

CARAVAN OR CAMPING IN AUSTRALIA 2008

Snapshot



Tourism Australia
Tourism Research Australia

Domestic and international visitors stay in a range of accommodation while travelling in Australia. This snapshot presents information on the caravan or camping accommodation sector and a profile of domestic and international visitors who stayed in caravan or camping accommodation in 2008.

Definition

Visitors who stay in caravan or camping accommodation stay at either commercial sites (*caravan parks, camping grounds or cabins*), or non-commercial sites (*caravan or camping by the side of the road, private property, crown land or a National park*).

Visitors do not necessarily spend all of their nights in caravan or camping accommodation.

What are the recent visitor trends?

The caravan and camping industry has remained relatively stable since 2000 with little change in visitors or visitor nights for either the domestic or international markets.

Caravan or camping accommodation in Australia is dominated by the domestic market and accounted for 15% of the total domestic visitor nights in 2008. There were 8.3 million domestic visitors and 39.6 million visitor nights spent in caravan or camping accommodation in 2008, a decrease of 2.3 million nights from 2007. Domestic caravan or camping visitors have declined; this is in line with a decline in total domestic visitation.

The number of international visitors using caravan or camping accommodation has been gradually increasing since 2000 at an average annual rate of 2%. This is in line with total international visitation during this period. However, international visitor nights spent in caravan or camping accommodation

Table 1 Visitors and nights spent in caravan or camping accommodation, 2000-2008

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Average annual change
Domestic										
Sum of overnight trips (million)	8.5	9.0	9.5	8.9	8.8	8.1	8.2	8.4	8.3	0%
Nights in caravan/camping (million)	41.1	40.8	42.5	43.7	41.6	38.8	41.9	41.9	39.6	-1%
Average stay in caravan/camping (nights)	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	
Nights away from home (million)	48.0	49.5	52.6	52.6	50.1	45.4	49.1	48.4	46.1	-1%
Average length of trip (nights)	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	
International										
Visitors ('000)	298.3	321.3	327.8	320.1	319.8	283.5	277	315.6	336.1	2%
Nights in caravan/camping (million)	4.8	4.6	6	4.4	4.6	3.9	3.8	4.4	4.6	-1%
Average stay in caravan/camping (nights)	16	14	18	14	14	14	14	14	14	
Nights in Australia (million)	24.5	24.1	22.0	21.1	21.0	17.3	19.1	21.0	22.9	-1%
Average stay in Australia (nights)	82	75	67	66	66	61	69	66	68	

Table 2 Domestic and international expenditure per visitor, 2008

	Domestic		International	
	Caravan or camping	Other	Caravan or camping	Other
	Expenditure per visitor (\$)			
Accommodation, food and beverages	389	389	2 502	1 409
Domestic airfares	597	475	455	379
Rental vehicle	605	265	813	393
Other transport	223	117	2 382	1 683
Shopping	156	224	489	488
Organised tours	260	278	918	417
Entertainment	118	126	211	184
Other	126	227	2 098	2 265
Total average spend per visitor	635	633	8 204	5 008
Total average spend per night	114	174	121	167

has been decreasing (average annual rate of 1%), while total international nights have increased on average 4% per year. Another trend is the shortening length of stay in Australia of international visitors using this type of accommodation. This is in contrast to the increasing length of stay of total international leisure visitation.

How much do they spend?

International caravan or camping visitors spent significantly more per person than other international visitors. However, this expenditure is related to the average length of stay in Australia by international caravan or camping visitors compared to other visitors (68 nights compared to 30 nights). While spend was higher across all expenditure items, spend on *shopping, entertainment* and *domestic airfares* was comparatively similar.

Domestic caravan or camping visitors spent more on transport items such as *car hire, fuel and airfares* compared to other domestic visitors, but spent less

on *organised tours, shopping* and *entertainment*. Generally, there was little difference between the expenditure for those domestic visitors who stayed in caravan or camping accommodation and those who did not.

Who are they?

International visitors who stayed in caravan or camping accommodation mainly travelled *alone* (51%) or *as a couple* (29%).

International caravan or camping visitors were mainly from the UK (22%), Germany (14%) and New Zealand (10%), with Asian visitors less likely to use caravan or camping accommodation.

Older age groups (55 to 59 years and 60 years and over) in the domestic caravan or camping market have shown the largest growth since 2000, increasing at an average annual rate of 6%. Domestic visitors were more likely to travel *as an adult couple* (29%) or *as a family group* (28%).

What do they do?

International caravan or camping visitors spent most of their time in *social activities* (98%) and *outdoor or nature-based activities* (97%), which reflects the same interests of other visitors.

