



## National Tourism Alliance

17 March 2015

Mr Wyatt Roy MP  
Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Via email: [jsct@aph.gov.au](mailto:jsct@aph.gov.au)

Dear Mr Roy

I write on behalf of the member associations of the National Tourism Alliance (NTA) in response to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties' inquiry into Australia's withdrawal from the World Tourism Organisation under Article 35 of the *World Tourism Organization (WTO) Statutes (Mexico City, 27 September 1970)*. The NTA received notification in late 2014 following a decision by the Minister for Trade and Investment and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) commenced the process to withdraw Australia as a Full Member of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The NTA wrote to Austrade at that time expressing its concern at the withdrawal and requesting a review of the decision.

The NTA represents industry associations with an interest in Australia's \$113 billion tourism and hospitality industry. NTA membership comprises national and state industry associations who together represent the interests of an industry with 280,000 businesses nationally, who employ 1 million Australians. Australia's tourism industry is part of the international tourism and travel market worth over US\$1,000 billion globally, that saw 1.138 billion international tourists traveling in 2014, the fifth consecutive year of growth. With 6.3 million international visitors a year, Australia is part of a hugely competitive globally engaged market; Australia's membership of the UNWTO is an important element of this country's involvement and engagement in the international marketplace.

We understand that this withdrawal has been prompted by questions about the value of benefits of membership to Australia in recent years. Whilst we acknowledge that it is important that the cost and value of various Government-funded activities are monitored and evaluated, we believe that it would be in the national interest for this decision to be reviewed and reversed as soon as possible.

As noted, Australia's visitor economy is a \$110 billion industry, employing close to 1 million people and supporting 280,000 businesses across metropolitan and regional Australia. Tourism has been identified as one of Australia's five super growth industries, with the sector expected to grow more than 10% faster than global gross domestic product. Australia's top five super growth industries including tourism have the potential to deliver an additional \$250 billion to the national economy over the next 20 years if these growth projections are realised. As Australia moves towards a service-based economy as a result of globalisation, and the visitor economy continues to grow, it is important that this country maintains its engagement with the international community which will provide markets, investment and sources of skilled labour, enabling the Australian industry to grow.

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Some of Australia's key potential growth markets are long standing members of the UNWTO, including China, India, Indonesia, Japan and Malaysia. It is important that Australia's tourism and hospitality industry, as well as the governments of other countries, are aware that the Australian Government is engaged in an important international forum that represents growth and development for the sector.

As the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism, the [World Tourism Organization \(UNWTO\)](#) plays an important global coordinating and facilitation role. It is important that Australia finds a way to be involved in this forum. In an increasingly globalised sector, Australia should have a presence in forum where key issues are addressed that may affect Australia's \$110 billion industry.

In discussing this issue with the industry associations, it appears that there has been a disconnect between the Government's UNWTO representation and the industry itself, which may have contributed to the perception that there was low value in the membership. We therefore propose that this is reviewed in the next budget cycle, and that membership is reinstated with a new system to engage tourism and hospitality in the activities and outcomes of UNWTO membership, with defined objectives and expectations that are assessed each year. The NTA would be most willing to assist to develop and implement a feedback and consultation system between Austrade and the industry, for UNWTO activities.

In closing, we also commend to you the submissions made last year by Queensland Tourism Industry Council and the Australian Tourism Export Council on this issue, which we have included with our letter.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a comment. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need more information, on 0488 0699 45 or by email at [jpayne@tourismalliance.org](mailto:jpayne@tourismalliance.org)

Yours faithfully

**Juliana Payne**  
Chief Executive Officer

## **NATIONAL TOURISM ALLIANCE MEMBERS**

- Australian Tourism Export Council
- Caravan Industry Association of Australia
- Ecotourism Australia
- Queensland Tourism Industry Council
- National Capital Attractions Association
- Restaurant & Catering Australia
- Star Ratings Australia
- Tourism Council Western Australia
- South Australia Tourism Industry Council
- NSW Business Chamber Tourism Division
- Tourism Industry Council Tasmania
- Tourism Top End
- Victoria Tourism Industry Council