Australian Government

**Australian Government Response to the
Inquiry into Australia's Tourism and
International Education Sectors
final report:**

**'Are we there yet?': From recovery to resilience – opportunities and
challenges for Australia's tourism sector'**

Contents

Overview

On 20 October 2022, Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism, asked the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, through its Trade Subcommittee (the Committee), to inquire into Australia's tourism and international education sectors. The Inquiry explored the challenges and opportunities presented to both sectors since the reopening of Australia's borders in February 2022.

The Committee has tabled two reports that will receive separate responses from the Australian Government:

- An interim report tabled on 19 October 2023 – *Quality and Integrity - the Quest for Sustainable Growth': Interim Report into International Education* with 29 recommendations and
- A final report tabled on 1 October 2024 — *'Are we there yet?': From recovery to resilience – opportunities and challenges for Australia's tourism sector* with 28 recommendations.

This response focuses on the final report, which addresses the recommendations made in relation to tourism.

As the Committee indicates, tourism is a rich and complex ecosystem. The government, through Austrade and Tourism Australia, engages with State and Territory Organisations (STOs), Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs), local government bodies and industry bodies on relevant tourism policies and programs.

At the Australian Government level, Austrade is established by the *Australian Trade and Investment Commission Act 1985*, which outlines its role to develop and administer tourism policy, including domestic tourism. Tourism Research Australia is a branch within Austrade, providing quality tourism intelligence across both international and domestic markets and producing Australia's official tourism statistics.

Tourism Australia was established, and its role set, by the *Tourism Australia Act 2004*. Tourism Australia is the Australian Government agency responsible for international tourism marketing to influence people to travel to and throughout Australia for holidays and business events, increase the economic benefits to Australia from tourism and help foster a sustainable tourism industry in Australia.

THRIVE 2030 is Australia's national strategy for the long-term sustainable growth of the visitor economy. Under the first action plan, we met the interim target of returning visitor spend (for tourism and long-stay international students) to pre-COVID levels of $166 billion, with annual visitor spend reaching $214 billion in the 12 months to December 2024. Approximately $80 billion of this was spent in regional Australia, against a target of $70 billion.

In line with the Committee's emphasis on emerging opportunities, the Australian Government is focused on supporting the visitor economy to expand international markets, grow visitation to our regions, build industry capability and address workforce challenges. Appropriately embedding Australia's First Nations cultural heritage in Australia's visitor economy provides an opportunity for improved economic opportunities and outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

Recommendations and Response

> **Recommendation 1**
>
> The Committee recommends the Australian Government establishes a national First Nations tourism body to represent the interests of First Nations businesses and communities in visitor economy policy and program development.
>
> The Committee recommends the terms of reference of the new body are informed by the strategies and successful activities of the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC), particularly WAITOC's approach to community engagement, business capability development, and fostering employment opportunities for First Nations people.

The Government **agrees in part** with this Recommendation.

Since the Committee's report was tabled, a national First Nations Visitor Economy Partnership (FNVEP) has been established, comprised of First Nations tourism industry representatives from every state and territory. This was the result of an 18-month co-design process involving First Nations tourism industry representatives and Australian and state and territory governments. Funding for the two-year establishment phase of the FNVEP was announced on 30 October 2024. The Chief Executive Officer of WAITOC was a member of the FNVEP co-design group and is now Chair of the FNVEP. While the FNVEP differs from WAITOC's structure and remit, this initiative's terms of reference has benefited from WAITOC's expertise and experience.

The FNVEP will provide leadership and guidance on respectfully embedding Australia's rich cultural heritage in our tourism offerings and be a national consultation mechanism for government, while investigating the establishment of a national First Nations tourism body.

> **Recommendation 2**
>
> The Committee recommends that once the First Nations tourism body referred to in Recommendation 1 is established, it should consider:
>
> - A review into the current state of the First Nations tourism sector with the aim to make recommendations to government and industry on the short-, medium- and long-term actions to build a stronger and sustainable First Nations tourism sector and enable First Nations peoples to derive real financial benefit from appropriately sharing their cultural knowledge in the tourism sector;
> - Preparation of a National First Nations Visitor Economy Strategy; and
> - Development and implementation of programs that educate non-First Nations tourism operators on how to engage and ethically partner with First Nations people in their local communities and how to appropriately collaborate with First Nations people and showcase cultural product in their business and services.

The Government **agrees in principle** with this Recommendation.

