

Queensland Tourism Celebrated and Represented in Canberra



QUEENSLAND
TOURISM INDUSTRY
COUNCIL



It was a significant week for Queensland tourism in Canberra, combining national recognition for three exceptional regional communities with a strong program of industry advocacy at Parliament House.

QTIC represented Queensland throughout the week through my role as a Director of the Australian Tourism Industry Council, ensuring the priorities of our operators and regional communities were heard as national policy decisions were being considered.

Queensland Brings Home Two Golds and a Silver

Queensland achieved an extraordinary result at the 2026 Australia's Top Tourism Town Awards in the Great Hall of Parliament House:

Stanthorpe was crowned Australia's Top Tourism Town

Airlie Beach won Gold as Australia's Top Small Tourism Town

Toogoolawah received Silver in the Tiny Tourism Town category

Queensland Top Tour Guide Jeb Connelly of Gems Tag Along Tours also represented our state proudly on the national stage.

These awards are about much more than naming Australia's best places to visit. They recognise the tourism operators, local businesses, councils, volunteers and communities working together to create memorable visitor experiences.

For regional destinations, this national recognition provides another platform to build awareness, inspire visitation and showcase the distinctive experiences and stories that make Queensland so special.

We congratulate everyone who represented Queensland and helped deliver such an exceptional result for our state.

Building Tourism's Presence in Parliament

The week began with the Parliamentary Friends of Tourism networking event at Parliament House, bringing together more than 100 tourism leaders, parliamentarians and industry stakeholders.

The event provided an important opportunity to speak directly with decision-makers about the contribution tourism makes to Australia's economy, regional communities and employment.

Representatives included the Minister for Trade and Tourism, Senator the Hon Don Farrell; Assistant Minister for Tourism, Senator Nita Green; Shadow Minister for Trade, Investment and Tourism, Senator Matt Canavan; and Shadow Minister for Tourism, the Hon David Littleproud MP.

Events such as this give our industry a visible and united presence in Canberra and help ensure tourism remains part of national economic and policy discussions.

Taking Industry Priorities Directly to Decision-Makers

ATIC representatives also participated in a series of bipartisan advocacy meetings with Austrade, Tourism Research Australia, government and opposition tourism offices, One Nation and representatives focused on northern and regional Australia.

Working Holiday Makers and other longer-stay visitors were a central focus throughout these discussions.

ATIC reinforced that Working Holiday Makers are both a valuable visitor market and an essential part of the tourism workforce. Any reduction in their availability or length of stay would affect visitor spending, regional jobs and the capacity of tourism businesses to operate, particularly during peak periods. The industry's national position is clear: Working Holiday Makers and other genuine longer-stay visitors should not be caught within broad Net Overseas Migration reduction targets. Their availability, mobility and length of stay must be protected.

We also raised growing concerns about visa-processing delays and the uncertainty this is creating for tourism businesses preparing for the summer peak.

Since our meetings in Canberra, the Australian Government has released its new migration plan. QTIC will review this plan closely and update members on what it means for the tourism and events workforce.

Other issues discussed during the week included:

- Tourism Research Australia data and methodology
- Access to timely tourism data during natural disasters
- Insurance affordability and availability
- Sustainability and regional tourism development
- The importance of understanding visitation through regional border entry points

This was an important week for Queensland tourism: celebrating the regional communities that make our industry exceptional while continuing to advocate on the national policy decisions that affect their future.

QTIC will keep pressing these issues with government, starting with a response to the migration announcement. We'll update members as soon as there's more to report.