



# NATIONAL VISITOR SURVEY RESULTS MARCH QUARTER 2022

## Year ending March 2022



## March quarter 2022

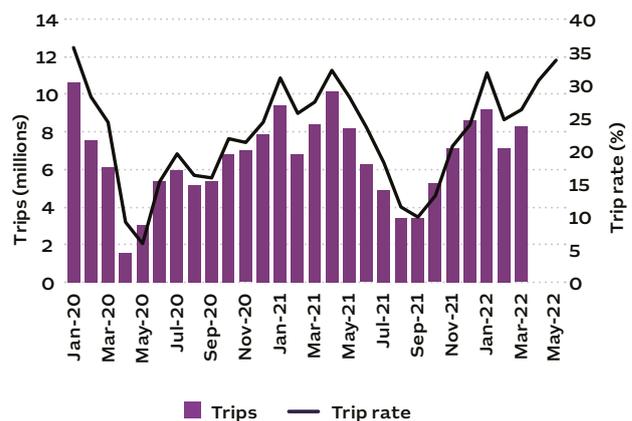


## March tourism results show gradual recovery from COVID-19

The continued easing of border restrictions, health regulations and lockdowns drove an increase in travel in the March quarter 2022. When compared to the March quarter of 2020 (pre-pandemic), overnight trips and nights increased by 1% and 3% respectively. Most notably, spend exceeded pre-pandemic levels by 14% or \$2.6 billion. Higher vaccination rates, the move towards ‘living with COVID’ and the peak holiday season over the December-January period resulted in an increase in trips returned from in January, which had the overall effect of increasing the March quarter results.

The general upswing in the domestic visitor economy is expected to continue but may not be consistent month-to-month. As an example, the overnight domestic trip incidence rate (a forward-looking travel indicator) for April 2022 was marginally lower than for April 2021, while the May 2022 trip incidence rate was higher than 2021 (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Domestic overnight trips and trip rates, March 2020 to May 2022<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> The trip rate reports whether or not a respondent has taken a trip in the past four weeks. The trip rate of 32.18% for May indicates a high level of NVS respondents reported taking one or more overnight trips in the preceding 28 days (the reference period). The return date will have been in April 2022 for some of these trips reported in May.

The trip estimate of 8.3 million for the month of March refers to overnight trips returned from in that month.

## Recovery is driven by spend on accommodation and holidays

Spend in the March quarter 2022 exceeded spend in the March quarter 2020 by 14% or \$2.6 billion. This was driven by an increase in spend on:

- Accommodation, up 33% or \$1.6 billion
- Eating out, up 23% or \$686 million
- Petrol, up 21% or \$396 million
- Shopping, up 22% or \$270 million

Increased spending on holidays also contributed to the strong performance in the quarter. Holiday spend increased by 30% or \$3 billion from the March quarter 2020. Visiting friends and family also saw a modest increase of 14% or \$499 million over the same period. On the other hand, business travel fell by 23% or \$826 million.

**Note:** Summary results for the March 2022 quarter, and the year ending March 2022, are compared to the March 2020 quarter, and the year ending March 2020 unless stated otherwise.

Whilst March 2020 was impacted by the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of the March 2020 quarter and the year ending March 2020 was unaffected.

## Key figures

### Year ending March 2022

The year ending March 2022 saw visitors:

- take 82.1 million overnight trips
- stay 318.3 million nights
- spend \$63.3 billion.

Compared to the pre-COVID year ending March 2020, this was a:

- 27% fall in overnight trips
- 20% or \$15.4 billion fall in spend.

Overall annual results for the year ending March 2022 were stronger than the previous year. Overnight trips and spend increased by 13% and 39% respectively. This was driven by the strong recovery in early 2021 and 2022 (Figure 1.)

## March quarter 2022

Quarterly results were up on March quarter 2020, signalling a gradual recovery from COVID-19 with the further easing of state border closures and movement restrictions in this quarter. Australians:

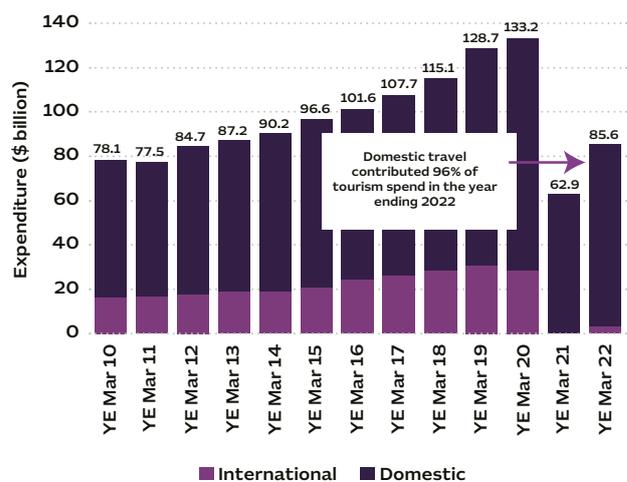
- took 24.6 million overnight trips (up 1%)
- spent \$20.5 billion (up 14%).

## Domestic tourism continues to make up the majority of visitor spend

Domestic tourism contributed 96% of total tourism spend in the year ending March 2022

The March quarter 2022 saw the re-opening of international borders on 21 February 2022, leading to a small increase in the international spend contribution (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Domestic and international visitor spend in Australia, year ending March 2010 to 2022**



**Note:** The data is year ending March quarter and excludes long-term international students. This means estimates will not directly align to THRIVE 2030 targets.

