

MEDIA RELEASE

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ABS SAYS TOURISM GROWING FASTER THAN THE TOTAL ECONOMY FEDERAL GOVT SHOULDN'T STRANGLE THE INDUSTRY WITH HIGHER FEES & NEW TAXES

The Tourism & Transport Forum Australia (TTF) has seized on today's ABS Tourism Satellite Account 2014-15 as evidence why the Federal Government should be working with industry to make Australia an even more attractive tourism destination rather than risking its future through indiscriminate hikes in fees and new taxes.

According to the ABS analysis, the tourism sector's direct contribution to the Australian economy in the last financial year was an impressive \$47.5 billion or 3 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In fact, tourism GDP increased by 5.3 per cent over the period – three times the growth of the total Australian economy.

TTF CEO Margy Osmond said: "If the Federal Government is looking for a miracle industry to help lead Australia through the transition from mining to a broad service-based economy, they've found it!

"The number of direct jobs being created by the industry has now reached 580,800 – an increase of 6.3 per cent – and with related employment that is supporting close to one million jobs (10 per cent of the total Australian workforce) more broadly through the Australian economy.

"Tourism is continuing to perform remarkably compared to other industry sectors in the Australian economy and yet successive Federal Governments seem to be obsessed with putting a handbrake on its growth potential by ratcheting up the stealth fees and charges on travellers and proposing new taxes like the poorly considered backpacker tax.

"If the Federal Government is serious about the new economic future for Australia it needs to work with industry by slashing visa fees, reducing the holiday tax (Passenger Movement Charge), scrapping the backpacker tax and making a greater investment in marketing campaigns."