



**NINTI ONE** REMOTE ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

# VISITORS TO AUSTRALIA'S MAIN REMOTE TOURISM REGIONS BETWEEN 2009/2010 AND 2012/2013

## RESEARCH UPDATE KEY HIGHLIGHTS

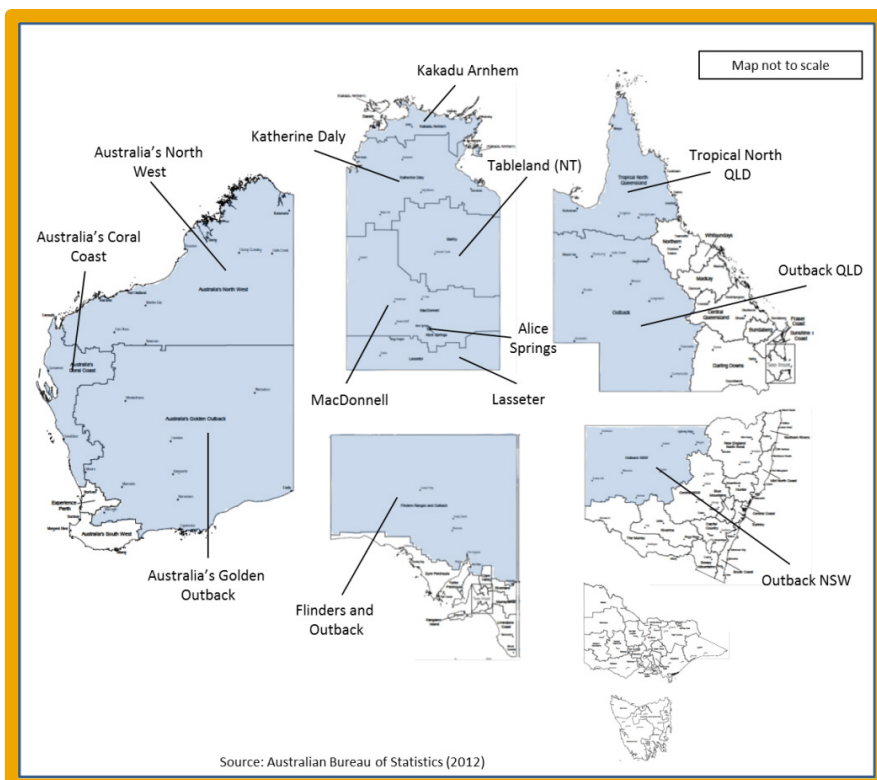
- ▶ Overall visitor numbers have increased 10.9% from 2009/2010 to 2012/13
- ▶ In 2012/13, total visitor numbers were 6.9 million
- ▶ Combined international visitor numbers in 2012/2013 were 1.294 million, an increase of 5.7% from 2011/2012; this was still lower (-4.7%) than 2009/2010 figures
- ▶ Combined domestic visitor numbers for all remote regions in 2012/2013 were 5.64 million, a small decrease from 2011/2012 figures
- ▶ There is no clear trend between all regions; some individual regions have risen in popularity in recent years, while visitation to many regions continues to decline or plateau

## Background

Who visits remote Australia? Where do they go? Are visitor numbers increasing or decreasing? The Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation is conducting research with Aboriginal Tourism operators in remote Australia to assist with their resilience and profitability. Understanding visitor statistics is an important part of this research.

For the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the distance of a place to the closest urban centre is important in determining remoteness. Hence, the further the distance, the more remote a place will be.

Tourism Research Australia (TRA) publishes data on Australia's tourism regions defined according to ABS calculations. This briefing sheet identifies international and domestic overnight visitor trends for the main 13 tourism regions covering remote Australia (shaded in map below) from 2009 to 2013.



