

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Budget Estimates

29 May 2012

Question: BR23
Topic: Tourism Initiatives and Grants - Tourism 2020
Proof Hansard Page: 75

Senator Waters asked:

Senator WATERS: Likewise, is the department doing anything in particular to help regional and remote –

Ms Madden: There are some of those initiatives, including national landscapes, which Mr McEvoy mentioned earlier. Overall, the policy context in which we are working on things like industry resilience and strengthening labour and skills is called Tourism 2020. We have details of that here. It is also supported through a range of initiatives and grants, as well as research. In the grant program, and specific to Uluru, the minister announced last year that Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia's Uluru Resort is home for the Indigenous national training college for tourism and hospitality. That is an important initiative that is also seeking to ensure there will be long-term interest in the Uluru region, particularly as our research points to a growing interest of travellers to have an Indigenous experience whilst visiting particularly regional and rural parts of Australia.

Senator WATERS: That is a success story. You mentioned that there was a range of initiatives and grants. If you would not mind, can you provide me, on notice, with a list of those with brief detail?

Ms Madden: Yes. We have a number of publications here in relation to that and some of the questions you asked about recent data and trends, which I am happy to leave for you and the committee.

Senator WATERS: I am happy to take those.

Answer:

The Department is delivering a range of programs and initiatives to support tourism in regional areas. Tourism 2020, launched in December 2011 to respond to the ongoing challenges and emerging opportunities for the Australian tourism industry, provides the policy framework for much of this work. Key areas of focus include China (already Australia's most valuable in-bound market), facilitating investment in tourism infrastructure, sourcing and improving labour and skills and Indigenous participation, service quality accreditation and improvement, industry resilience and online capabilities. Specific examples of initiatives being delivered to support tourism in regional areas are listed below.

Research: Through Tourism Research Australia (TRA), the Department provides research, statistics, forecasts and analysis to support tourism industry development. TRA enables access to reliable, independent visitor information which can support the development of the tourism industry in regional areas. The TRA Destination Visitor Surveys program provides destinations with high quality tourism research at the local or regional level to support their information needs and business decision-making. TRA also publishes annual regional data reports which provide reliable, independent visitor information to support the development of regional tourism and growth of regional economies.

T-QUAL Grants Program: Through the T-QUAL Grants Program, the Department provides competitive grants funding to support tourism projects, predominantly in regional areas.

Tourism Quality Project grants of up to \$100,000 are available for smaller scale projects to support tourism industry development, particularly those with community benefits. In July 2011, the Minister for Tourism announced 117 successful applicants for first round of Tourism Quality Projects grants, with a total project value of approximately \$8.5 million. Applications for the second round of Tourism Quality Projects grants have closed, with announcements of successful projects expected by mid-2012.

Strategic Tourism Investment grants of up to \$1 million are also available to fund a small number of larger scale projects to support Indigenous tourism, economic development and tourism employment. In March 2012, the William Angliss Institute was awarded a \$1 million grant to fund the development of a tailored business skill curriculum at the National Indigenous Training Academy located at Ayers Rock Resort. More recently, in July 2012 the Minister announced a further five Strategic Tourism Investment Grants, including: \$1 million awarded to TRC Tourism for Australia's National Landscapes Project; and grants totalling \$1.825 million awarded to Dreamworld, Surfers Paradise, and Lirrwi Yolngu Aboriginal Corporation, Arnhem Land, for Indigenous product development projects.

Tourism Industry Regional Development Fund: Through the Tourism Industry Regional Development Fund, announced by the Government in June 2012, funding of \$48.5 million will be provided over the next four years for projects to increase the supply of quality tourism products and experiences in regional areas.

National Tourism Accreditation: The T-QUAL Accreditation Framework, launched in April 2011, is providing a quality benchmark for the tourism industry. The T-QUAL Tick identifies the tourism businesses and operators in Australia that have been endorsed as meeting the quality standards of T-QUAL Accreditation and provides one national symbol for consumers to be able to recognise quality products and services easily. An extensive marketing campaign is underway to increase sales for T-QUAL endorsed products and services by encouraging consumers to look for the T-QUAL Tick when planning their Australian holidays. T-QUAL endorsed business and operators, including those in regional areas, will also benefit from increased online exposure on state and national tourism websites.

Labour and Skills: The Department is delivering (and contributing to) a number of important initiatives to address tourism labour and skills shortages in regional areas. These include the development and roll out of regional Tourism Employment Plans to address the labour and skills shortages in selected regions across all jurisdictions and the expansion of the Seasonal Worker Program to include a trial for accommodation providers in Broome, the Northern Territory, Tropical North Queensland, the Whitsundays, and Kangaroo Island. The Program commenced on 1 July 2012, and will involve a small-scale, three year trial of seasonal labour mobility arrangements with accommodation providers for workers from the Pacific and East Timor.

Industry Resilience: The Department is delivering initiatives to assist tourism businesses build resilience and adapt to change in a dynamic, competitive environment. The industry resilience toolkit, launched in July 2012, provides Regional Tourism Associations and tourism businesses with a self-help guide for mitigating risks to enhance business continuity.

Further information on initiatives being delivered by the Department to support the Australian tourism industry is available on the Department's website at <http://www.ret.gov.au/tourism>.