



MEDIA RELEASE

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BUSINESS TRAVEL STRENGTHENS TOURISM RECOVERY

Today's March quarter *International Visitors Survey* figures show that while inbound tourism has held up nationally, the natural disasters in Queensland caused heavy cancellations by international visitors.

The number of visitors and visitor nights to Australia in the March quarter 2011 were unchanged from March 2010. Business visitors were up 11 per cent and there were increases in visitors from China (up 23 per cent), India (up 13 per cent), and Indonesia (up 10 per cent) while Japan declined 16 per cent.

"These figures reflect the impact of the Queensland and Japanese natural disasters on Australia's inbound tourism industry," said the Minister for Tourism, Martin Ferguson AM MP.

"While Queensland's inbound visitation was down 9 per cent and New South Wales remained unchanged other States and Territories performed well - Victoria had a 10 per cent increase in international visitors while Western Australia and the ACT were up 9 per cent.

"These are robust figures in light of recent challenges and show that, by and large, Australia's tourism industry has come through a turbulent few months in better shape than many had feared.

"Our challenge is to make the most of emerging markets and that's what the Australia-China Tourism Summit in Cairns this week is doing," Minister Ferguson said.

The Minister Assisting on Tourism, Senator Nick Sherry, welcomed the rebound in business travel.

"Total business spend leapt by one third during the March quarter, underpinned by an increase in business visitor arrivals from China of 55 per cent," Senator Sherry said.

The recovery in expenditure began in the first half of 2010 and broadened during the rest of the year to record seven per cent annual growth on 2009.

"In dollar terms, expenditure on business events rose by \$539 million to \$8.4 billion in 2010. But the sector is yet to reach the levels last seen before the global financial crisis," Minister Sherry said.

"Business events visitors are an important market for Australia's tourism industry.

"These are high-yielding visitors who spent on average \$212 per night in 2010. That compared with \$136 per night for all overnight visitors in Australia.

"The outlook is good - the Tourism Forecasting Committee expects average annual growth of 3.3 per cent over the next ten years.

“That’s a signal to investors that high-yield visitors are looking for more hotels and other tourism infrastructure.”

The Business Events Factsheet and the *International Visitor Survey* is at www.ret.gov.au/tra

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