

Where do the statistics come from?

The primary sources of information on visitor numbers to South Australia and to South Australia's tourism regions, published by the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) are:

- the National Visitor Survey (NVS) for domestic visitor figures (travel by Australian residents), and
- the International Visitor Survey (IVS) for visits by international visitors to Australia.

These surveys are managed by Tourism Research Australia on behalf of Commonwealth and State Tourism Organisations.

How is the information collected?

The statistics are collected through interviews with visitors after their trip.

The NVS is an 'origin based' survey. Respondents are surveyed on residential fixed-line telephones and mobile phones using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Since January 2005, interviews have been conducted with approximately 120,000 respondents annually.

In 2014, the NVS moved to a dual frame sample methodology. This means one portion of the sample is now interviewed on residential fixed-lines and another on mobile phones. This change has occurred as the "mobile only" population has increased substantially and this trend is set to continue. Latest data indicates that 20% of those aged 18 or more are "mobile only" with the incidence much higher for younger age groups. Until 2014, "mobile only" respondents were outside the scope of the NVS.

The IVS is conducted through Computer Aided Personal Interviews (CAPI) in departure lounges of international airports with short-term (stay of less than 12 months duration) international visitors aged 15 years or older. Since January 2005, interviews are conducted with around 40,000 departing international visitors each year.

Both the IVS and NVS operate continuously throughout the year.

What trips are included?

The NVS includes questions about:

- Overnight Trips – trips involving a stay of one or more nights away from home at a place at least 40km away from home.
- Day Trips – trips that involve a round trip distance of at least 50km and being away from home for at least 4 hours, but not including an overnight stay away from home.

- Routine day trips, such as for commuting, are not included. As day trip visitors return home on the same day, the majority of day trips are likely to be by visitors from within a region or adjoining region, although trips such as same day business trips from other interstate capitals etc. are also included.
- Outbound Trips – trips to another country by Australian residents.

International visitors are asked about their entire trip in Australia.

Only those 15 years or over are interviewed for the surveys and the resultant visitor estimates are for persons aged 15 or over. Trips by international and domestic visitors of more than 12 months duration are excluded.

For more information on the [NVS](#) and [IVS](#) please visit the website.

What about persons staying in their own holiday home, are they included?

Yes they are included. Information is collected about all eligible trips regardless of accommodation used. Therefore the figures include those staying in hotels/motels, bed and breakfast accommodation, friends/relatives homes, own holiday home or even by the side of the road. Similarly information is collected about all eligible trips regardless of purpose of visit, whether it is for holiday, visiting friends, business, weddings - or even a funeral.

What information is collected?

The surveys are comprehensive. For instance, for overnight trips, the NVS includes questions about:

- The Visitor e.g. gender, age, life-cycle stage, income etc;
- The Trip e.g. travel party, length of trip, number/places of stopovers, information sources, expenditure, bookings on the internet etc;
- Each Stopover Visit e.g. for each place a visitor stopped overnight they are asked about transport used, accommodation, length of stay, leisure activities, purpose of visit etc.

The IVS asks, in the main, similar questions to the NVS although some questions such as activities undertaken are asked for the entire trip – rather than for each stopover.

Are the figures accurate?

The data is based on a sample of the population. As with all sample surveys, the results are subject to sampling variability. That is, the results are subject to some degree of uncertainty and differ statistically from what would be obtained from a census of the entire population.

The sampling approach is designed to optimise reliability of estimates. That is, respondents interviewed for the NVS are representative of the Australian population based on place of residence, age and sex. IVS respondents are selected to reflect country of residence of visitors to Australia and the pattern of departure of visitors by airport and month. The NVS is benchmarked to population estimates of those aged 15 years or over and the IVS to data on overseas arrivals and departures as released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

What is the impact of sampling variability?

The impact of sampling variability is measured by the Confidence Interval (CI), which indicates the extent to which an estimate might vary from the true figure because only a sample of the population is included.

