

MEDIA RELEASE
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Record-breaking year for NSW as visitor expenditure soars past \$50 billion

The NSW visitor economy has surpassed \$50 billion in expenditure for the first time in history and is leading Australia's post-pandemic rebound.

Data from Tourism Research Australia (TRA) shows domestic and international travellers contributed a record \$51.4 billion to the NSW visitor economy in the year ending December 2023.

NSW welcomed the most international visitors, nights spent and visitor expenditure nationally during the period, which contributed \$11 billion to the visitor economy. NSW also saw the largest absolute growth in international visitor numbers (up 1.8 million), nights (up 42.8 million) and expenditure (up 6 billion) of all states and territories.

International arrivals reached 78 per cent of pre-pandemic levels with visitor nights at 90 per cent and expenditure at 96 per cent in comparison to 2019. The United States, New Zealand and the United Kingdom remained NSW's top international source markets in 2023, with China showing strong recovery as the fourth largest. South Korea saw the fastest visitor growth, while Indonesia excelled in both nights spent and expenditure and Singapore led in expenditure growth.

Sydney cemented its position as the undisputed visitor economy leader among Australian capital cities in 2023. It attracted 53 per cent of all international visitors to Australian capitals, who stayed for a combined 73.1 million nights and spent an estimated \$10 billion, representing 40 per cent and 44 per cent of total nights and expenditure respectively.

Domestic visitors to NSW surged 9.3 per cent, driving the state's highest-ever domestic expenditure at \$40.5 billion. Regional NSW continued to shine with its natural attractions and experiences, leading regional Australia in domestic daytrip visitor levels.

Nature-based activities and caravan and camping holidays were major draws, with NSW remaining the top destination for caravan and camping in Australia. More than 15 million overnight visitors also engaged in nature-based activities during their trips, spending a combined \$16.1 billion across their whole trip to NSW.

Western Sydney accounted for one in five domestic overnight visitors to Sydney in the year ending December 2023. There were a total of 2.2 million domestic overnight visitors during the period, up 3.1 per cent on the previous year. These visitors stayed 5.6 million nights and spent \$1.4 billion - an increase of 8.4 per cent and 30.4 per cent respectively on the previous year.

Destination NSW CEO Steve Cox said: "The NSW visitor economy is leading the country's recovery from the pandemic and attracting the majority of international visitors to Australia as well as setting new benchmarks domestically.

"The diversity of natural and cultural experiences in NSW is unrivalled and puts our state in a unique position to attract visitors from around the world.

"These results are a testament to the world-class visitor experiences on offer in NSW from Ballina to Broken Hill and Narooma to Newcastle. Congratulations and well done to the thousands of people working hard each and every day to grow our visitor economy, support local jobs and inject billions into our state.

“It is gratifying to see Western Sydney’s visitor economy go from strength to strength. It is already Australia’s third largest economy and is on the runway to becoming an even bigger powerhouse for the state’s visitor economy. When Western Sydney International Airport opens in 2026 it will have capacity for 10 million passengers per year from day one, further boosting visitation to Greater Sydney and regional NSW.”

International visitor fast facts

- NSW recorded 3.4 million international visitors, 87 million nights and \$11 billion in expenditure in the year ending December 2023
- Visitation recovered to 78 per cent of 2019 levels
- Visitor nights reached 90 per cent of 2019 levels
- Expenditure reached 96 per cent of 2019 levels
- Average expenditure per night grew to \$126 in 2023, up from \$118 in 2019
- Top 3 source markets: US, New Zealand, UK
- Fastest recovering markets: South Korea (visitors), Indonesia (nights and expenditure), Singapore (expenditure)
- Sydney received 53 per cent of all international visitors to Australian capitals
- Sydney received 3.2 million international visitors who stayed 73.1 million nights and spent \$10 billion
- Regional NSW received 79 per cent of its 2019 international visitors
- 583,500 international visitors to NSW participated in an Aboriginal cultural tourism experience.

Domestic visitor fast facts

- NSW attracted 102.5 million domestic visitors in the year ending December 2023 (9.3 per cent increase YoY)
- Domestic visitor expenditure reached a record high of \$40.5 billion
- NSW, regional NSW and Sydney all achieved record domestic expenditure
- Sydney received 36 million domestic visitors who stayed 30.7 million nights and spent \$15 billion
- Regional NSW received 67.5 million domestic visitors who stayed 86.4 million nights and spent \$25.5 billion
- Regional NSW led regional Australia in daytrip visitors and expenditure
- Nature-based activities and caravan/camping were major drawcards for visitors. NSW remained the top destination for caravan and camping in Australia
- 15.9 million overnight visitors participated in nature-based activities, spending \$16.1 billion across their whole trip to NSW.

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