

Tourism 2020

Whole of government working with industry to achieve Australia's tourism potential

TOURISM MINISTERS' MEETING COMMUNIQUÉ **28 August 2017**

The Hon Steven Ciobo MP, Federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment welcomed Australia's Tourism Ministers to Beijing, China today for the Tourism Ministers' Meeting.

The meeting was held in China in recognition of the 2017 China-Australia Year of Tourism. The China-Australia Year of Tourism celebrates the close relationship between our two countries, increases people-to-people links, fosters growth, and our ability to capitalise on tourism opportunities.

The China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) was invited as a special guest to mark the occasion. The Chairman of the CNTA delivered a presentation on the Year of Tourism from China's perspective, and highlighted opportunities for further cooperation between our two countries.

China is one of Australia's fastest growing and highest spending international visitor markets. Over 1.2 million Chinese tourists visited Australia in the last year, and this is forecast to nearly double by 2020. These same Chinese tourists spent \$9.7 billion in Australia to the year ending March 2017. This accounts for 24 per cent of total visitor spend.

More generally, international tourist arrivals to Australia are at record highs, with 8.5 million visitors to the year ending March 2017. This has resulted in record spending of \$39.8 billion in the year to March 2017. Domestic overnight visitor expenditure also reached a record high of \$61.7 billion in the year to March 2017. Overnight visitor expenditure is now at \$101.5 billion for the year ending March 2017, up 6 per cent and tracking above the lower bound of the \$115 billion by 2020 target.

Tourism provides a source for growth across Australia's capital cities and regional areas. While Australian tourism is well on the way to achieving its objective under Tourism 2020, more work still needs to be done. Tourism Ministers agreed that all levels of government and industry must continue to work together to ensure the upper-bound of the industry's Tourism 2020 \$140 billion overnight expenditure target is met.

Accordingly, Tourism Ministers discussed today how initiatives under the below themes will help the tourism industry maintain its competitiveness.

Labour and skills reform– Ministers recognised the importance of the tourism industry as a major employer of Australians. Ministers provided updates on key initiatives underway in their respective jurisdictions to help address labour and skills priorities in the sector. These initiatives included enhancing perceptions of tourism careers and vocational education and training. In particular, Ministers noted Queensland's Tourism Workforce Plan 2017-2020 and Tasmania's Tourism and Hospitality Workforce Taskforce.

Data and research and beyond Tourism 2020 – Ministers acknowledged the importance of providing industry and governments with tourism specific data to inform policy and business decisions. In particular, Ministers discussed how continuous improvement of tourism data will better inform potential areas of focus for the next national long-term tourism strategy beyond Tourism 2020. Ministers noted the various Australian Government initiatives to enhance the data landscape including the development of a data plan. In particular, Ministers noted the Data61 initiative aimed to identify alternative data sources that have the potential to provide robust measures of tourism activity project. Findings from this initiative are due later this year.

Aviation capacity and access – Ministers agreed on the need to grow aviation capacity to Australia to drive economic growth. Ministers welcomed, in particular, the landmark open skies-style air services arrangement with China settled in late 2016. This has removed all capacity restrictions between Australia and China for airlines of both countries, creating unlimited growth potential for the Australian tourism, trade and investment sectors.

Infrastructure investment and regulatory reform – Ministers considered progress to date in the selection of pilot regions in each of the jurisdictions and the work undertaken to develop implementation plans as part of the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Investment Attraction Strategy. Improving the investment environment is crucial to ensure Australia remains competitive and can meet the needs and expectations of visitors in our capital cities and those dispersing into our regional areas. Ministers also welcomed the progress made by the 177 projects totalling over \$104 million under the Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure programme.

Visa reform – Ministers received an update on the Australian Government's recent announcement on 31 July 2017 regarding proposed reforms to transform Australia's visa system. The transformation will make the visa system easier to understand, easier to navigate and more responsive to our economic, social and security interests. Ministers noted the consultation process currently underway. The reform agenda will further improve the competitiveness of Australia's visitor visa programme in key markets. Building on the success of recent visa products introduced in the China market, including the trial of 10-year multiple-entry visas and online visa lodgement, this remains a priority for the Australian Government.

Marketing – Ministers agreed it is critical for Australia to produce effective, coordinated marketing campaigns to drive international demand for Australia. Ministers received an update from Tourism Australia on their marketing activities, in particular the events delivered and planned as part of the China-Australia Year of Tourism.

Ministerial attendance:

The Hon Steven Ciobo MP (Federal Minister, Chair)

Mr Andrew Barr MLA (Australian Capital Territory)

The Hon Kate Jones MP (Queensland)

The Hon Adam Marshall MP (New South Wales)

The Hon Leon Bignell MP (South Australia)

The Hon Paul Papalia CSC MLA (Western Australia)

The Hon Lauren Moss MLA (Northern Territory)

Apologies (senior officials in attendance):

The Hon John Eren MP (Victoria)

The Hon Will Hodgman MP (Tasmania)

Apologies:

Hon Paula Bennett (New Zealand)

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