As outlined in the response to recommendation 1, the FNVEP was established in October 2024. The Australian Government has provided this recommendation to the FNVEP for its consideration.

Since the Committee's report was tabled, the Australian Government provided a $8 million grant to ATIC's Quality Tourism Framework (QTF) to develop a number of initiatives, including a "Connecting to Culture Toolkit" that educates non-First Nations tourism operators on how to build and foster meaningful and collaborative connections with First Nations people and communities. Launched in March 2025, the toolkit was developed through ATIC's First Nations Reference Group, comprised of First Nations representatives from across Australia, to ensure it provides an accurate reflection of First Nations people and culture.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends the Australian Government continues to implement grant programs that support First Nations tourism businesses to design and deliver authentic, culturally appropriate experiences including in ethical partnerships with established operators. In implementing these programs, the Government should engage with the new national First Nations tourism body proposed in Recommendation 1.

The Government **agrees in principle** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government continues to implement the Strategic Indigenous Tourism Program, which commits up to $17.0 million to 30 June 2026 to co-invest with states and territories on strategic First Nations tourism initiatives, including grants.

The Australian Government also supports First Nations enterprises through programs such as Indigenous Business Australia's Business Solutions Program, which provides tailored business support and access to capital for small-to-medium First Nations enterprises looking to commence a business or scale-up operations and grow their business.

The Australian Government will explore opportunities to engage with FNVEP in designing and implementing any future First Nations grant programs.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends the membership of Tourism Australia's board should include at least one or more First Nations people.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government will seek to maintain Indigenous representation on the Tourism Australia Board.

Minister Farrell appointed Luritja woman, Ms Georgina Richters, to the Tourism Australia Board in August 2023. Ms Richters brings a valuable Indigenous perspective to the Tourism Australia Board.

> **Recommendation 5**
>
> The Committee recommends the Board of Tourism Australia establishes a First Nations advisory panel under section 28(1) of the Tourism Australia Act 2004 (Cth). The purpose of the panel would be to advise Tourism Australia on appropriate representation of First Nations in marketing strategies and campaigns. The membership of the panel should comprise a majority of First Nations peoples.

The Government **notes** this Recommendation.

The Australian Government is not considering establishing a First Nations advisory panel as it considers existing Tourism Australia activities fulfil the intent of this recommendation.

Tourism Australia appointed a Head of Indigenous Affairs in 2020 who works closely with Indigenous communities across Australia to ensure their cultures and stories are represented appropriately to international audiences.

Tourism Australia will continue to seek First Nations' advice in relation to the appropriate representation of First Nations in marketing strategies and campaigns and ensure First Nations representation is prioritised in all marketing activities. Tourism Australia convenes a regular forum of representatives from STOs to share best practice on destination marketing of Indigenous tourism and in 2024, as part of its tender for creative services, appointed Indigenous consulting firm *YarnUp* to provide advice and guidance on future marketing campaigns.

> **Recommendation 6**
>
> The Committee recommends relevant Australian Government agencies work with the tourism industry and First Nations representatives to develop partnerships and implement a robust accreditation scheme that supports and promotes the integrity and authenticity of First Nations tourism products, experiences and partnerships.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government has committed to introducing legislation to protect First Nations knowledge and cultural expressions, addressing the harm caused by fake art and merchandise. This is an action in Australia's National Cultural Policy – *Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place.* Consultation on the legislation with First Nations communities is underway to inform the process.

This initiative will build on existing measures that support authenticity including:

- Indigenous Art Code: A voluntary code ensuring ethical trade with First Nations artists.
- Desart Digital Labelling Project: Government-funded QR codes to verify artwork provenance (supported by the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support program).

> **Recommendation 7**
>
> The Committee recommends that Austrade develops, in consultation with Tourism Australia, State Tourism Organisations and Regional Tourism Organisations, a Regional Dispersal Strategy to drive greater domestic and international visitation into more of Australia's regions.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

There are a range of factors impacting dispersal of domestic and international visits to Australia's regions. To understand this better, Austrade, in partnership with Tourism Australia, will conduct analysis to understand the factors that can increase greater domestic and international visitation into regional Australia.

Austrade and Tourism Australia will also continue existing collaboration with STOs to increase regional dispersal. Regular activities include dialogue through the Tourism Ministers' Meetings and STO CEO forums to ensure Tourism Australia's marketing campaigns, such as the Come and Say G'Day campaign, is consistent and representative of STO's regional campaigns.

