Australian Government
Austrade

TOURISM RESEARCH AUSTRALIA

INTERNATIONAL VISITORS IN AUSTRALIA

YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 2019

VISITORS ▲3%
8.7 MILLION

NIGHTS ▲2%
276 MILLION

SPEND ▲5%
$45.2 BILLION

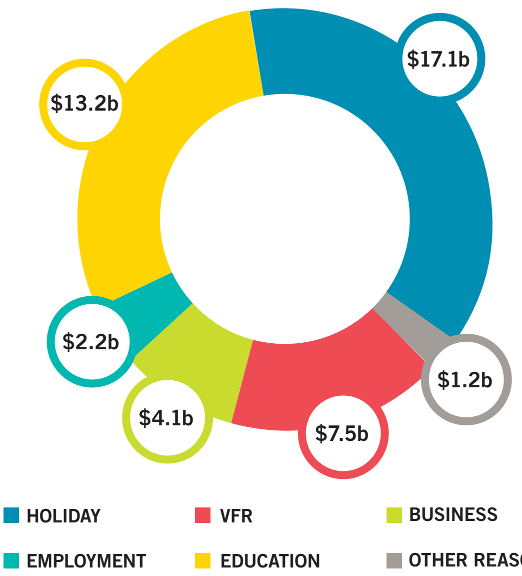
Australia continued to see record numbers of international visitors over the year to September 2019. There were 8.7 million visitor arrivals (aged 15 years and over), 3% more than the previous year. This supported strong growth of 5% in total trip spend, which reached a record $45.2 billion.

PURPOSE OF TRAVEL

Increases to visitation were led by holiday, education and employment travel over the year, all increasing by 3%. This contributed to strong growth in spending across these sectors (employment 11%, education 7% and holiday 5%).

Holiday and education travel are the largest contributors to tourism spend, collectively generating two-thirds of Australia's international travel receipts.

FIGURE 1: SPEND BY PURPOSE OF TRAVEL ($ BILLIONS) – YE SEP 2019



Education's contribution to tourism spend continues to grow. Since 2014, education spend has more than doubled from $6.2 billion (20% of spend) to $13.2 billion (29% of spend). This comes from increased education visitors and rising education fees.

MARKETS

There were mixed results for Australia's top 5 markets over the year. Growth was impressive for Japan with visitors up 9% to 455,000 and spend up 15% to $2.1 billion. The US also saw solid gains, with visitors up 5% to 771,000, and spend increasing a strong 10% to $4.0 billion.

Visitor growth for the Chinese market was a modest 1%, though spend from China still increased a strong 7% to $12.3 billion. This can be attributed to an increase in education visitors (up 9%), who are higher spenders than the average visitor due to their extended length of stay in Australia.

New Zealand visitor numbers increased by 1% with 1.3 million visitors over the year, as did spend to reach $2.6 billion. The UK market continued to decline over the year (visitors down 4% and spend down 5%).

Outside of the top 5 markets, high performing source countries included India, fostered primarily by growth in visiting friends and relatives, and Canada and Singapore, stimulated mostly by holiday visitation.

FIGURE 2: GROWING MARKETS – YE SEP 2019

	VISITORS	GROWTH	SPEND	GROWTH
INDIA	364,000	12%	$1.8B	12%
CANADA	181,000	10%	$0.9B	9%
SINGAPORE	417,000	9%	$1.5B	4%

TRIP LENGTH FOR HOLIDAY MAKERS

The average length of holiday trips to Australia has fallen from 26 to 21 nights over the last five years. This has occurred across all top markets except China (up from 10 to 14 nights). The increase for China is due to more free and independent travellers, who stay for longer – on average – than group tour travellers (20 nights compared to 6 nights).

The wider Asian market now accounts for 55% of all holiday travel to Australia, and has had the largest impact on the decline in overall trip length. Their average trip length has dropped from 21 to 17 nights.

There has been no adverse financial impact from shorter holiday trips. The average spend per holiday visitor remained relatively constant at $4,300 per visitor (down only 1%). This is due to spend per night increasing from $166 to $208 over the last five years. The number of visitors has increased 52% to 4 million over the same period.

FIGURE 3: HOLIDAY VISITOR AVERAGE TRIP LENGTH (NIGHTS)

	AVERAGE TRIP LENGTH			VISITORS
	SEP-14	SEP-19	CHANGE	SEP-19
ASIA	21	17	-16%	2,193,000
EUROPE (INCL. UK)	51	40	-20%	687,000
NEW ZEALAND	11	9	-18%	485,000
NORTH AMERICA	21	16	-27%	454,000
OTHER COUNTRIES	26	28	6%	177,000
ALL VISITORS	26	21	-21%	3,995,000

HOLIDAY EXPERIENCES IN AUSTRALIA

Half of all holiday travellers to Australia were first-time visitors. The top reasons for them choosing to visit were our world-class beauty and natural environments (43%), local wildlife (30%), safety and security (27%), friendly citizens (27%) and interesting attractions (25%).

