

Release: ABS Overseas Arrivals and Departures (ABS Cat No 3401.0)

International Visitor Arrivals to Australia in August 2008:

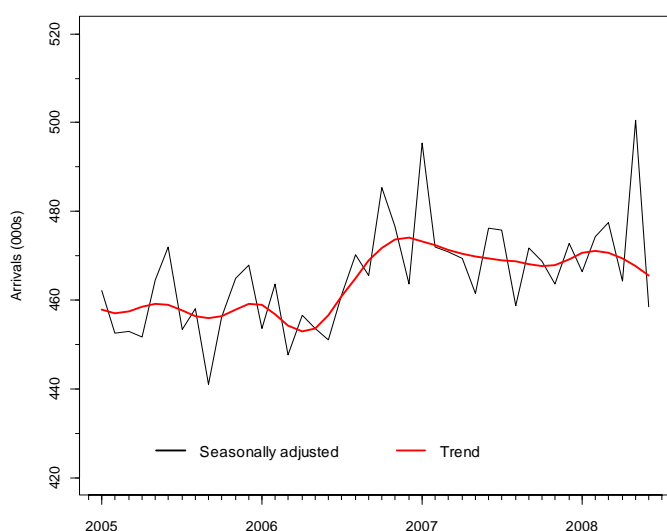
After the strongest ever July on record (531,600 arrivals), short term international visitor arrivals to Australia in August 2008 decreased 3.9 per cent (year-on-year) to 420,200. In seasonally adjusted terms, the decline in August was more pronounced, down 8.4 per cent while in trend terms arrivals fell 0.5 per cent compared to July 2008 (467,800 movements). This followed monthly decreases of 0.2 per cent for June 2008 and 0.4 per cent for July 2008. Currently, trend estimates for arrivals are 0.8 per cent lower than in August 2007.

North East Asia led the decline in August (down 15.7 per cent) with main markets Japan (down 12.2 per cent – its 22nd straight decline to 48,000); China (down 24.7 per cent to 22,000); and Hong Kong (down 22.4 per cent to 10,400) all falling sharply. Considering the Beijing Olympic Games were held during the period 8 to 24 August, the decline in visitation from China and Hong Kong are likely to have been largely driven by attendance at that event. Other main markets to decline were New Zealand (down 7.8 per cent) to 93,600 and the United Kingdom (down 6.0 per cent) to 35,900.

Holiday visitation, generally the most price sensitive of the main inbound sectors and which represents around 47 per cent of total inbound, declined 10.4 per cent to 200,000 visitors.

Partially offsetting the abovementioned declines, the Americas increased solidly with the United States up 8.2 per cent and Canada up 11.1 per cent. This provides some positive news for the inbound sector with per visitor consumption from both these markets above the sector's average (\$4,629 and \$5,942, respectively, versus \$4,207).

Figure 1: International visitor arrivals, 2005 to 2008



Source: ABS Overseas Arrivals and Departures (ABS Cat No 3401.0)

Inbound - calendar year to date (January to August 2008)

International visitor arrivals to Australia have increased 0.4 per cent to 3.6 million visitors. In original terms, the main inbound markets which have increased include India (up 24.2 per cent) to 79,100 and France (up 17.2 per cent) to 55,200. Main markets which have declined include

Japan (down 17.8 per cent) to 312,200; New Zealand (down 3.1 per cent) to 705,200; and the United Kingdom (down 1.7 per cent) to 413,700.

Short-term Australian Resident Departures in August 2008

There were 485,400 departures from Australia during August 2008, an increase of 8.0 per cent. In seasonally adjusted terms, departures increased 2.5 per cent to 495,600. In trend terms, departures increased 0.3 per cent to 488,000 to be 6.0 per cent higher when compared to August 2007.

Outbound - calendar year to date (January to August 2008)

Short term Australian resident departures are 8.7 per cent higher to 3.7 million and exceed visitor arrivals by 55,000 movements.

However, volatile consumer confidence and waning household consumption as well as solid growth in recent years has partly resulted in growth moderating from 11.2 per cent in 2007-08 to 8.7 per cent for the calendar year to date.

Table 1: International visitor arrivals

	Change on previous period ^{1,2}			International arrivals ^{1,2}		
	August 08 (%)	CYTD 2008 (%)	2007-08 (%)	August 08 (000s)	CYTD 08 (000s)	2007-08 (000s)
Top ten (2007-08)						
New Zealand	-7.8	-3.1	0.6	93.6	705.2	1,121.4
United Kingdom	-6.0	-1.7	-6.4	35.9	413.7	686.2
Japan	-12.2	-17.8	-14.6	48.0	312.2	521.1
United States	8.2	0.7	-0.2	34.2	312.2	454.5
China	-24.7	5.0	10.8	22.0	254.7	375.1
Singapore	2.2	3.6	1.1	18.8	168.5	266.4
South Korea	-0.5	-9.5	-12.7	18.7	157.5	236.2
Malaysia	1.5	8.5	5.7	13.9	108.9	166.1
Germany	2.7	7.4	4.4	11.6	100.2	155.1
Hong Kong	-22.4	-3.8	-4.1	10.4	97.4	146.7
Other Asia						
Indonesia	10.0	8.6	9.3	6.6	58.0	93.2
Thailand	-14.1	0.5	9.6	6.1	56.2	84.3
India	26.0	26.4	22.5	9.2	79.1	107.7
Other Europe						
France	12.9	17.2	11.4	7.0	55.2	77.9
Ireland	5.0	5.3	9.2	4.2	41.8	69.1
Netherlands	-10.0	6.0	3.7	2.7	31.8	53.1
Switzerland	5.0	-1.2	-3.0	2.1	24.0	41.7
Italy	-12.3	18.2	-0.6	5.7	39.0	52.8
Other						
Canada	11.1	12.6	9.5	7.0	81.2	120.9
South Africa	25.6	12.0	9.3	4.9	41.1	65.8
Regions						
South East Asia	3.1	6.8	5.6	53.3	458.5	700.9
North East Asia	-15.7	-9.2	-6.8	105.6	877.1	1,367.8
North West Europe	-1.6	1.7	-2.0	69.5	739.5	1,204.6
South & East Europe	2.4	20.0	5.7	12.8	100.6	141.7
Middle East	8.2	13.5	11.8	10.5	69.7	92.6
Americas	10.6	5.2	2.8	45.8	437.4	633.0
Total	-3.9	0.4	-0.2	420.2	3,642.8	5,629.3

Source: ABS Overseas Arrivals and Departures, October 2008 (ABS Cat No 3401.0)

Notes: (1) Calendar year to date (Jan to Aug 2008); (2) Original data

Tourism Forecasting Committee forecasts

With two-thirds of 2008 reported, the Tourism Forecasting Committee forecasts for both inbound and outbound remain generally on track. Inbound sector expected to remain flat (at 5.6 million) in 2008 while outbound is expected to increase 9.9 per cent to (6.0 million). A risk to these forecasts is the instability brought on by the global liquidity crisis and the effect this may have on a range of economic indicators critical for tourism growth such as employment and household consumption.

Upcoming major tourism statistical releases

- Australian Bureau of Statistics Overseas Arrivals and Departures, September 2008