> **Recommendation 8**
>
> The Committee recommends that tourism training providers make training more accessible for regional tourism operators, particularly through culturally appropriate partnership with First Nations businesses, in order to support innovation.

The Government **agrees in principle** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government will continue to deliver on training outcomes for regional tourism operators through VET, higher education, and industry-led programs, with shared state and territory and industry responsibility.

- The National Skills Agreement (January 2024), a 5-year $12.6 billion investment, includes $3.7 billion in new Australian Government funding to strengthen VET systems.

Key region-specific initiatives include:

- **Jobs and Skills Councils** (e.g., Service and Creative Skills Australia for arts, personal services, tourism and hospitality) addressing sector challenges, including First Nations and remote engagement.

- **Jobs and Skills Australia** developing a Regional, Remote and Rural Jobs and Skills Roadmap Phase 1 was published 3 July 2023. The Roadmap is currently being updated with public submissions sought in 2025.

Since the Committee report was tabled, Australian Government grant funding of $8 million to the ATIC has been used to develop a range of training programs as part of the QTF platform which are available to tourism businesses, including regional tourism operators.

As noted in response to recommendation 2, ATIC used this grant funding to develop the *Connecting to Culture* Toolkit to support non-First Nations-owned tourism businesses foster meaningful

connections with First Nations people and communities, guided by a newly established ATIC First Nations Reference Group. Training is available to all tourism operators who take part in the QTF.

Through Yamagigi Consulting Pty Ltd, the Australian Government delivered the First Nations Tourism Mentoring Program (FNTMP), a free mentoring program for First Nations tourism businesses across Australia. The FNTMP supported businesses to grow and achieve their goals by connecting them with skilled, experienced and culturally respectful tourism industry specialists who have made one-on-one guidance, advice and support available to all eligible First Nations tourism businesses.

Initiatives to increase access to training for regional tourism operators beyond these programs would require further funding and resources for Austrade and partner agencies to deliver.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government supports the sustainability of the tourism sector in regional communities, and the development of both accommodation and attractions in regional areas.

Where appropriate, the Australian Government should consider incentives to promote development, co-investment in tourism stock and other mechanisms to promote development in regional areas.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

Programs delivered by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (DITRDCSA) and Austrade contribute to the achievement of this recommendation.

Tourism capital works and infrastructure projects qualify for funding through Australian Government regional development programs, including the Growing Regions Program, which allocated $55 million to tourism projects in its first round, and the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program which has allocated more than $13 million to project delivery and planning. These programs invest in capital works and infrastructure across Australia's regional, rural and remote areas.

The Australian Government has committed $10 million to support students across Australia to visit the Great Barrier Reef and to support tourism operators to become 'student ready' and accommodate increased numbers of students. The Government is also providing $8.5 million to reinvigorate Central Australia's tourism industry to develop new experiences and attract visitors.

The Government will consider further investments as permitted within the Government's fiscal constraints.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in the context of implementing the Aviation White Paper, prioritises policies that will achieve more accessible and affordable regional air access for travellers across Australia.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government recognises the ongoing impact of airline market concentration and of Australian airports as natural monopolies on the accessibility and affordability of domestic aviation services across the Australian sector. The Aviation White Paper includes a range of policy initiatives to drive a more competitive domestic aviation sector including: reforms to Sydney Airport slot management arrangements, consultations on Aeronautical Pricing Principles (APPs), tasking the next Productivity Commission inquiry into the economic regulation of airports and Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC) monitoring of domestic airline pricing and performance.

The Government has committed $90 million (over three years from 2024-25) to regional and remote airports through the **Regional Airports Program** ($40 million) and **Remote Airstrip Upgrade Program** ($50 million), recognising their vital role in supporting tourism accessibility and safety.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that in developing its International Diversification Strategy, Austrade includes actions that build industry capability to meet the needs of visitors coming from the new markets identified in the Strategy.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

Austrade will continue to identify opportunities to help tourism businesses engage with emerging markets. Since the Committee's report was tabled, the Australian Government has funded an expansion of Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) Host programs to cover Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand to educate operators about these markets. Tourism Australia has also expanded its Aussie Specialist Program to attract buyers from emerging markets to trade events.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends Austrade supports industry to develop and implement national standards and certification systems to promote best practice and deliver quality service outcomes for identified sectors. These standards should be aligned with global standards where applicable. The Committee recommends that Austrade and industry consider the following sectors as priorities for standards development:

- sustainable practices within the tourism sector; and
- tourism activities in national parks and other protected areas, including Indigenous Protected Areas.