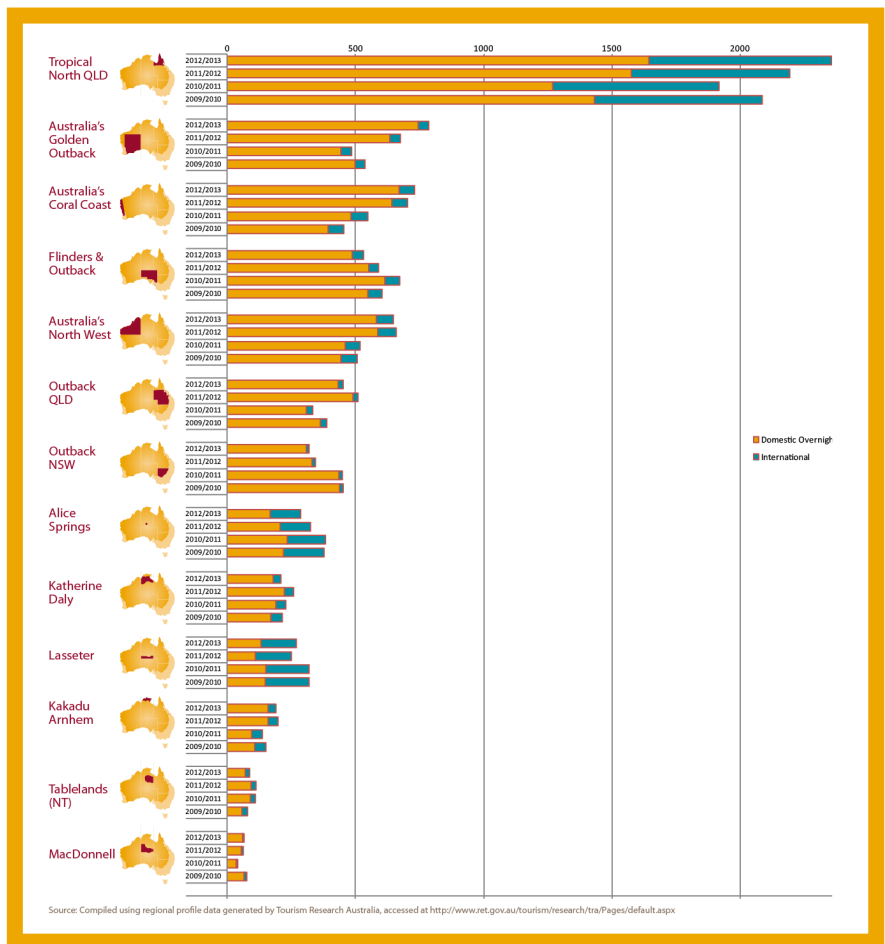


## Overall visitor figures

- ▶ The combined visitation for all 13 regions was approximately 6.9 million for 2012/2013, an increase of 0.74% from 2011/2012 and of 10.9% from 2009/2010 figures (6.2 million). This growth has been ongoing for each 12-month period between 2009/2010 to 2012/2013.
- ▶ Of all remote regions, Tropical North Queensland recorded the highest visitation for each 12-month period between 2009/2010 and 2012/2013 (averaging 2,138,000 a year), with top destinations including non-remote areas such as Cairns and Port Douglas. MacDonnell in the Northern Territory recorded the lowest visitation for each 12-month period between 2009/2010 and 2012/2013 (averaging 62,000 a year).
- ▶ Regions that maintained an overall visitor growth trend include Tropical North Queensland, Australia's Golden Outback and Australia's Coral Coast. Other regions, such as Australia's North West, Outback Queensland and Tablelands, had fewer visitors in 2012/2013 than in 2011/2012, but still maintained higher visitation than in 2009/2010.
- ▶ The 2012/2013 visitation numbers are below the 2009/2010 figures for Outback NSW (-28.82%), Flinders and Outback (-11.92%), Alice Springs (-24.33%) and Katherine Daly (-3.2%), and for most it was a decline that started in 2010/2011. The biggest percentage decline between 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 was for Katherine Daly (-22.32%).
- ▶ In central Australia, there was visitor growth between 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 for Lasseter (6.74%) and MacDonnell (8.06%), but this visitation still remained lower than 2009/2010 figures for both regions (-15.93% and -12.98% respectively).

## International visitors

- ▶ The combined international visitors for all regions in 2012/2013 (1.294 million) increased from 1.224 million in 2011/2012 (5.7%), but was still lower (-4.7%) than 2009/2010 figures (1.358 million).
- ▶ The only regions to record increases in international visitors between 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 are Tropical North Queensland (15%), Flinders and Outback (13.15%), Outback Queensland (5.26%) and Alice Springs (0.84%). However, visitor numbers still remained lower than 2009/2010 figures for Alice Springs (-24.2%), Outback Queensland (-20%) and Flinders and Outback (-23.21%).
- ▶ Between 2011/2012 and 2012/2013, international visitor numbers remained steady for Outback NSW, Australia's Coral Coast and MacDonnell. For MacDonnell, however, 2012/2013 international visitor numbers were much less than in 2009/2010 (-30%).
- ▶ The regions with the biggest decrease in international visitors between 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 are Katherine Daly (-19.44%) and Kakadu Arnhem (-17.94%). For both regions, 2012/2013 international visitor numbers are also well below 2009/2010 figures (at -34% and -27.27% respectively).



Visitors to Australia's main remote tourism regions: 2009/10–2012/13, ('000s)

## Domestic overnight visitors

- ▶ The combined domestic overnight visitor total for all remote regions in 2012/2013 (5.64 million) decreased (-0.335%) from 5.659 million in 2011/2012.
- ▶ Domestic overnight visitors accounted for 81.3% of visitors to all remote regions in 2012/2013. Domestic overnight visitors account for 80% or more of tourists in 10 remote regions, and for 5 of these regions the proportion is 90% or more. Only Lasseter (home to Uluru) received fewer domestic overnight (48.7%) than international visitors (51.3%).
- ▶ Regions to record increases in overnight domestic visitors between 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 are Tropical North Queensland (4.44%), Australia's Golden Outback (17.69%), Australia's Coral Coast (4.36%), Lasseter (19.09%) and MacDonnell (9.09%). This is above 2009/2010 figures for Tropical North Queensland (14.8%), Australia's Golden Outback (49.2%) and Australia's Coral Coast (70%), but below 2009/2010 figures for Lasseter (-11.4%) and MacDonnell (-10.4%).

- ▶ Between 2011/2012 and 2012/2013, there were overnight domestic visitor decreases for Outback NSW (-6.9%), Outback Queensland (-12%), Australia's North West (-0.85%), Flinders and Outback (-11.41%), Alice Springs (-18.93%), Katherine Daly (-18.9%) and Tablelands (-25.53%). In 2012/2013, domestic overnight visitor numbers were less than 2009/2010 figures for Outback NSW (-29.6%), Flinders and Outback (-10.76%) and Alice Springs (-24.43%).

## Summary

The TRA figures suggest that while there is an overall increase of visitors in remote Australia, the increase is only experienced by a small number of regions, but in some cases the increases are large. For other regions it appears to be the opposite, and visitation is in decline. Few remote regions have simultaneous growth in domestic overnight and international visitors, while for some, 2012/2013 figures are languishing well below visitation only four years earlier. There is no clear trend between all regions; some individual regions have risen in popularity in recent years, while visitation to many regions continues to decline or plateau.

## For further details about this project, please contact:

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### Research Partners of the CRC-REP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Product project



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Iga Warta...  
the place of the native Orange

