

Tourism 2020

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

TOURISM MINISTERS' MEETING COMMUNIQUE 4 May 2012

Tourism Ministers met in Melbourne today to advance progress on *Tourism 2020*, a whole of government strategy, working with industry to increase the competitiveness of the Australian tourism industry and help it achieve its full potential. New Zealand's Associate Tourism Minister, the Hon Chris Tremain, joined Ministers from across the Commonwealth.

The key highlights of the meeting were:

- Ministers supported jurisdictions working towards nominated timeframes for development approval assessment and escalating state significant developments.
- Agreement to release in October 2012 a report card on progress by all jurisdictions in progressing the regulatory reform agenda, in line with COAG's focus on addressing unnecessary and burdensome red tape.
- Endorsement of the Australian Tourism Investment Guide and the Tourism Investment Monitor, launched earlier in the week.
- Agreement to work with industry to support the implementation of the Seasonal Workers Program to supply seasonal workers to the accommodation sector.
- Endorsement of the recent developments under T-QUAL Grants Program, including the commencement of the first Indigenous Employment Strategic Tourism Investment Grant project in the Northern Territory.

Tourism 2020 Progress

Ministers reviewed and welcomed progress on work within the six strategic areas of *Tourism 2020* to achieve the 2020 Tourism Industry Potential of doubling overnight visitor expenditure to between \$115 and up to \$140 billion by the year 2020. They agreed to intensify the focus on 16 key priorities for delivery in 2012.

Encourage Investment and Implement Regulatory Reform Agenda

Following the 13 April 2012 COAG meeting, Tourism Ministers agreed to support First Ministers' commitment to streamlining approval processes and removing **burdensome and unnecessary regulation** to facilitate increased tourism investment. Particular actions include:

- Tourism Ministers writing to First Ministers highlighting how **the recommendations from *Tourism 2020's* Investment and Regulatory Reform**

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Working Group's (IRRWG) can feed into the major projects taskforces being established so that **approvals are administered by a single state agency, with no unnecessary duplication in commonwealth and state processes.**

- Support for **jurisdictions continuing to work towards nominated timeframes for development approval assessment and escalating state significant developments.**
- Referral of the *Best Practice Guidelines for Eco-opportunities in Protected and Natural Areas*, commissioned by the Tourism and Protected Areas Forum, to the COAG Standing Council of Environment and Water. This will help to **facilitate tourism investment in high natural amenity areas** through guidance to land management agencies to promote and facilitate ecotourism development across Australia.
- Tourism Ministers writing to Small Business Ministers with examples of **burdensome and unnecessary regulations identified by the IRRWG for consideration by the COAG Taskforce on red tape**, due for completion by the next COAG meeting.

Ministers also reviewed work delivered through *Tourism 2020* to address impediments to tourism investment and agreed to release a report card in October 2012, highlighting progress by all jurisdictions on the tourism regulatory reform agenda since the TMM of 14 October 2011. Tourism Ministers also agreed to work towards **nationwide reform in the areas of investment facilitation and approval processes for tourism development in areas of high natural amenity** at their next meeting in October 2012.

Ministers welcomed the announcement that as part of *Tourism 2020*, Austrade is prioritising the attraction of tourism investment and is working in partnership with Tourism Australia and the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism to **promote Australia as a destination for tourism investment.** Ministers endorsed the launch of the ***Australian Tourism Investment Guide*** that will act as a prospectus for potential investors displaying up to 80 investment ready, and/or proposed Australian tourism investment opportunities. Tourism Ministers agreed that State Tourism Organisations and State Investment Attraction agencies would work with Tourism Australia and Austrade to promote tourism investment opportunities detailed in the *Australian Tourism Investment Guide*.

Tourism Ministers also endorsed the release of Tourism Research Australia's ***Tourism Investment Monitor*** that for the first time benchmarks the level of investment in Australia's main tourism-related sectors. They discussed ways in which the \$42 billion identified in the tourism investment pipeline could be channelled towards meeting *Tourism 2020* objectives, such as **increasing accommodation capacity by 40,000 plus rooms by 2020.**

Increase Supply of Labour, Skills and Indigenous Participation

Tourism Ministers committed **\$1.2 million to help fill labour and skills shortages in key tourism hot spots**. The tourism industry currently has 36,000 vacancies, with a projected need for an additional 56,000 workers by 2015. Tourism Ministers noted the progress of **Tourism Employment Plans (TEP)** which identify the specific needs of each region and provide strategies to help tourism operators fill gaps, including linking tourism and hospitality firms with existing and prospective government and industry programs. The TEPs will also have a particular focus on **maximising employment opportunities for Indigenous Australians**. The TEPs will be rolled out progressively with Broome and the Red Centre currently under development, with Sydney and Victoria's Mornington Peninsula and Philip Island region underway later in 2012.

