

Australian holidays hot but Working Holiday Maker result worrying

International visitors are loving Australia with a record number of holidaymakers hitting our shores, and the USA registering its strongest year of holiday visitor number growth, up 30% in the year to June 2016 at 294,000.

"Its great to see our US market has come back after the GFC and we remain a strong destination for American holiday visitors," ATEC Managing Director, Peter Shelley said today.

"We are also seeing a strong growth in both first time and return visitors which is a testament to the great focus our industry has had on keeping on top of the needs, trends and changes in the international visitor market.

"With over half of our top 20 markets revealing record visitor numbers and many with spend growth in the double digits, the export tourism sector can claim this great success."

Mr Shelley said export tourism has long been a strong performer but the Government has sent the wrong message to visitors through proposed changes to the tax rate for Working Holiday Makers.

"We have definitely become a less attractive destination for young backpackers and, unfortunately, today's figures reveal a worrying trend with a significant 7% drop in the number of nights backpackers are spending in Australia.

"The word is out on the backpacker tax and we are beginning to see the signs of a change in demand from this market who are spending less time on our shores, and therefore less money in our economy.

"We urge the Federal Government, in its current review of the Working Holiday Maker visa, to scrap the proposed tax and reinstate Australia's position as a leading destination for backpackers."