The Government **notes** this Recommendation.

The Australian Government acknowledges that Australia has a lot to gain from being seen as a sustainable destination and notes that significant progress has already been made.

There are existing industry-led accreditation programs for sustainability and business development, such as EcoTourism Australia and EarthCheck, which provide sustainability certification.

The Australian Government, via Austrade, is also supporting industry to develop and implement national standards and certification systems to promote best practice through an $8 million grant for ATIC's QTF to enhance SME capabilities.

The Government is committed to reforming Australia's national environmental law – *the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The Government also notes that productivity can be enhanced via deregulation and considers the current certification systems are sufficient.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends the Australian Government prioritise the development of policies which improve regional transport and infrastructure, in coordination with state and local governments.

The Government **agrees in principle** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government delivers regional transport and infrastructure through multiple mechanisms, aligned with state and territory priorities. Programs delivered by the DITRDCSA contribute to the achievement of this recommendation. This includes the Government's community infrastructure funding programs; the Infrastructure Investment Program, which includes a range of sub programs that contribute to investment to improve regional transport infrastructure; and the Regional Airports Program and Remote Airstrip Upgrade Program. (See also responses to Recommendations 9 and 10). DITRDCSA's Regional Investment Framework developed in July 2023 provides guiding principles for a consistent approach for Australian Government investments that impact on regional Australia. The Framework describes how the Australian Government delivers regional investment – valuing local voices and priorities, being informed by and building the evidence, operating with flexibility, integrity and transparency, and coordinating across governments to make investments work better for regions.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government considers the expansion of first-point-of-entry status for ports, in order to promote access to regional tourism.

The Government **notes** this Recommendation.

The DITRDCSA administers the *New and Redeveloping International Ports Framework* (the Framework) in consultation with border agencies. Port operators proposing new or expanded international services must apply through the Framework, which evaluates national interest considerations including the availability of border services (biosecurity, immigration and customs control).

The Government notes legislation covering international arrivals to Australian ports is intended to ensure that the entry of vessels and goods into Australia does not come at the expense of national security and biosecurity requirements. To balance the facilitation of passenger entry to regional ports against national and biosecurity considerations, permanent, compliant infrastructure and adequate border agency staff would be essential for efficient inbound and outbound border clearance services. Establishing and maintaining these facilities – especially in remote ports – often involves long lead times and sustainability challenges.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends the Australian Government engage with the government of New Zealand and the governments of other neighbouring countries to develop and implement innovative initiatives and opportunities to encourage tourists to visit multiple countries in the region; for example, joint visa offerings.

The Government **notes** this Recommendation.

Joint visa programs between Australia, New Zealand and neighbouring countries are currently not feasible due to differences in visa requirements and data-sharing protocols. However, Australia and New Zealand are advancing simplified travel through the Trans-Tasman Seamless Travel Group, endorsed by both Prime Ministers in August 2024, to enhance border security and ease travel. The two nations continue regular discussions on tourism growth and mutual priorities.

The Australian Government also provides support for tourism in the context of its engagement supporting a strong and unified Pacific family. Key tourism-related partnerships and initiatives include:

- The Australia-Pacific Partnerships for Aviation Program, supporting a safer, more sustainable, inclusive and resilient Pacific aviation sector to enhance tourism opportunities in the Pacific.
- The Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus (PACER Plus), which entered into force on 13 December 2020, includes commitments for its ten member countries on services and investment in tourism.

Austrade has initiated early engagement to support Timor Leste's tourism sector, facilitating knowledge-sharing between Northern Territory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism

operators and Timor Leste. Future expansion through webinars and in person activities is possible with additional funding.

Tourism Australia is the Australian Government agency responsible for international tourism marketing. The *Tourism Australia Act 2004* sets out the agency's functions, which relate to influencing travel and economic benefits to Australia from tourism. Without legislative change, Tourism Australia is unlikely to be able to promote destinations other than Australia.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government works with states and territories to support the promotion of regional tourism initiatives through effective marketing, improving transport linkages, streamlining regional development and providing incentives for investment.

