

# SERVICE DELIVERY GUIDELINES PREPARING FOR THE CHINESE VISITOR

# WECHAT



Chinese visitation to Australia has been growing strongly over the past ten years and has seen Australia reach its 2020 goal of one million visitors in March 2016 – making it the largest and fastest growing of all inbound markets.

For the year ending March 2016, 34,000 Chinese visitors included South Australia in their itinerary, spending \$211 million, making it our most valuable international market.

Projections suggest that if we maximise the growth of

Chinese visitation to South Australia we could attract up to 57,000 visitors by 2020 with associated expenditure of \$450 million.

To achieve this potential, it is essential we understand the current Chinese visitor, as well

as the likely changes in travel patterns that are to occur over the next five years and look at ways to prepare and deliver the expectations of the market.

The South Australian tourism Commission in partnership with Fastrak Asian Solutions

has developed this series of service delivery guidelines to assist our industry partners in preparing South Australia to meet the expectations and grow visitation from one of the fastest growing markets – China.

Chinese access to many internet sites is blocked by what is known as the 'Great Fire Wall' so most of the sites we use and take for granted are not available in China. There is no Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Google and your website, which loads in seconds here, may take hours to load in China. As a result, an almost parallel internet universe has been developed, instead of YouTube they have YouKu, instead of Google they have Baidu, instead of Twitter they have Weibo and above all of these, they have WeChat, a social media platform in a league of its own.

## WHAT IS WECHAT?

WeChat is a combination of Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Skype, Uber, Amazon, Venom and much more. Since its launch in 2011 it has grown to become the most popular and powerful social media app in China with over 700 million Active Monthly Users and a further 70 million users outside of China. What makes WeChat different to all its competitors is that it allows users to do everything without having to leave the app. They can post messages, text, share music, read articles, make voice or video calls, post images and videos and book and pay for services (such as restaurants, doctors, electricity bills) all without leaving the app. It also includes the Wechat payment system which is accepted at over 200,000 offline shops and businesses in China.

## WHY USE WECHAT?

Many people prefer to communicate through WeChat rather than email because the WeChat app provides better functionality and more options. If you want to do business in China and attract Chinese visitors then you need to consider using WeChat and there are numerous cases of tourism operators running their entire Chinese business through the WeChat app.

Once your account is set up, WeChat is a great way to share information direct with consumers and for consumers to research and review your product – similar to Trip Advisor. If you are lucky enough to have a Chinese celebrity or Key Influencer visit your business, then you can leverage their followers to raise the profile of your business and increase visitation.

At trade events or when meeting with Chinese travel agents or Inbound Tour Operators, WeChat allows you to instantly share all your company information, including brochures, images, videos, rate sheets and booking/payment details etc. to whoever you are meeting. The translation function also makes it very easy to talk with your Chinese business colleagues.

## WECHAT AT A GLANCE:

- Over 700 million monthly active users
- 10 million Official WeChat accounts
- 700,000 WeChat articles published per day
- 94% of users use WeChat every day, more than half of which use WeChat for more than 1 hour daily.
- 61% of users open WeChat more than 10 times per day.
- Top 3 things people do on WeChat are chatting with each other, posting and sharing information, and reading content via followed public accounts.

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## HOW TO GET INVOLVED?

There are two main account types that you can use to get involved – a personal account or a subscription account. We recommend that you consult a company that is qualified in Chinese social media to determine the type of account that is best suited to your needs. A list of these companies can be found on the China Development Framework listed on the SATC corporate website: [www.tourism.sa.com/industry/understanding-china.aspx](http://www.tourism.sa.com/industry/understanding-china.aspx)

Like any social media platform, your content should be valuable, interesting and emotional to keep your followers engaged and to encourage them to share the content with their friends. It's also important to link yourself to a relevant public account with a large follower base, i.e. SATC or Tourism Australia and to leverage from their activities. Once you have set up your account and developed relevant content you will also need to invest time and effort to grow your fan base and engage with your followers.

WeChat is a community and people expect a certain level of engagement. Whilst setting up a WeChat account is relatively simple, it is recommended that to maximise the opportunity you also need to develop a landing page with information specific to Chinese visitors; have it translated; and commit to post regularly (even daily) and respond to enquiries in a timely manner. If you are not able to do this yourself there is a list of companies on the China Development Framework that are able to help manage and run your Chinese social media activities.

If you ignore your followers then you will lose face which will adversely impact your business. For further information on the importance of Face please refer to the FACE Service Delivery Guidelines sheet available on the SATC corporate website.

Disclaimer: This summary has been prepared by the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) in good faith and based on information sourced from the WeChat Impact Report 2016. While every care has been taken in preparing the information, the SATC does not represent or warrant that it is correct, complete or suitable for the purposes for which you wish to use it. By using this information you acknowledge that it is provided by SATC without any responsibility on behalf of the SATC and agree to release and indemnify the SATC for any loss or damage that you or any third party may suffer as a result of your reliance on this information.

## CONTACT

For more information and the full series of Service Delivery guidelines - Preparing for the Chinese visitor, see [www.tourism.sa.gov.au](http://www.tourism.sa.gov.au)