Tourism Ministers agreed to use the outcomes from the TEPs to help fill labour and skills shortages in other regions and to integrate the TEPs with other jurisdiction employment strategies.

Tourism Ministers agreed to **Partnership Agreements** between the Commonwealth, State Tourism Organisations and Tourism Industry Councils to support the implementation of the **Seasonal Workers Program (SWP)**. Commencing from 1 July 2012, the three-year Seasonal Workers Program will allow workers from the Pacific and East Timor to travel to Australia to work in the tourism accommodation sector, helping to alleviate seasonal labour shortages in selected regions. Tourism Ministers agreed on five identified regions as Broome, the Northern Territory, Tropical North Queensland, the Whitsunday Islands and Kangaroo Island. The exact number and pace of workers arriving will be determined by the uptake and interest in these regions and taking into account consultation with communities and industry.

These measures will contribute towards *Tourism 2020* objectives of adding the 56,000 to 152,000 jobs needed to meet the *Tourism 2020* potential.

Ensure Tourism Transport Environment Supports Growth

Tourism Ministers noted that **simplifying trans-Tasman travel requirements** would increase New Zealand visitor expenditure by \$16 million a year under a 'domestic like' border arrangement and by \$370 million a year under a 'common border' arrangement. Tourism Ministers asked the TMM Chair to advocate the value of harmonising trans-Tasman border arrangements to border agencies.

Tourism Ministers noted a new communications strategy to better promote "**Australia's Regional Air Access Packages.**" The communications strategy will inform foreign governments and international airlines of **potential benefits when utilising the entitlements offered in the regional packages**. The enhanced regional package permits unrestricted capacity and frequency (that is, open, third and fourth freedom capacity) for direct flights to and from Australia's regional international gateways. If taken up further, this measure will assist dispersal and grow international aviation capacity by the 40 to 50 per cent required to meet Australia's tourism potential.

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Tourism Ministers tasked the Tourism Access Working Group to investigate further options to encourage international flights to regional airports including Canberra.

Grow Demand from Asia

Tourism Ministers welcomed the fact that international arrivals to Australia remained at 5.9 million in the year ending February 2012 and noted the strong performance from Asian markets.

Tourism Ministers discussed a range of initiatives underway to embrace opportunities arising from the Asian Century. Ministers look forward to Tourism Australia's India 2020 Strategic Plan, to be announced by Minister Ferguson at the Australian Tourism Exchange in June 2012.

Build Industry Resilience, Productivity and Quality

Tourism Ministers noted progress underway on the first Indigenous employment **Strategic Tourism Investment Grant (STIG)** project. William Angliss Institute has commenced development of a business development curriculum at the National Indigenous Academy at Ayers Rock Resort (ARR), with the view to facilitating greater participation of Indigenous Australians in tourism businesses.

Tourism Ministers welcomed the recent calls for two new STIG proposals for Indigenous Tourism Product Development and National Landscapes, and noted that assessment of applications under the Welcoming Chinese Visitors initiative was underway.

Tourism Ministers also noted the closing of the 2012 round of T-QUAL Grants – Tourism Quality Projects, for projects that will support *Tourism 2020*. Tourism Ministers were pleased with the successful rollout of T-QUAL Accreditation, which now has ten Quality Assurance Schemes operating under T-QUAL Accreditation and over 13,000 businesses eligible to use the T-QUAL Tick. Ministers also welcomed the T-QUAL Tick's recent approval as a Certified Trade Mark by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

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The Tourism Ministers' Meeting was attended by:

The Hon Martin Ferguson AM MP (Commonwealth - Chair)
The Hon Louise Asher MLA (Victoria)
The Hon Scott Bacon MP (Tasmania)
Mr Andrew Barr MLA (Australian Capital Territory)
The Hon Gail Gago MLC (South Australia)
The Hon Dr Kim Hames MLA (Western Australia)
The Hon Malarndirri McCarthy MLA (Northern Territory)
The Hon George Souris MP (New South Wales)
The Hon Chris Tremain (New Zealand)

Dr Richard Eden (Director-General, Queensland Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business, and the Commonwealth Games – representing the Hon Jann Stuckey MP, Queensland Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games)

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