

Sunny outlook for domestic tourism in Australia post COVID-19 restrictions

April 24 2020



Associate Professor Gabby Walters. Credit: University of Queensland

Australians are keen to travel close to home when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, with new national data revealing positive signs for the domestic tourism industry.

Key points

- More than 50 percent of Australians want to [travel](#) domestically when restrictions lift
- The number one motivator cited for traveling is the need to support Australian tourism
- Popular destinations include coastal, country and regional areas—with cities being the least appealing
- 50 percent said they will drive to their [destination](#), rather than fly or take [public transport](#)
- Future travelers will be more aware of hygiene standards

University of Queensland Business School researcher Associate Professor Gabby Walters said more than half those surveyed wanted to travel, and many had already started researching their next holiday.

"They're searching for accommodation options and destination-related information that includes attractions and local restaurants and cafes, so they are ready to take their next trip once they're able to do so," she said.

"Australia's tourism industry has been heavily impacted, and the number one motivator for future travel was to support the economy and tourism sector.

"This news that many Aussies are looking to travel locally as soon as they can is great for tourism operators, sector workers and the industry as a whole."

The study of 528 Australians revealed coastal destinations were the most

popular, followed by country and regional destinations.

Cities were the least appealing destination for future travel—and half of the travelers stated they would prefer to drive to their destination.

"Older Australians are feeling less cooped-up and less eager to travel as opposed to millennials who voiced the need for a change of scenery or to escape the confines of home," she said.

Dr. Walters said the data showed that tourism providers should actively communicate with their current and prospective customers, maintain a strong online presence and be available to take inquiries should they come in.

With the current restrictions in place, more than 80 percent of those surveyed believed that it was not yet safe to travel within Australia and that capital cities held the greatest risk, while 62 percent believed that traveling domestically was just as risky as traveling overseas.

"This current sentiment is indicative of the effectiveness of the messaging Australians are being exposed to via the government and mainstream media—the stay home message is clearly getting through."

Dr. Walters said the tourism industry also needed to be aware that the pandemic had changed tourists' travel behaviors and this will mean that [tourism](#) may look slightly different once the restrictions are lifted.

"Our data showed that tourists care more about hygiene standards—in accommodation, airlines, public transport, public facilities and recreational sites—than they did prior to the coronavirus," she said.

Provided by University of Queensland

Citation: Sunny outlook for domestic tourism in Australia post COVID–19 restrictions (2020, April 24) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-04-sunny-outlook-domestic-tourism-australia.html>

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