



22 June 2017

GROWTH CAN'T BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED

Record tourism spending by visitors is welcome and sends another strong signal to economic policy-makers about the importance of the industry to the Australian economy.

That's the view of the Accommodation Association of Australia following the release of the National Visitor Survey figures which show spending by international and Australian visitors has reached a new record of \$101.6 billion for the year ending March 2017.

"The level of growth is pleasing and is positive for Australia's accommodation industry," said the Association's Chief Executive Officer, Richard Munro.

"However, it must be kept in mind that this trajectory cannot be taken for granted, particularly if public policy settings which directly impact on the tourism industry change for the worse.

"It's important for there to be continued support for tourism marketing, tourism infrastructure and ensuring the visa reforms which were recently announced do not create significant problems for operators of accommodation business, notably those in regional areas where it remains difficult to attract and retain staff."

Mr Munro said the dispersal of visitors from capital cities to regional Australia is an ongoing challenge, but that the industry is thrilled with the turnaround in tourism in Tasmania.

"Some four or five years ago, visitors found it difficult to book affordable plane tickets to Tasmania and investment in the accommodation industry in the state was patchy, to say the least," Mr Munro said.

"Fast forward to today and Tasmania has experienced the largest growth in spending - 54 per cent. Like we did in Tasmania, the Accommodation Association is keen to work with stakeholders in Australian markets which are not as strong at the moment to assist with attempting to boost visitation and investment."

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