

Media Release

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FEDERAL BUDGET: TURBOCHARGED VISITOR ECONOMY CAN KEEP AUSTRALIA ON PATH OF PROSPERITY

Turbocharging Australia's visitor economy by boosting the nation's marketing budget, reducing the cost of visas, reducing the Passenger Movement Charge, scrapping the backpacker tax and investing in innovative passenger facilitation and visitor infrastructure are the key Federal Budget recommendations of the Tourism & Transport Forum Australia (TTF).

TTF Federal Budget Submission Key Recommendations:

- *Increase marketing budget of Tourism Australia;*
- *Reduce the cost of visitor and working holiday visas;*
- *Scrap the backpacker tax on working holiday makers;*
- *Implement a phased reduction of the \$1 billion holiday tax (Passenger Movement Charge);*
- *Improve cruise ship access to Sydney's Garden Island with passenger processing facility;*
- *Continue to invest in world-leading biometric technology and automation at air and sea ports;*
- *Reform the Tourist Refund Scheme to allow private operators to deliver the scheme;*
- *Develop an investment strategy for visitor economy infrastructure;*
- *Boost Parks Australia funding; and*
- *Increase funding for national cultural institutions.*

"Australia has had a fantastic story to tell about our visitor economy – we've seen strong growth year after year at a time when our economy is traversing a difficult transition from mining and manufacturing to a diversified services-driven economy," said Margy Osmond, TTF CEO.

"Now is the right time for the Federal Government to back the tourism industry by reducing the financial burden and barriers that are limiting the potential for the sector to become a jobs and wealth generating juggernaut.

"The Government talks the talk on a bold new economic and innovative future for the nation, now it's time to walk the walk by backing the industry sectors that will create the jobs and national wealth for that future.

"Undercutting the nation's tourism marketing budget, slugging a \$1 billion holiday tax on people heading overseas, hiking the fees on visas and slapping a new tax on backpackers is not the way to grow our visitor economy – it's a false economy that is ripping off the nation in the long run for a short term sugar hit to the budget.

“Nearly one million people are directly and indirectly employed in the tourism sector – we want to grow that even more by working with government to cut the taxes and regulatory barriers that are holding the industry and so many more jobs back.

“Treasurer Scott Morrison’s first budget is the opportunity to unveil an innovative investment strategy for the nation’s visitor economy that will grow the economic contribution of the sector and generate a good return on investment to Australian taxpayers over the longer term.

“Investing in Tourism Australia, reducing the cost of visas, scrapping the backpacker tax and improving the visitor experience is the right direction we need to see the government map out in its key financial statement.”