

Tourism Australia Opening Statement

Budget Estimates – Opening statement (Tuesday, 4 June)

Phillipa Harrison, Managing Director

- Good evening and thank you for giving me the chance to address this committee.
- I would like to start with a quick statement to provide an update on Tourism Australia’s work and some insights on the ongoing recovery of the inbound international tourism.

Arrivals

- Arrivals to Australia continue to trend in the right direction and the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics numbers show in the month of March arrivals were 91 per cent compared to the same month in 2019.¹
- But we know the number of visitors travelling to Australia for the purpose of a ‘Holiday’ still has a way to go. The most recent numbers show holiday arrivals are at about 73 per cent of 2019 levels and that’s the part that really helps our industry.
- Overall these numbers have been generally tracking in the right direction since borders opened in February 2022 and we are increasingly confident we will get back to 100 per cent of pre-pandemic levels this year.
- Full recovery will be a significant moment for the Australian tourism industry, and while it is one we should acknowledge and celebrate, we will quickly turn our attention to returning to a path of sustainable growth.

China

- I won’t run through how all of our markets are recovering individually but there is often interest in the China market given it was our largest in terms of both visitation and spend pre-pandemic.
- It is important to remember China is about a year behind other markets in its recovery, as travel from China only resumed at the start of last year.
- The good news is Chinese travellers are returning and the market is following a similar pattern to what we saw with others after reopening.
- Encouragingly in February China was back to 73 per cent of pre-pandemic levels and was once again our largest market. This was largely off the back of Lunar New Year celebrations.²

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics arrivals numbers for March 2024 - the most recent arrivals numbers.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics arrivals numbers for February 2024 - when China was the #1 inbound market for the first time since travel resumed from China.

- This surge in demand for an Australian holiday shows what our team on the ground in China has been seeing – that is Australia remains a highly desirable destination for Chinese travellers.

Come and Say G'Day Campaign

- Our global campaign, Come and Say G'day, remains in markets around the world encouraging travellers to plan and book an Australian holiday.
- We are pleased with how it is performing – there have now been 2.45 billion views of campaign advertising globally...
- And we have 190 partners around the world working to convert the demand the campaign creates into actual bookings to Australia.

TA events

- At the same time Tourism Australia continues to connect the Australian tourism industry with global distribution partners.
- Just two weeks ago we hosted the Australian Tourism Exchange in Melbourne. It is our biggest trade event and it involved more than 2,600 international and Australian travel operators and buyers.
- Over four days more than 50,000 appointments took place and the business created of the back of the event is expected to run into the billions of dollars.
- We are also running events in market to further connect our industry. In August we will host Australia Marketplace Japan and Korea.
- Our Marketplace events are an opportunity for the Australian industry to travel abroad to meet with qualified travel agencies, wholesalers and tour operators.
- We also have many other events coming up this year including:
 - Australia Next in Cairns to attract more business events to Australia;
 - G'day Australia in Perth to give international travel agents the chance to see the destination for themselves; and
 - A Marketplace event for UK and Europe.
- Thank you for your time. I'll now happily take any questions you might have.