

REGIONAL JOB NUMBERS: COVID RECOVERY INDICATORS

Regional Tourism Satellite Accounts (RTSA) provide our only measure of regional tourism employment. On the 13 July 2022, the most recent RTSA were released by Tourism Research Australia.

The data showed an increase in regional tourism employment of 20 per cent and a decrease in Adelaide employment of 28 per cent to June 2021. The results highlight the uneven impact of COVID on Tourism across South Australia with Adelaide having a higher reliance on international and/or domestic interstate visitors more impacted compared to the benefits received by the regions through increased intrastate travel with border closures.

Tourism region	2019-20	Change
Adelaide	15,900	-28%
Regional South Australia	21,300	20%

To better understand the status of tourism performance in the regions, more recent data can paint a comprehensive picture of how regions are performing post-COVID.

The following table draws on Tourism Research Australia data and shows the total tourism expenditure per region. It uses the year ending December 2019 as a pre-COVID benchmark and compares this to the most recent data available (year ending March 2022).

The data shows that most of our regions have recovered from initial COVID impacts so strongly that on average over the 12 months to March 2022, six regions are performing above, or close to pre-COVID levels.

Considering the absence of international travellers, and ongoing impacts to interstate travel, this shows remarkable levels of tourism spending in regions over recent months.

Summary data for regional Australia and regional South Australia shows that South Australia is performing more strongly compared to the total result for regional Australia. This is further evidenced by even more recent accommodation data. Occupancy data to May 2022 shows that regional South Australia is showing the occupancy levels at 70 per cent, the second highest month on record. At 70 per cent occupancy, this is 8 per cent higher compared to May 2019.

The Great State Voucher program has continued to generate significant room bookings with Round Seven recently resulting in 55,000 nights booked across Adelaide and Regional South Australia.

Combined with the increasing data around workforce demand, and the high numbers of job vacancies being listed in regions, from an employment perspective, the issue is currently supply of an adequate workforce rather than lack of employment opportunities.

TOTAL TOURISM EXPENDITURE PER REGION			
TOURISM REGION	PRE-COVID (YE DEC '19)	MOST RECENT (YE MAR '22)	% OF PRE-COVID PERFORMANCE
ADELAIDE HILLS	\$207m	\$193m	94%
BAROSSA	\$225m	\$261m	116%
CLARE VALLEY	\$117m	\$156m	133%
EYRE PENINSULA	\$549m	\$482m	88%
FLEURIEU PENINSULA	\$559m	\$657m	118%
FLINDERS RANGES AND OUTBACK	\$516m	\$365m	71%
KANGAROO ISLAND	\$191m	\$214m	112%
LIMESTONE COAST	\$421m	\$370m	88%
MURRAY RIVER, LAKES AND COORONG	\$281m	\$212m	76%
RIVERLAND	\$195m	\$253m	130%
YORKE PENINSULA	\$240m	\$257m	107%
REGIONAL SA	\$3.6bn	\$3.5bn	97%
REGIONAL AUSTRALIA	\$74.8bn	\$52.9bn	71%