



TRAVEL BY AUSTRALIANS

Year ending September 2021



September quarter 2021

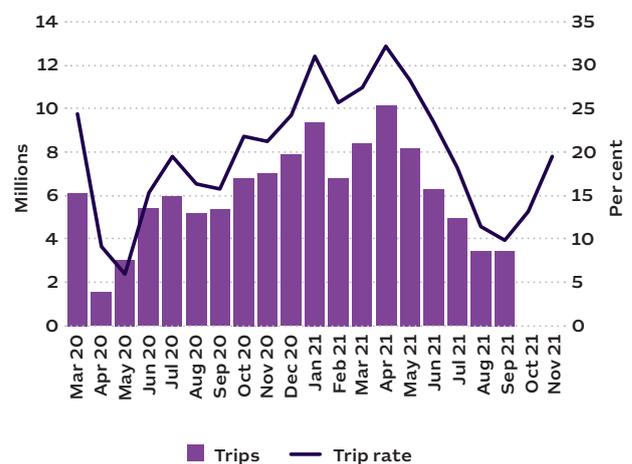


Significant falls in domestic tourism due to the Delta outbreak

Since the start of the pandemic, domestic tourism in Australia has experienced large losses in both trips and spend. Some recovery was seen through the second half of 2020 and into the first half of 2021 but has been thwarted by a number of outbreaks of the Delta variant of COVID-19. The impacts of border closures and health regulations have seen domestic tourism numbers more than halved in the September quarter 2021. New South Wales (NSW), Victoria (Vic) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) were impacted particularly hard through strict and lengthy lockdowns.

However, with high vaccination rates and a decrease in the number of COVID-19 cases, lockdown restrictions have been progressively removed from 12 October onwards. The December quarter 2021 looks to have much promise with domestic overnight trip rates showing signs of recovery (Figure 1). This trip rate is expected to continue to improve with more state borders opening up to coincide with the upcoming holiday season.

Figure 1. Domestic overnight trips and trip rates March 2020 to November 2021¹



¹ The trip rate for November 2021 tells us 19.47% of NVS respondents interviewed in weeks 1,2 and 3 reported taking one or more overnight trips in the preceding 28 days (the reference period). The return date will have been in October for some of these trips.

The trip estimate of 3.5 million for the month of September refers to overnight trips returned from in that month.

Significant losses continue for the tourism industry

Overall, tourism has seen significant losses since the start of the pandemic (March 2020) through to September 2021 with loss in spend now totalling \$128.3 billion. This is comprised of:

- Domestic overnight trip spend down 39% or \$49.8 billion
- Domestic day trip spend down 38% or \$16 billion and
- International spend which has seen losses of 95% or \$62.5 billion in spend.

In terms of overall losses in tourism spend, 70% or \$89.5 billion has occurred in NSW (\$35.9 billion), Vic (\$32.6 billion) and Queensland (\$21 billion).

Year ending September 2021

The year ending September 2021 saw 82.7 million overnight trips, with visitors staying 325 million nights and spending \$60.9 billion. Compared to a pre-COVID-19 year ending September 2019 this was a 29% fall in overnight trips and a 23% or \$18.2 billion fall in spend. Results in comparison to a year partially impacted by COVID-19 (year ending September 2020) fared better with overnight trips up 3% and spend up 17%.

September quarter 2021

The signs of improvement seen in the March and June quarters 2021 have been thwarted by multiple state border closures and strict regulations due to outbreaks of the COVID-19 Delta variant. The requirement for travel restrictions and health regulations have heavily impacted the domestic travel sector. Australians took 11.8 million overnight trips and spent \$9.3 billion down 58% and 55% respectively in 2019.

Note: As the results for the year ending September and September quarter 2020 were a large deviation from pre-pandemic levels, the summary results for the year ending September and September quarter 2021 are compared to the year ending September and September quarter 2019 pre-COVID-19 periods

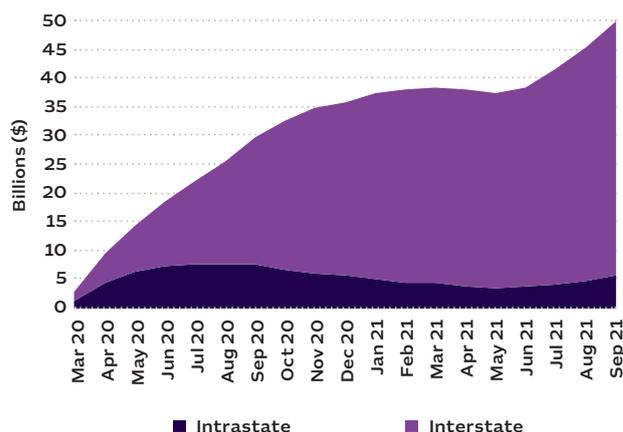
Interstate and intrastate travel

COVID-19 period (March 2020 to September 2021)

Travel restrictions and border closures have had the most impact on interstate movement over much of the COVID-19 period. Overall, since the start of the pandemic, interstate overnight trip spend has fallen 62% (down \$44.4 billion) and accounts for 89% of the total loss in spend on domestic overnight travel. In comparison, intrastate overnight trip spend fell just 10% with a loss of \$5.4 billion (Figure 2).

During the September quarter 2021 the border restrictions brought about by the outbreak of the COVID-19 Delta variant resulted in losses of 86% in domestic interstate overnight trips (just 1.4 million trips for the quarter) and a reduction in spend of 77%, down \$9.6 billion on the September quarter 2019 (pre-COVID-19) to reach \$2.9 billion.

