

ATEC welcomes new Federal Ministry

The Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) today welcomed the new Federal Government Ministry and the opportunity to work with the new Assistant Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment, Keith Pitt, and continuing to work with the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment the Hon. Steven Ciobo.

"ATEC, representing the tourism export industry in Australia, has had a strong and productive relationship with the Federal Government and we are looking forward to continuing this relationship with the new Turnbull Ministry," ATEC Managing Director, Peter Shelley said today.

"Together, the Government and the export tourism industry, have been able to make positive changes to some of the key policy settings which affect Australia's ability to attract a growing number of international visitors, including improving visa processing and building a strong labour force for the industry.

"As we have recently seen, Australia is in a fantastic position to take advantage of the growth in demand for international travel coming from China, India, Indonesia and Malaysia and we should be focused on improving our attractiveness to these visitors and remaining competitive.

"Australia's export tourism industry is a powerhouse of growth, now contributing an extraordinary \$38 billion in export revenue annually and expected to grow at more than 7% in the coming decade - so it is important we get our policy settings right.

"We are also pleased to see the Prime Minister refer to the new portfolio of Trade, Tourism and Investment - recognising the valuable contribution our industry makes to the Australian economy and the importance of tourism being within the Cabinet.

Mr Shelley said one issue needing immediate Government attention was the backpacker tax which remained in limbo, with calls from within the Coalition for it to be taken off the agenda.

"We currently have a six month freeze on the introduction of the backpacker tax but its future hangs over the industry and is directly affecting the decisions of backpackers currently considering an Australian working holiday.

"Now is the time to act on this issue and to re-engage these visitors by sending a positive and welcoming message before they make the decision to head to New Zealand or an Asian destination.

"We look forward to working with Ministers Ciobo and Pitt and other key Ministers to build a strong future for the Australian tourism export industry."