## Capital cities and regional travel

Capital cities have been hit harder than regional areas during the pandemic (Figure 3) due to:

- more frequent lockdowns
- tougher restrictions
- cities relying more on visitors arriving by air and/or for business, (both down during the pandemic).

### March quarter 2022

Compared to pre-pandemic levels, March quarter 2022 saw

- trips to regional Australia increase 9% and spend increase 32%
- trips to capital cities decreased 13% and spend decreased 7%

**Figure 3. Quarterly capital city and regional spend March 2019 to March 2022**



### Year ending March 2022

Compared to pre-pandemic levels, the year ending March 2022 saw:

- trips to regional areas fall 17% to 58 million and spend down 1% to \$40.2 billion
- trips to and spend in capital cities fall by 42% to 27.3 million and 39% to \$23.1 billion respectively
- regional trips contribute 66% to total spend, up from 51% on pre-pandemic levels.

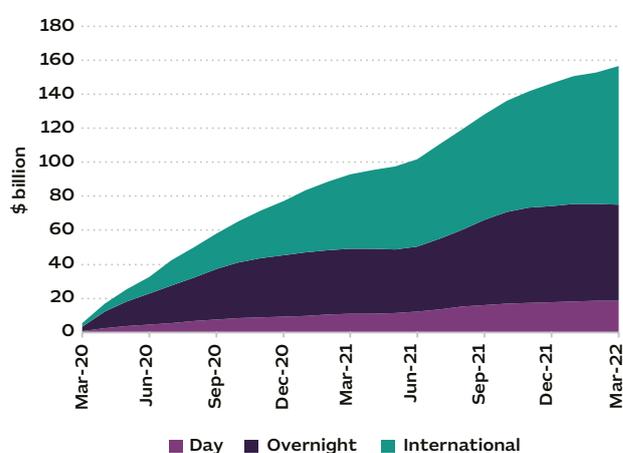
## Losses continued for the tourism industry through March 2022

Tourism losses since the start of the pandemic (March 2020) totalled \$156.8 billion through to March 2022 (Figure 4).

This is comprised of:

- Domestic day trip spend down 34% or \$18.7 billion
- Domestic overnight trip spend down 33% or \$56.2 billion and
- International spend down 92% or \$81.9 billion.

**Figure 4. Cumulative losses in travel, March 2020 to March 2022<sup>2</sup>**



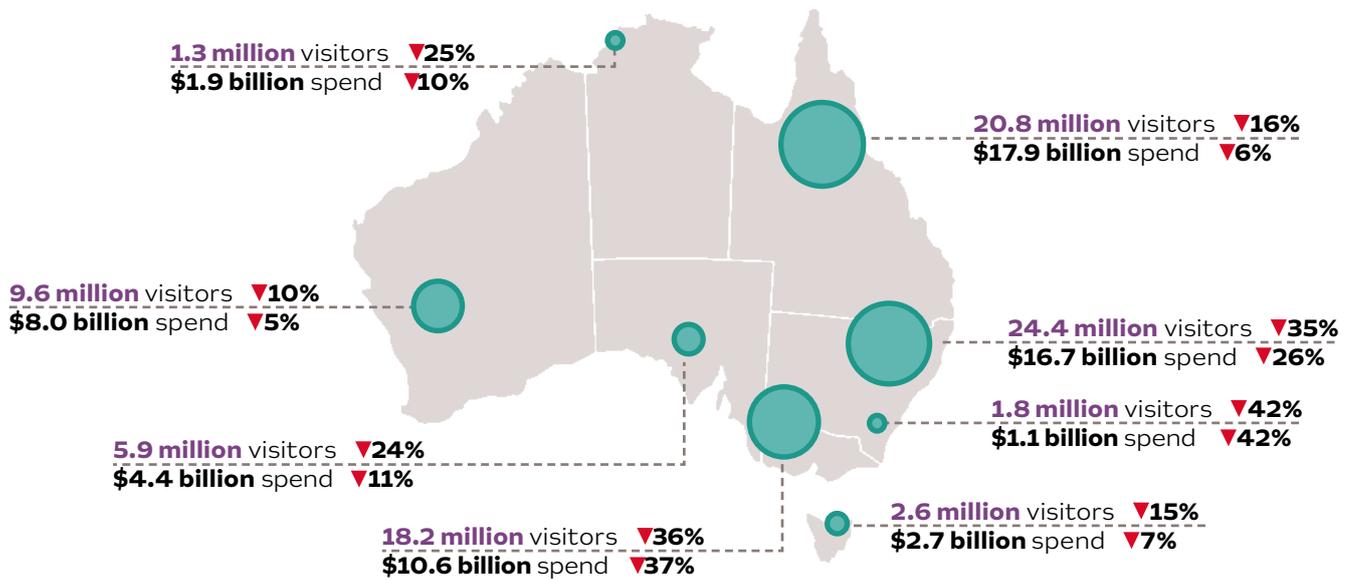
<sup>2</sup> The summing of individual months may result in slight differences due to rounding and weighting variations.

Cumulative loss reporting during the pandemic has provided valuable insights into the impact COVID-19 has had on the tourism sector. As the economy transitions to recovery cumulative loss reporting will be discontinued.

## States and territories

COVID-19 impacts have reduced domestic overnight travel across all states and territories during the year ending March 2022 for visitors and spend (Figure 5). The states and territories most impacted by the pandemic in this year were the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and New South Wales. The least impacted state was Western Australia.

**Figure 5. Overnight trips and spend by state and territory, year ending March 2022<sup>3,4</sup>**



<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> As the results for year ending March 2021 were a large deviation from pre-pandemic levels, summary results for 2022 are compared to year ending March 2020 pre-COVID periods.

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