



Australian Government
Austrade



TOURISM
RESEARCH
AUSTRALIA

50 YEARS ON MEASURING TOURISM IN AUSTRALIA

Today, Australia's tourism industry enjoys world's best practice visitor surveys – the International Visitor Survey (IVS), and the National Visitor Survey (NVS). These surveys provide the basis for industry measurement and support policy formulation, business planning, investment and marketing.

In the 1960s, however, it was a very different story, as tourism struggled for recognition as a legitimate industry. The then Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, addressed the Pacific Area Travel Association (PATA) Conference in Sydney on March 2, 1964, stating:

This is something that we are all in, for this is an industry. This is a commonplace remark but it is almost revolutionary in my country to regard the tourist trade as an industry. Yet here we have an industry, which at present produces in real terms, as invisible exports, the ninth largest amount among the major export industries. It will stand much higher in the list as more and more we get to understand the tremendous importance of it.

Release of the ground-breaking report *Australia's travel and tourist industry, 1965* (published in April 1966 and also known as the 'HKF report' in reference to its authors and researchers) would challenge the apathy of the day towards the value of tourism. The forward-thinking shown by its authors would revolutionise the measurement of tourism in Australia, and ultimately pave the way for our world-renowned visitor surveys.



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NUMBERS HAVE CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY...

THEN...1966

NOW...2016



International tourism spend was estimated at **£37.9 million (or \$75.8 million)**

\$38.1 billion



Estimated number of international visitor arrivals was **187,262**

8.1 million



13% of arrivals came by sea (down from 23% in 1960)

0.6%



Room availability at **50,000** with an estimated **46,600** more needed for future growth

Approx. **249,000** with an estimated additional **6,000 – 20,000** rooms required for growth



Over **200 visitors** came from China

Over **1 million visitors** from China (growing at 20% per year)



Australia held approximately **0.2%** share of worldwide international travel (187,262 visitors) of over 67 million

Approx. **0.6%** share of worldwide international travel (8.1 million) of over 1,280 million



Worldwide spend on international travel was estimated at **US\$10 billion**

US\$1,260 billion



Australia counted **3.77 million** paying air passengers

58.44 million domestic passengers flew during the year ending June 2016

BUT THE CHALLENGES HAVEN'T...

Interestingly, the report highlights that the challenges for the industry in 1966 were no different to those we face in 2016, including the need for:

- a coordinated plan for growing tourism
- more (and better) accommodation choices
- better aviation access and cheaper fares
- high-quality tourism experiences.

The report also acknowledged the increasing importance of tourism to Australia's economy as outbound travel across the globe increases, which is still a significant factor for the industry in 2016.

...AND NEITHER HAVE THE VIEWPOINTS ON EVIDENCE-BASED PLANNING

The visionaries of the 1960s, including Menzies, the HKF report authors and the many others they consulted on their journey, all saw the enormous potential and importance of tourism as an industry. Reflecting the thinking of the time, which closely echoes current thinking, is this excerpt:

The existence of a basic plan for development, and the availability of supporting facts and information as to past records and future projections would be a major factor in establishing confidence by prospective sources of financing or investment in new, or in expansion of existing, projects in the travel and tourist industry.

This factor alone could justify the entire cost involved in planning and research as it would contribute significantly towards avoiding financial loss involved in unsound projects which otherwise might proceed without the benefit of such planning.

The HKF report provides a fascinating insight into Australia's tourism industry in the 60s, highlighting not only how little the challenges have changed, but also how far we have come in growing the industry despite these challenges.

This document is a snapshot of TRA's research into the HKF report. TRA will be publishing the full findings soon – keep an eye on our website, tra.gov.au!



IMAGE: THIS COULD BE THE FIRST TOURISM-RELATED INFOGRAPHIC EVER PRODUCED IN AUSTRALIA!