FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where do the statistics come from?

The primary sources of visitor statistics published by the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC) are:

- Domestic Tourism Statistics (DoTS) for travel by Australian residents; and
- the International Visitor Survey (IVS) for international visitors to Australia.

Both are managed by Tourism Research Australia (TRA). DoTS replaced the National Visitor Survey (NVS) from January 2025.

How is the information collected?

Domestic Tourism Statistics (DoTS)

DoTS combines survey responses with large-scale mobility data and other data sources to estimate domestic trips, nights and expenditure. Approximately 32,000 Australian residents aged 14 years and over are interviewed each year, including around 24,000 face-to-face interviews, with the remainder completed online.

The survey provides detailed information about travellers and their trips, while mobility data provides a much larger picture of travel movements. These sources are combined and modelled by TRA to produce official estimates of domestic tourism.

The previous NVS relied primarily on telephone interviewing and was replaced by DoTS from January 2025.

International Visitor Survey (IVS)

The IVS surveys international visitors as they depart Australia. Samples of departing flights and visitors are selected each month across Australia's international airports. The survey collects information about visitors' travel within Australia, including destinations visited, nights and expenditure.

IVS results are weighted to international visitor data from the Department of Home Affairs, taking into account factors including country of residence, state of arrival, purpose of journey, airport of departure, age and sex.

What trips are included?

Domestic travel

DoTS collects information on:

- Overnight trips – travel at least 40 kilometres from home involving one or more nights away.
- Day trips – travel involving at least four hours away from home and a round-trip distance of at least 50 kilometres, without an overnight stay.
- Outbound trips – overseas travel by Australian residents for less than 12 months.

Routine travel within a person's usual environment and day trips undertaken as part of an overnight trip are excluded.

DoTS covers Australian residents aged 14 years and over.

Are visitors staying in their own holiday home included?

Yes. All eligible trips are included regardless of the type of accommodation used, including hotels and motels, friends' or relatives' homes, holiday homes and camping.

Eligible trips are also included across all purposes of travel, such as holidays, visiting friends and relatives, business and other personal travel.

International travel

The IVS measures travel by international visitors to Australia and provides information on the number of trips, nights and expenditure, as well as visitor characteristics and travel behaviour.

What information is collected?

The surveys collect detailed information about visitor behaviour.

DoTS collects information including:

- destination
- purpose of travel
- transport
- travel party

- accommodation
- activities
- travel packages
- expenditure
- visitor demographics.

The IVS collects broadly similar information about international visitors and their travel within Australia.

Some survey measures relate to the entire trip rather than an individual destination, so care should be taken when attributing particular activities or characteristics to a specific location visited.

Are the figures accurate?

Both DoTS and IVS provide estimates rather than counts of every visitor.

DoTS uses a combination of survey, mobility and other data sources, with modelling used to estimate domestic trips, nights and expenditure.

The IVS is sample-based and is therefore subject to sampling variability. TRA publishes confidence intervals to indicate the level of uncertainty associated with IVS estimates. Generally, smaller estimates have greater uncertainty and should be interpreted with greater caution.

Particular care should therefore be taken when interpreting small visitor segments, regional results and changes between individual periods.

Can current DoTS results be compared with historical NVS data?

Care is required when making historical comparisons because DoTS uses a different collection and modelling methodology from the former NVS.

TRA has produced back-cast historical estimates for selected measures to improve comparability with current DoTS results. TRA advises that caution should still be exercised when interpreting comparisons with the back-cast series.

This is particularly important when looking at more detailed market segments and regional results.

Are there other sources of tourism statistics?

Yes. Other important sources used by SATC include:

Australian Accommodation Monitor / STR

Accommodation performance is monitored using STR Benchmark data from CoStar. Through its partnership with Austrade, the Australian Accommodation Monitor provides accommodation performance information for capital cities, states and territories and tourism regions.

Key measures include:

- room supply
- room demand
- room revenue
- occupancy
- Average Daily Rate (ADR)
- Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR).

The current AAM methodology generally defines an in-scope property as having 10 or more rooms, being open to the public and generating nightly accommodation revenue.

I would replace the existing Survey of Tourist Accommodation (STA) section with this. The STA material in the attached FAQ is historical and no longer represents SATC's current accommodation performance source.

Tourism Satellite Accounts

Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSAs) estimate tourism's contribution to the economy, including measures such as tourism gross product, gross value added, consumption, trade and employment.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics produces tourism estimates at the national level, while Tourism Research Australia produces annual estimates for states, territories and tourism regions.

State and Regional Tourism Satellite Accounts

The State and Regional Tourism Satellite Accounts provide annual estimates of tourism's economic contribution across all Australian states and territories and 76 tourism regions. They include measures such as tourism's contribution to Gross State Product or Gross Regional Product, jobs, exports and tourism consumption.

For the 2024–25 release, TRA introduced a new sub-national Tourism Satellite Account model, replacing the previous State and Regional TSA models. State and territory results have been back-cast to 2018–19, while tourism-region results are available under the new model for 2023–24 and 2024–25. Comparisons with results produced under the previous methodology should therefore be made with caution.