The lower the value of the visitor estimate, the wider the CI. The following examples demonstrate the operation of the CI for different values of estimates from the NVS.

- For the estimated 66.8 million domestic overnight visits in Australia in 2009 the 95% Confidence Interval is 1.3% meaning that there are 95 chances in 100 that, if the entire population had been included in the survey, a figure within the range of 66.8 million plus or minus 1.9% would have been obtained, that is, between 67.7 million and 65.9 million.
- For the 4.6 million domestic overnight visitors to SA in 2009, the 95% CI is 5.9% i.e. there are between 4.9 million and 4.3 million visits to SA – probably.
- Currently around half of South Australia's tourism regions have a 95% CI range of over 20% for domestic overnight visits to their region.

What does sampling variability mean in terms of using the results?

TRA's annual NVS publication refers to Confidence Intervals above 50% as subject to sampling variability that is too high for practical purposes and that they should be used with caution. For CIs less than 50% the figures should still be regarded as estimates and their use based on an understanding of the data's level of reliability. In most cases the figures can be regarded as providing useful indicative estimates of the likely level of visitation to a tourism region and the characteristics of these visits. Particular caution is needed in using

the figures to measure changes between two periods. Especially at the regional level, it is likely that a percentage change in visitor numbers from one year to the next is within the range that statistically could be expected through random sampling variability of the data. Longer term trends in visitor movements may however be discernible from considering a time series over several years.

Are there other sources of visitor statistics?

Yes. Other key information sources referenced by the SATC include:

Survey of Tourism Accommodation (STA) conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This survey involves a census of accommodation establishments that are 'in-scope' for the survey and provides details on capacity (e.g. rooms available), takings from accommodation, employees and room nights sold (used to calculate occupancy rates). It does not provide information about visitors themselves.

The survey is scope is Hotels, motels and serviced apartments with 15 or more rooms.

Tourism Satellite Accounts The development of Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA's) for Australia and each State and Territory provide estimates of the contribution of the tourism industry to the economy in terms of output, value added and employment. National level accounts have been produced annually and detailed State/territory Accounts are produced every 3 years, with State/Territory summary spreadsheets available in other years. For more information on TSA's see the [factsheet Tourism and the Economy, on SATC corporate website. Research page.](#)

Regional Tourism Satellite Accounts follow on from the National Tourism Satellite Accounts. The Regional Satellite Accounts go beyond these state-wide findings to examine the role and contribution of the tourism industry at a regional level. The analysis is underpinned by benchmark industry data sourced from Tourism Research Australia and a modelling framework consistent with that employed in the derivation of the national and state TSA. The contribution of tourism to key economic metrics such as employment and gross regional product is estimated for South Australia tourism regions.

KI TOMM. Kangaroo Island (KI) Tourism Optimisation Management Model (TOMM) was developed to monitor the effects of tourism from a variety of perspectives, in the interests of both KI residents and visitors. The model is a community based initiative responsible for monitoring and managing the long term sustainability of tourism on the island. KI TOMM is underpinned by an annual visitor survey and a resident survey every second year. [For more information visit the Tourism Kangaroo island website.](#)



What can I expect of the future?

Improvements to the accuracy and relevance of the tourism surveys is ongoing. Recent and ongoing improvements include:

- The IVS and NVS questionnaires are reviewed annually and questions changed, added and deleted as appropriate.
- As of 2015, the NVS includes sampling by both fixed line and mobile phones.

How do I find out more about visitor statistics?

Visitor statistics are summarised in fact sheets on the research page of the [SATC corporate web site](#) under Research the 'At a Glance' and 'Overnight Visitors to Regions' fact sheets, updated quarterly, they provide the top-line State results and number of visits and visitors nights from interstate, intrastate and overseas for each SA tourism region. Under 'Regional Profiles', summaries are available for each region that cover a range of tourism statistics for the region including visits, visitor characteristics and accommodation occupancies. Further information is also available from the [Tourism Research Australia website](#), with numerous reports, fact sheets and snapshots of National, State and Regional perspective.