

## **TOURISM AUSTRALIA**

### **SENATE ESTIMATES OPENING STATEMENT**

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

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land on which we are meeting and pay respect to the Elders both past and present and emerging.

When we last spoke more than six months ago, I painted a rather gloomy picture of the state of the tourism industry. Since then, we have seen patches of recovery across Australia's tourism regions. However, there is still a long way to go.

Recent weeks have seen more state borders re-open, which is certainly welcome news for airlines, hotels, tourism operators and the communities who rely on them for their livelihood. But until all of our state borders are open, many operators will continue to struggle as they miss out on critical tourism dollars.

With international borders closed for the foreseeable future, Tourism Australia - as Australia's marketing agency - is prioritising its recovery effort towards stimulating domestic tourism demand and supporting our industry to ensure that they survive this crisis.

Earlier this month we launched the next phase of our domestic recovery campaign, '*Holiday Here This Year*', which was first launched in the wake of the 2019/20 summer bushfires. The campaign urges those Australians who can, to support their country by not just holidaying in their own backyard, but by immersing themselves in local tourism experiences.

The campaign has performed very well in the first 2 weeks – with our tracking showing it has reached over 8 million Australians on our social media channels, 4 million through our TV advertisements, and it has generated 1300 pieces of media coverage worth \$8.3m million in equivalent advertising value. Additionally, 56% of Australians we recently surveyed said that the campaign made them “more likely to consider taking a holiday this year”.

As part of this domestic push, we will of course also be resuming key bushfire recovery activities that were paused in the wake of COVID-19.

Getting more Australians to travel domestically has the potential to deliver billions of much needed revenue to our industry.

But domestic tourism alone cannot fill the vacuum of lost international tourism and there is no doubt that once it is safe to do so, attracting international travellers will form a critical part of our recovery.

That is why we have continued to focus on what we call 'dreaming' activity, which involves keeping a visible presence in all of our 15 key markets, through content partnerships and PR initiatives; and maintaining critical relationships with our commercial and distribution partners. This is vital for maintaining interest in Australia as a destination among travellers until they can visit again.

As international borders reopen and we move into recovery, we will switch the focus to brand and partnership activity aimed at conversion.

Our recovery plans also include reactivating aviation capacity, getting the global distribution system firing again and ensuring we roll out the right type of campaign activities, in what will be a fiercely competitive landscape for international tourism dollars.

Our industry is resilient. And I remain sure that it will rebuild, recover, and grow again.

Thank you.