



Australian Government

Australian Trade and Investment Commission

# China Approved Destination Status Advisory Panel (ADSAP) 24th Meeting – 27 May 2025 - Communique

On 27 May 2025, Austrade held the 24<sup>th</sup> ADSAP meeting at Austrade's Sydney Office. ADSAP brings together representatives from the Australian Government and the Australian tourism industry to provide advice on the continued administration, operation and improvement of the ADS scheme.

## **ADS Transition Phase update**

Austrade provided an update on the transition phase of the ADS scheme, highlighting the rebuilt of the ADS team with enhanced capability and renewed focus on program delivery and industry engagement. Austrade also presented the ADS 2025-26 Roadmap, which will guide the development of a new ADS framework. The roadmap received broad support from ADSAP members, who noted the increasing momentum achieved through recent government-industry collaborations.

## **Visa trends**

The Department of Home Affairs reported continued growth in ADS visa applications in 2024-25, though the overall volumes remain well below pre-COVID levels. Visa grant rates and visa compliance remain high, reflecting the program's low-risk profile compared to broader visitor visa categories. The Department is focused on strengthening its engagement with outbound tour operators in China and improving program integrity through upcoming trainings, audits and communications.

## **China market insight**

Tourism Australia shared insights on market recovery and consumer trends. China remains a key growth market, with steady increases in visitor arrivals and strong performance across major digital platforms. Tourism Australia continues to invest in promotional activities and industry partnerships to drive demand.

Guest speaker Mr Reder Wang (China outbound tour operator) provided further on the ground insights, noting shifting traveller expectations towards safety, quality and personalised experiences. Younger, digitally engaged travellers and the growing "silver hair" segment were highlighted as key opportunities. Mr Wang raised concerns about the impact of low-cost, low-inclusion tours on Australia's reputation, emphasising the importance of repositioning Australia as a premium long-haul destination.

## **Future of the ADS scheme**

Panel members participated in a facilitated discussion on the future of the ADS scheme. There was strong support for its continuation, with recognition that the program must evolve to reflect changing traveller preferences and market conditions.

Key priorities identified included improving tour and guide quality, increasing flexibility, and refining marketing to better target emerging traveller segments. Stakeholders also supported a more insight driven, modernised approach to program design.

## **Interim Compliance Framework**

ADSAP discussed the proposal for an Interim Compliance Framework to manage the immediate risk to the ADS scheme while the development of an updated ADS Code is underway. While there was a strong agreement on the overarching risk-based approach to compliance, ADSAP members expressed the need for more time to consider its practical application. It was agreed that the interim compliance requirements be consulted further, e.g. at the upcoming ITO Annual Training Meeting in Sydney on 25 June 2025.

## **Attendees**

- Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade)
- Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC)
- Tourism Australia
- Department of Home Affairs
- Tour Guides Australia (TGA)
- Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC)
- Destination NSW
- Visit Victoria
- South Australian Tourism Commission
- Tourism Tasmania
- Tourism and Events Queensland
- Australia China Business Council (ACBC)
- PTC Express Travel
- Grandview Travel Pty Ltd
- Aus Highway Travel Services Pty Ltd
- Grand Aust Tour

## **Apologies**

- NSW Tourism Association

## **Next meeting**

The Next ADSAP meeting is scheduled for 29 October 2025.