This should be informed by enhanced destination management plans developed by state and territory governments in collaboration with regional tourism operators.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

Tourism Australia will continue to work with the states and territories to support the promotion of regional Australia in its marketing. Tourism Australia convenes a regular forum with STOs to ensure its marketing is representative of all states and territories. Tourism Australia also works closely with the STOs on international distribution, for example in holding the Australian Tourism Exchange each year with a different state or territory. The Come and Say G'Day campaign featured regional destinations across all states and territories, with the development of this campaign informed by discussions with the STOs.

Tourism Australia's consumer website also features product and itineraries in regional Australia, and the agency highlights regional destinations on its social media channels, which it does in consultation with the states and territories. Tourism Australia also conducts trade and media familiarisation trips to regional areas in conjunction with STOs.

Australian Government work to build aviation linkages and support investment in regional Australia is outlined in responses to Recommendations 9 and 10.

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends the Australian Government seeks opportunities to promote nature-based tourism and agritourism in combination with developing policies directed at enhancing international tourism to regional areas, including through streamlining approval processes with state and national parks and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth).

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government will continue to seek opportunities to promote nature-based tourism and agritourism. Tourism Australia's research highlights wildlife, beaches, and natural environments as top draws for international visitors, driving its focus on nature-based tourism. Tourism Australia is developing marketing strategies to further promote regional agritourism experiences.

The Wine Tourism and Cellar Door Grant has allocated $60 million to support wineries and promote agritourism, encouraging visitors to wine regions via their cellar door operations. On 1 September 2025 the Government extended this grant program, announcing a further $30 million over three years. Grants of up to $100,000 are available through the program.

States, territories and regional tourism bodies are similarly prioritising nature-based and agritourism initiatives, to meet growing demand.

The Australian Government has announced plans to strengthen and streamline Australia's national environmental law, *the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.*

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends the Australian Government works with State and Regional Tourism Organisations to promote the inclusion of people with a disability in the tourism sector, including through inclusion on national and state tourism organisation boards.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government will actively work towards increasing the representation of people with disability in the tourism sector, including organisation boards in line with our commitment under *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031.* We note that STO board appointments are ultimately the responsibility of states and territories.

The Government supports the commitment to "nothing about us, without us" which ensures the voices of people with disability are embedded in the design and delivery of policy, programs and services.

Since the Committee's report was tabled, the National Accessible Tourism Working Group (NATWG) has been established, comprising representatives from state and territory governments, Austrade and Tourism Australia to collaborate and share information on accessible tourism initiatives.

Tourism Australia partners with the Dylan Alcott Foundation's Shift 20 Initiative launched in 2023 to increase disability representation and accessibility in Australian advertising. In July 2025, Austrade's

Tourism Research Australia published a comprehensive report quantifying the market of travellers with accessibility needs, helping identify opportunities to better support travellers with disability.

Through the Aviation White Paper, the Government committed to creating a more accessible aviation sector that protects the rights of people with disability and improves their air travel experiences. Recent reforms to the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards) also aim to remove discrimination by improving accessibility requirements for public transport operators.

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that the Minister for Tourism issue a new Statement of Expectation to Tourism Australia reinforcing its primary focus on marketing to drive demand from international visitors.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

The Minister for Tourism intends to issue a new Statement of Expectations to Tourism Australia. In line with standard practice, the new Statement of Expectations, and the Board's Statement of Intent, will be published on Tourism Australia's website.

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends increased communication and flexibility among agencies in the tourism sector on both state and federal levels to improve integration and cooperation.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government agrees there should be an ongoing focus on collaboration between agencies in the tourism sector at all levels of government.

Collaboration is a core theme in THRIVE 2030, the national visitor economy strategy, supported by a framework for coordination across government and industry. Key mechanisms include:

- **Tourism Ministers' Meetings (TMM):** The TMM is the forum for the Federal Tourism Minister to engage with his state and territory counterparts on key strategic issues impacting tourism. It is supported by the **Australian Standing Committee on Tourism**, which is the heads of all tourism policy and marketing organisations at both federal and state and territory level.

- **State Tourism Organisation CEO forums** (convened by Tourism Australia) facilitates a discussion of tourism marketing organisations to align the overseas marketing campaigns led by Tourism Australia with the work of states and territories.

- **Visitor Economy Senior Officials Taskforce** comprises all Australian Government agencies contributing to the delivery of THRIVE 2030 strategy who meet regularly to ensure effective implementation of the strategy.

Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that Austrade, in collaboration with Tourism Australia, State Tourism Organisations and Regional Tourism Organisations, collectively develop a charter that explains and delineates the responsibilities each level has in the tourism sector to improve clarity, communication and accountability between the agencies.

This charter should be promoted and communicated effectively to ensure it is easily understood by new and established stakeholders across the sector. Organisations should take active steps to ensure that stakeholders understand the charter and have easy pathways to ask for clarification if necessary.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

Since the Committee's report was tabled, Austrade and Tourism Australia have updated their websites to ensure that the roles and responsibilities for tourism of the various levels of government in Australia are more clearly outlined. This information is provided regularly in public presentations and other communications to enhance understanding of their respective roles. The THRIVE 2030 - Action Plan to 2030, which was released on 12 February 2026, has assigned responsibility for key actions to provide further clarity of roles and responsibilities.

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends more effective communication and regular interaction with local and Regional Tourism Organisations to foster effective knowledge sharing and to enable productivity gains. Austrade, Tourism Australia and State Tourism Organisations are recommended to implement a new engagement mechanism to achieve more effective communication with Regional Tourism Organisations and Local Government Authorities regarding government policies and programs. This will also improve the capacity for federal, state and territory governments to understand the needs and concerns of regions and regional tourism businesses.

This mechanism, in conjunction with the charter developed in Recommendation 21, will foster a 'no wrong door' environment for tourism operators seeking assistance or advice.

The Government **agrees in principle** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government, through Austrade and Tourism Australia, will continue to work with states and territories, which lead engagement with their Regional Tourism Organisations and local government authorities.

Tourism Australia convenes an annual forum of Regional Tourism Organisations to share knowledge and promote coordination, where Austrade is invited to present every year. Tourism Australia meets with over 1,000 tourism businesses across Australia each year, helping those businesses understand

how they can work with Tourism Australia, how to access international markets, and collecting industry's insights so this feedback can be incorporated into marketing activity and policy.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that Austrade, in consultation with Tourism Australia and State Tourism Organisations, undertakes surveys of tourism businesses every three years to understand their data and research needs, including how data and research should be presented and accessed.

The Government **notes** this Recommendation.

Austrade's Tourism Research Australia and Tourism Australia regularly engage with industry on their data and insights. Austrade has a Service Level Agreement with STOs that outlines the joint data and research to be undertaken. This agreement is reviewed annually, and this recommendation will be considered in that context. Without additional resourcing, it may not be feasible to deliver this recommendation.

The Government acknowledges the importance of understanding the data and research needs of tourism businesses. Since the Committee report was tabled, the Government has made significant progress in improving tourism data and insights through the rollout of Domestic Tourism Statistics, which commenced in June 2025. The Domestic Tourism Statistics combined mobile phone data with survey information to provide a world-leading approach to measuring tourism. The Domestic Tourism Statistics are available on the Austrade website.

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends the Australian Government, through the Aviation White Paper, prioritise implementation of policies to increase the competitiveness, accessibility and environmental friendliness of air travel into and around Australia, and continues to pursue increased capacity on international routes, including consideration of further 'open skies' agreements, consistent with our national interests.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

Through the Aviation White Paper, which was released in August 2024, the Government is addressing and prioritising implementation of policies to increase competitiveness, accessibility and environmental friendliness of air travel into and around Australia. This includes measures to increase competitiveness through prioritising the following initiatives:

- Revising principles for the aeronautical pricing negotiation process between airlines and airports
- Monitoring domestic airline pricing and performance
- Enhancing the ACCC's monitoring of pricing and service quality at Australia's major airports
- Publishing additional data on airline performance and aviation competition
- A Productivity Commission review of the determinants of regional airfares.

Further competitiveness measures by the Australian Government include:

- reforms to the Sydney Airport slot management to improve efficiency in the allocation and use of take-off and landing slots at Sydney Airport and reduce incentives for anti-competitive slot misuse
- a review of government purchasing policies will consider whether changed policy settings could better support competition
- pursuing additional air services capacity ahead of demand in bilateral air services arrangements and negotiation of 'open skies' style arrangements where it is in Australia's interests and can be agreed bilaterally.

On accessibility, the Aviation White Paper commits the Government to an accessible aviation sector that protects the rights of people with disability. The Government is co-designing, with people with disability, new aviation-specific disability standards, as a schedule to the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002.

