

TOURISM MINISTERS' MEETING COMMUNIQUÉ 19 February 2016

Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck, Federal Minister for Tourism and International Education, and the Hon Dr Kim Hames MLA, the West Australian Minister for Tourism, welcomed Australia's Tourism Ministers to Perth today for the 68th Tourism Ministers' Meeting.

2015 was a fantastic year for tourism with record levels of visitation and expenditure in domestic and international markets. Overnight visitor expenditure reached a record \$88.8 billion last financial year. The strong performance of the tourism industry reflects the hard work of industry and governments.

Minister Colbeck, as Chair, highlighted the importance of the benefits of tourism being spread economy wide and attracting visitors to regional Australia to experience some of our key attractions. Tourism is important to regional communities, with 45 cents in every tourism dollar spent in regional Australia. Regional Australia needs the economic impetus that tourism can bring.

Tourism Ministers discussed a range of issues, including:

Tourism 2020 – Tourism Ministers from all Australian jurisdictions recommitted to the Tourism 2020 target of reaching between \$115 billion and \$140 billion for overnight visitor expenditure by 2020. Forecasts indicate the industry is on track to achieve the lower end of the target due to the excellent contributions from all States and Territories to Australia's tourism industry. While reaching the lower end of the target is a good achievement, it is important not to be complacent – there is still work to do. Ministers noted that consideration will also be given to looking beyond 2020 to ensure the ongoing and long-term success of the industry.

Building a Sustainable Skilled Workforce for Tourism – the Australian Tourism Labour Force Report: 2015-2020, released in November 2015, found that Australia's tourism industry will need an additional 123,000 workers – including 60,000 skilled workers – to meet visitor demand by 2020. Tourism Ministers will continue to engage with industry to develop measures to promote tourism and hospitality industry careers and appropriate migration settings to alleviate short-term pressure. The proposed changes to the Working Holiday Maker taxation arrangements were discussed, and jurisdictions noted concerns that this might affect working holiday maker visitation.

Sharing Economy – Ministers discussed regulatory challenges and opportunities that the sharing economy presents. In tourism, this includes short-term accommodation platforms such as Airbnb and ride-sharing platforms such as Uber. Jurisdictions updated Ministers on progress made to date.

Indigenous Tourism – Ministers heard presentations from New Zealand Maori Tourism and the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC). Ministers discussed the broader lessons learned from these case studies for Australia's Indigenous tourism industry.

Tourism and International Education Opportunities – Ministers discussed opportunities arising from tourism and international education linkages – visiting friends and relatives (VFR) and the potential to grow VFR visitation, particularly in regional Australia; visa reform to ensure competitive visa arrangements; and work opportunities for international students in tourism and hospitality.

Tourism Australia's Aquatic and Coastal Campaign – Tourism Australia updated Ministers on *There's Nothing Like Australia* – aquatic and coastal. The campaign aims to increase total leisure spending and improve Australia's current association with world-class coastlines, beaches and marine wildlife, working with state and territory tourism organisations.

Tourism and the arts – all jurisdictions noted the importance of culture and the arts to tourism, and agreed to progress discussions on this area with their counterparts.

New Zealand Government Tourism update – Ministers received an update on the state of the tourism industry in New Zealand. New Zealand highlighted recent policy and marketing developments and initiatives, including the development of an 18-month strategy for the tourism sector that identifies the key challenges the industry is facing, and key priorities over the next 12-18 months.

Ministerial Attendance:

Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck (Commonwealth - Chair)

The Hon Dr Kim Hames MLA (Western Australia)

The Hon Will Hodgman MP (Tasmania)

The Hon John Eren MP (Victoria)

The Hon Leon Bignell MP (South Australia)

Mr Jonathan O'Dea MP (New South Wales)

Apologies:

The Hon. Stuart Ayres MP (New South Wales)

The Hon Kate Jones MP (Queensland)

Mr Andrew Barr MLA (Australian Capital Territory)

The Hon Adam Giles MLA (Northern Territory)

Rt Hon John Key, Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism (New Zealand)

The Hon Paula Bennett, Associate Minister of Tourism (New Zealand)

Secretariat contact:

Australian Trade Commission (Austrade)

ascot-tmm@austrade.gov.au Ph: (02) 6272 6897

Media contacts:

Minister for Tourism and International Education Office: 0400 940 968