accept and embrace the new ways of the world so that when it is safe to do so, we can welcome back our friends, family and others from overseas, who we know are eager to be here to enjoy all of the wonderful things our country has to offer.

Thank you.