



Australian Government

Australian Trade and Investment Commission

China Approved Destination Status Advisory Panel (ADSAP) Meeting Communiqué – 30 July 2026

On 30 July 2026, Austrade's Office of Tourism and the Visitor Economy (OTVE) chaired the Approved Destination Status Advisory Panel (ADSAP) meeting online. The meeting brought together representatives from the Australian Government and the Australian tourism industry to provide advice on the continued administration, operation and improvement of the Approved Destination Status (ADS) scheme.

Briefing on the report "The China Visitor Economy: Rebuilding the Momentum and Unlocking Australia's Full Opportunity"

Mr Tom Parker, CEO, Australia China Business Council and Ms Emily Davis, partner at L.E.K. Consulting Australia Pty Ltd provided insights into the report: [*The China Visitor Economy: Rebuilding Momentum and Unlocking Australia's Full Opportunity*](#). The report was published by the Australia China Business Council and prepared with assistance of funding from OTVE and supported by L.E.K. Consulting Australia Pty Ltd. The report covers shifting tourism patterns and links between visitation and trade, education and investment.

Department of Home Affairs Update

The Department of Home Affairs reported strong year-on-year growth in ADS visa applications in 2025-26 despite lodgements remaining below pre-COVID pandemic levels. 70,205 ADS visas were granted in the 2025-26 financial year compared to 51,781 last year during the 2024-25 financial year. Home Affairs conducted outreach and training activities for Outbound Tour Operators (OTO) in China from April to June 2026. In July 2026, Home Affairs commenced its annual OTO compliance audit to strengthen the integrity of the ADS program, ensuring it remains effective and aligned with its intended policy outcomes.

Tourism Australia Update

Tourism Australia reported strong growth on overall China visitation figures, with Australia welcoming 1.12 million Chinese visitors in the year ending March 2026, who spent a total of \$11.8 billion in Australia. This represented an increase of 21% in visitor arrivals and 30% in spend compared with the year ending March 2025. Tourism Australia also noted strong growth in Hong Kong visitation figures, which should be looked at in conjunction with China due to the integration of the two regions.

Tourism Australia noted shifting Chinese traveller preferences influenced by safety concerns associated with conflict in the Middle East, which have reduced the appeal of European destinations,

prompting Chinese travellers to consider Australia. Australia is widely regarded as a safe, welcoming, and traveller-friendly destination.

Austrade's Office of Tourism and the Visitor Economy (OTVE) Update

Compliance

OTVE provided an overview of compliance activities undertaken for the 2025-26 financial year, including frequently applied breaches. Austrade noted most breaches were rectified through a warning or education notice and many Inbound Tour Operators (ITOs) remained compliant with the ADS Code. Findings from compliance activities will inform the design and implementation of the new ADS Code.

Industry Capability

Through targeted outreach, engagement and training, OTVE supported Inbound Tour Operators (ITOs) across Australia and, in partnership with the Department of Home Affairs, OTOs in China to strengthen industry capability. OTVE published the second edition of [Exploring Australia](#), a bilingual tour guide booklet for the ADS, that was developed with State and Territory Tourism Organisations (STOs) to uplift tour guide capability and showcase Australia's diverse tourism experiences, including First Nations history and culture. OTVE noted the WA Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC), with support from the Australian Government National Foundation for Australia-China Relations, had undertaken research on Chinese perceptions of First Nations tourism experiences and provide practical recommendations for government, industry and Aboriginal tourism operators. The report is scheduled for official release in August 2026.

ADS Modernisation

OTVE outlined upgrades to the AccessADS portal as part of efforts to modernise the ADS scheme.

OTVE provided an overview of feedback received from consultations on the ADS Code and Framework, which broadly supported modernising the ADS scheme to better reflect contemporary Chinese traveller preferences while maintaining scheme integrity. OTVE is currently preparing advice to Government, informed by feedback from the consultations. Further consultation with ADSAP members was planned on the draft ADS Code and updated business processes before changes to the Code were finalised.

Attendees

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| • Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) | • Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) |
| • Department of Home Affairs | • Australia China Business Council |
| • Tourism Australia | • PTC Express Travel |
| • Destination NSW | • Grandview Travel Pty Ltd |
| • Tourism and Events Queensland | • Aus Highway Travel Services Pty Ltd |
| • Tourism Tasmania | • L.E.K. Consulting Australia Pty Ltd (Guest Speaker) |
| • Visit Canberra | |
| • South Australian Tourism Commission | |

Next Meeting

Austrade to seek advice from ADSAP members on preferred dates in October/November and format for the next meeting.