Figure 2. Cumulative losses in domestic overnight spend, March 2020 to September 2021

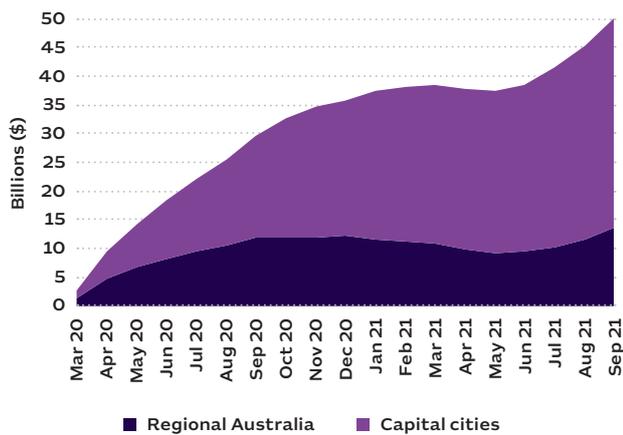


Capital cities and regional travel

COVID-19 period (March 2020 to September 2021)

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic capital cities have been hit harder than regional areas (Figure 3). This can be attributed to most outbreaks occurring in capital cities, resulting in more frequent lockdowns and tougher restrictions. In addition, cities rely more on visitors arriving by air and/or for business, both of which have seen significant declines due to COVID-19. During this period, domestic overnight trip spend has fallen 58% or \$36.3 billion, more than double the rate of decline in overnight trips to regional areas which is down 21% or \$13.5 billion.

Figure 3. Cumulative losses in domestic overnight travel, COVID-19 period



Year ending September 2021

For the year ending September 2021, regional areas fared better than capital cities. Although, overnight visitors were down 19% to 59.3 million, spend was down only 2% (or \$600 billion) to \$40 billion. In contrast, capital cities recorded large declines. Overnight trips fell 44% to 26.7 million and spend fell 46% (or \$17.6 billion) to \$20.9 billion compared to the year ending September 2019.

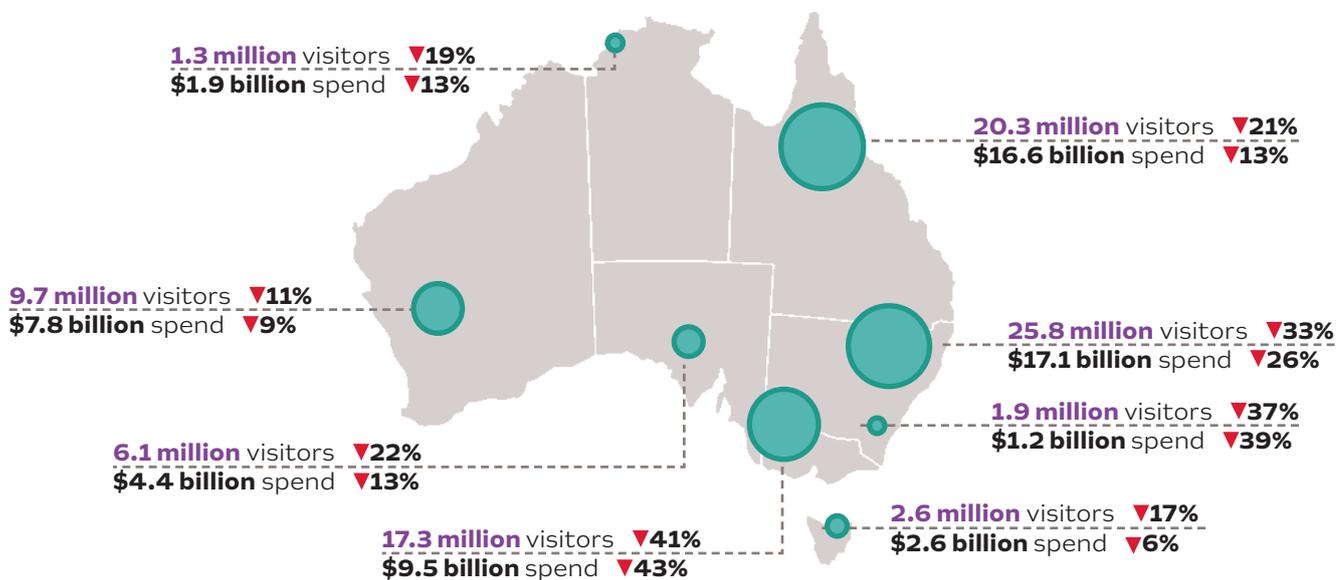
September quarter 2021

Regional areas continued to fare slightly better than capital cities through September quarter 2021. Overnight trips to regional Australia were down a significant 50% to 8.7 million on September quarter 2019. Spend was also down 39% or \$4.2 billion to \$6.6 billion. In comparison capital cities saw losses in spend of 73% or \$7.3 billion to reach \$2.7 billion for the September quarter 2021.

States and territories

COVID-19 impacts have reduced domestic overnight travel across all states and territories during the year ending September 2021 for visitors and spend (Figure 4). Figures are compared with year ending September 2019 (pre-COVID-19).

Figure 4. Overnight trips and spend by State, March 2020 to September 2021²



² The sum of the total number of visitors for each state will be greater than the total number of visitors for Australia due to individuals who visited more than one state. **Note:** As the results for the year ending September and September quarter 2020 were a large deviation from pre-pandemic levels, the summary results for the year ending September and September quarter 2021 are compared to the year ending September and September quarter 2019 pre-COVID periods

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