Finally, in support of net zero, the Aviation While Paper will fast-track support for a domestic low carbon liquid fuel (LCLF) industry. As part of the *Future Made in Australia* initiative, the Government is investing $250 million to develop innovation in LCLF and has undertaken targeted consultation to identify options for production incentives and other measures to support the establishment of a made in Australia LCLF industry. The Government will also extend the Guarantee of Origin Scheme to include sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). This verification and certification scheme will allow Australian SAF producers to make credible low emissions claims about their products, and ensure uptake of SAF is leading to genuine emissions abatement. It will also underpin the Government's support measures to decarbonise transport through low carbon liquid fuels.

Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that Treasury engages with Austrade and the tourism sector to improve access and affordability of insurance for tourism businesses.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government acknowledges that insurance access and affordability affects all parts of the economy and is not unique to tourism. Noting insurance access and affordability is a difficult issue to solve, under the THRIVE 2030 strategy the Treasury is monitoring insurance affordability, in consultation with Austrade. The Treasury has so far supported Austrade in addressing public liability insurance concerns through workshops and engagement with states, territories and industry stakeholders. The Treasury and Austrade will continue to consult industry and explore viable responses.

> **Recommendation 26**
>
> The Committee recommends that Austrade work with the tourism sector, in particular Regional Tourism Organisations, to develop resilience plans to make them less susceptible to 'shocks'.

The Government **notes** this Recommendation.

Austrade promotes resilience planning and connects businesses with government and industry resources. The Australian Government, with state and territory support, developed resources to assist tourism businesses with disaster prevention, response and recovery. These include the *Don't Risk It* guide to assist tourism businesses with disaster prevention, response and recovery. Other organisations that we fund also support tourism business resilience, including resilience and recovery grants to tourism businesses in Central Australia.

The Government notes state and territory tourism organisations work directly with regional tourism organisations on resilience planning and also have a role in advancing this recommendation.

> **Recommendation 27**
>
> The Committee urges the Australian Government to consider the recommendations from the Committee's Interim Report on the international education sector, with a particular emphasis on implementing policies and actions that support regional education providers.

The Australian Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government has considered all the recommendations made in the Committee's Interim Report. Please refer to the Australian Government Response to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade report: *'Quality and Integrity - the Quest for Sustainable Growth': Interim Report into International Education.*

> **Recommendation 28**
>
> The Committee recommends the Australian Government promotes the accessibility and affordability of appropriate housing in regional areas and supports policies which will increase housing stock more broadly to improve the availability of housing for international students and workers in the tourism sector.

The Government **agrees** with this Recommendation.

The Australian Government meets this recommendation through existing measures and has committed $43 billion to the Homes for Australia plan to increase housing supply and improve accessibility and affordability across the country, including in regional areas.

As part of the National Housing Accord, the Government is working directly with states and territories towards a target of 1.2 million new, well-located homes over five years to July 2029.

To achieve this objective, the Government has committed $3 billion for performance-based funding through the New Homes Bonus which aims to incentivise states and territories to undertake the necessary reforms to meet their share of homes under the National Housing Accord.

The Government has also delivered the $1.5 billion Housing Support Program (HSP) which will help achieve the Accord target by providing funding for enabling infrastructure, community amenity projects, and improvements in planning capability. Of the $500 million available for planning reform and enabling infrastructure projects through the HSP's two competitive streams, approximately $373 million was awarded to 73 projects in regional Australia.

The Government has made clear to publicly funded universities that increasing the provision of safe and secure student accommodation for both domestic and international students is a priority. This priority is reflected in policy settings for managed growth of international education in Australia announced in August 2025.

Appendix – Acronyms

APP	Aeronautical Pricing Principles
ACCC	Australian Consumer and Competition Commission
Austrade	Australian Government Trade and Investment Commission
ASCOT	Australian Standing Committee on Tourism
ATEC	Australian Tourism Export Council
ATIC	Australian Tourism Industry Council
Committee	Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's Trade Subcommittee
DITRDCSA	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication, Sport and the Arts
FNTMP	First Nations Tourism Mentoring Program
FNVEP	First Nations Visitor Economy Partnership
HSP	Housing Support Program
IVAIS	Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support
JSCFADT	Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
LCLF	low carbon liquid fuel
PACER Plus	Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus
QTF	Quality Tourism Framework
RTO	Regional Tourism Organisation
STO	State and Territory Tourism Organisations
SITP	Strategic Indigenous Tourism Program
SAF	Sustainable aviation fuel
TMM	Tourism Ministers' Meetings
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WAITOC	Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council