

Budget estimates – Opening statement

- Good evening and thank you for giving me the opportunity to address this committee.
- I would like to start by providing a quick update on the state of the tourism industry and what we are doing at Tourism Australia, before taking any questions you may have.

Recovery

- After a period of significant challenge for the global tourism industry, people around the world have emerged in 2023 with a huge appetite for travel.
- Just today the Australian Bureau of Statistics released the Arrivals numbers for December 2022.
- They show international arrivals were at 60 per cent of 2019 volumes, compared to the same month in 2019.
- Some markets are returning faster than others:
 - The UK is back to 82 per cent of pre-COVID volumes;
 - India is back to 79 per cent;
 - Canada 75 per cent;
 - New Zealand and Singapore 68 per cent; and
 - The US at 66 per cent.
- These numbers do give us confidence about the recovery of tourism here in Australia, but it will take time.
- While travel frictions, such as border closures, are behind us, there are new frictions that need to be resolved, including aviation capacity and a global skills shortage.
- The cost of living is also rising, with wealth concerns replacing health concerns as a key consideration for travellers, although we are not seeing that impact travel demand at this stage.

TA activity

- At Tourism Australia, when borders were closed, we kept the dream of an Australian holiday alive across all our key markets while travel was not possible.
- As travel returned, we escalated our activity spearheaded by our *Come and Say G'Day* campaign with a broad range of brand, PR and trade partnership initiatives to convert pent up demand.
- There are a lot of destinations out there all fighting for the tourism dollar, so it is important we make Australia stand out.

- While Come and Say G'day is still in its early days it is proving to be a success. There have been:
 - 501 million views of advertising across all channels and markets;
 - The short film alone, *G'day*, has had 102 million views across all channels; and
 - We are launching more than 190 partnerships, including 18 airlines.
- So we welcome these initial campaign results, and we also welcome the recent news of two-way quarantine free travel returning for the China market.
- This is a real game changer, as pre-pandemic China was our largest market in terms of both visitation and spend. We know we won't fully recover until we realise that opportunity...
- And that is a challenge we at Tourism Australia, and the entire tourism industry, is more than ready for.