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A member of the National Tourism Alliance (NTA)

Sam Gerovich  
First Assistant Secretary  
Trade and Economic Diplomacy Division  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

[tourism@dfat.gov.au](mailto:tourism@dfat.gov.au).

7 November 2014

Dear Mr Gerovich

### **Australia's commitment to the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)**

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Federal Government's intention to disengage from the UN's organisation for tourism. We had not previously been invited to any consultation on this matter and are disappointed that a decision appears to have been made already to this effect.

Tourism is one of Australia's major growth sectors in terms of employment, contribution to GDP and international trade. Apart from successive state and federal governments committing to significant growth targets for tourism, a recent study by Deloitte Access Economics (2014), *Positioning for Prosperity? Catching the next wave*, has identified tourism in Australia as one of five "super sectors of the economy". All of this illustrates the important role that this industry plays in the domestic economy and also, critically, the important role it plays in our international engagement in trade, bi-lateral relations, business promotion and indeed diplomacy.

Given these circumstances and given the commitment of the Federal Government to the promotion of tourism, it seems incongruent that it would now contemplate disengaging from the most important international forum for tourism.

Tourism reaches into many areas of international policy, including aviation, border control, visitor charges, trade liberalisation, education, community development etc. Many of these issue benefit from the discussions and the engagement of nations and stakeholders through the UNWTO, bringing a tourism perspective into the wider considerations. It would be a great loss to Australia and stakeholders in the local tourism industry to be rendered irrelevant in this global forum.

Australia prides itself for its role in international policy and development. Given our relative geographic isolation it requires perhaps more effort on our part not to be disadvantaged by distance. The tourism industry is particularly aware of this. Our engagement in the UNWTO may not consistently deliver readily measurable "value of benefits" but it is an important piece of infrastructure in our international engagement. It is a long term investment in our relationships that yield benefits that can be grown significantly if we chose to make the opportunity work for us.

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We believe it would be a great disappointment for Australia to abandon its membership of the UNWTO and it would not reflect well on a nation that depends as much as ours on our international relationships.

Kind regards

**Daniel Gschwind**  
**Chief Executive**

*QTIC is the State's peak body for tourism in Queensland and represents the interests of business operators, 20 sector associations, over 3,000 regional members and all of Queensland's 13 Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs).*

*QTIC works in partnership with government agencies and industry bodies at a local, state and national level to strengthen the voice of tourism in all relevant policy forums. QTIC's partnerships with the industry and government enable a greater level of responsiveness to increasingly diverse policy settings.*