During their stay in Australia, holiday travellers participated in activities that were consistent with their reasons for visiting. Many went sightseeing (81%), to the beach (71%), and visited national parks (56%), botanical or public gardens (45%), and wildlife parks, zoos and aquariums (45%). Other common activities included eating out (92%) and going shopping (82%).

Nearly all holiday visitors reported positive experiences in Australia, with 93% indicating they were likely to recommend Australia as a holiday destination to others.[1]

TRANSPORT

Just over half (52%) of all visitors to Australia had a single stopover location. These visitors were most likely to use a private vehicle (34%), taxi (20%) or local public transport (17%) on arrival to get to their stopover destination.

For those that had multiple stopovers, more than half (60%) used an aircraft at some point on their trip to travel between stopovers. The next most used modes were private (36%) and rented (20%) vehicles and local public transport (20%).

Within destinations, the most popular local transport modes used were trains (45%) and buses (42%). Uber was also prominent (30%), used by slightly more visitors (2.5 million) than taxis (29% or 2.4 million). Taxi use had fallen 6% on the previous year, whereas Uber use increased by 24% from 2 million users last year.

Uber was used more frequently by younger travellers (46% of those aged 15 to 34), and by North American and European visitors (40% and 36%, respectively).

FIGURE 4: PERCENTAGE OF VISITORS THAT USED UBER

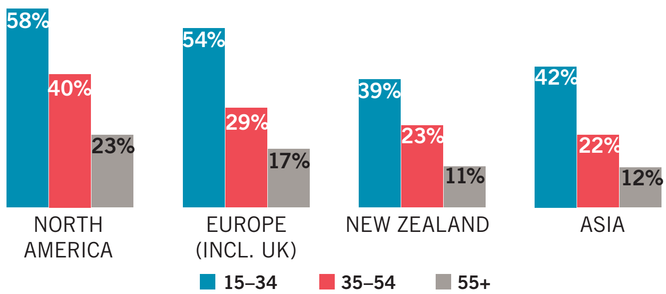
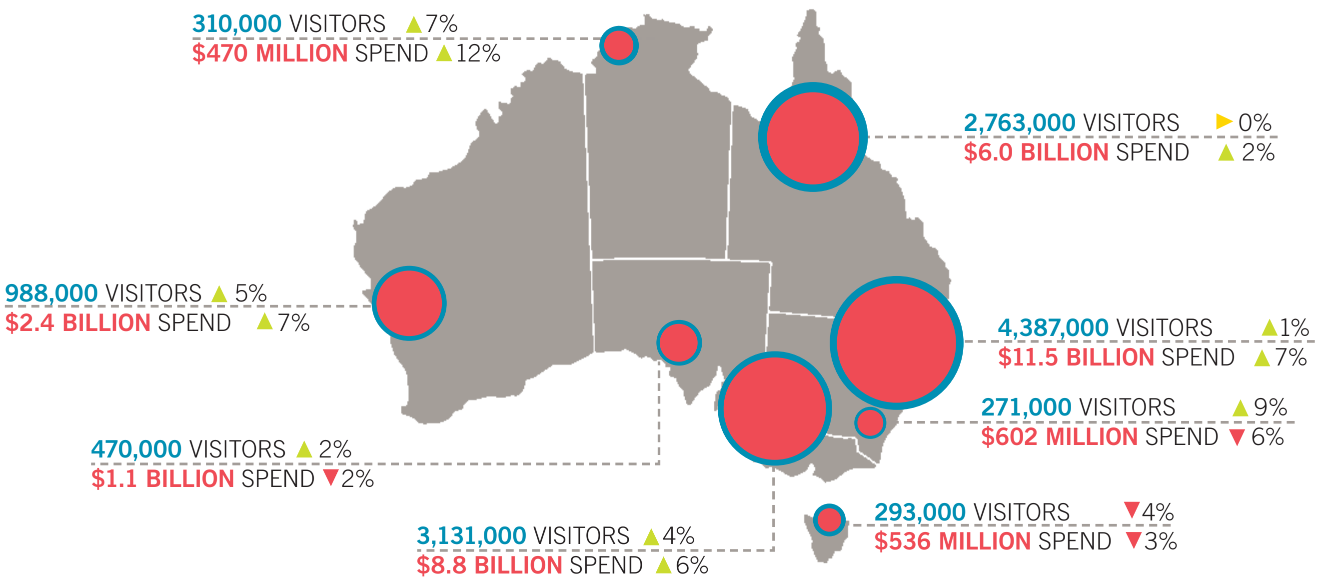


FIGURE 5[2]: INTERNATIONAL VISITOR NUMBERS AND SPEND BY STATE, YE SEPTEMBER 2019



1 These were respondents that selected 7 or greater on a scale of 0 to 10 for likelihood to recommend Australia as a holiday destination, where 0 was not at all likely and 10 was extremely likely.

2. Total number of visitors by state will be greater than the total number of visitors for Australia.