Domestic caravan or camping visitors participated in similar activities to that of international visitors. They spent most of their time engaging in *social activities* (73%) as well as *outdoor or nature-based activities* (58%) and *sports or active outdoor activities* (48%). Caravan or camping visitors were less likely than other visitors to *visit friends or relatives*, but more likely to *go bushwalking/rainforest walks, go fishing* and *visit National parks/State parks*.

Where do they go?

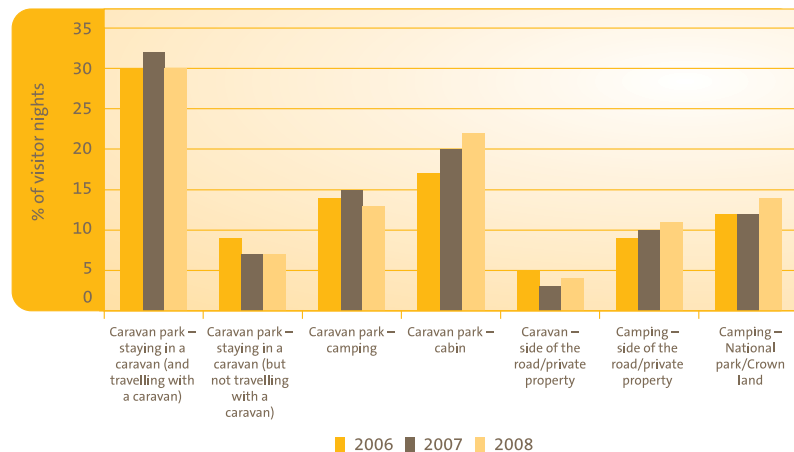
The most popular locations for international caravan or camping visitor nights were Queensland (35%) and Western Australia (18%). Queensland experienced a 10% increase in nights in caravan or camping accommodation in 2008, while there was a 3% decline in Western Australia.

Domestic caravan or camping visitors spent more of their nights (85% of nights) in regional Australia than other visitors (59% of nights). Areas such as New South Wales and Queensland coasts were the most popular destinations for caravan or camping visitors.

Table 3 Most popular tourism regions by nights in caravan or camping accommodation – domestic, 2008

Tourism region	State	Nights (million)
South Coast	New South Wales	2.7
Mid North coast	New South Wales	2.5
Northern Rivers	New South Wales	1.7
Australia's Coral Coast	Western Australia	1.4
Australia's South West	Western Australia	1.3
Western	Victoria	1.2
Tropical North Queensland	Queensland	1.1
Gold Coast	Queensland	1.1
The Murray	New South Wales	1.1
Experience Perth	Western Australia	0.9

Figure 1 Type of caravan or camping accommodation – domestic, 2006-2008



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Where do they stay?

Domestic visitors *travelling with a caravan and staying in a caravan park* contributed the greatest number of domestic visitor nights (30%), followed by those that stayed in *cabins* (22%). The number of nights spent in cabins within caravan parks has been increasing over the past few years, which has corresponded to a decline in the number of visitors staying in a caravan within a caravan park, but not travelling with their own caravan.

International caravan or camping visitors spent 76% of nights in a *caravan park or commercial camping ground*, and 24% of nights in a *caravan, or camping by the side of the road or on private property*.

Where else do they stay?

Domestic caravan or camping visitors spent the majority of their nights in *caravan or camping accommodation* (86%). They used other types of accommodation during their trip which included *homes of friends or relatives* (7%) and *hotel, resort, motel or motor inn* (4%).

International caravan or camping visitors spent 20% of their nights in Australia in this type of accommodation. These visitors also spent their nights in *backpacker and hostel accommodation* (23%), *rented houses, apartments, units or flats* (22%) and *homes of friends or relatives* (15%).

Why do they travel?

The majority of international and domestic caravan or camping visitors travelled for the purpose of a *holiday* (71% and 79% respectively). Both domestic and international caravan or camping accommodation visitors were less likely to travel to *visit friends or relatives* or for *business* than other visitors.

What is happening in the caravan or camping industry?

Over the past few years, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has been recording a decrease in caravan or camping establishments and total capacity. However, there has been a recorded increase in the number of cabins, flats, units and villas.

This has resulted in an increase in the number of persons employed and site nights occupied. This has also led to an increase in takings from accommodation in 2008.

Table 5 Caravan parks, capacity and accommodation, 2005-2008

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of establishments ^{a,b}	1 734	1 696	1 683	1 668
Capacity ^c				
- On-site vans ('000)	18	17	17	17
- Other powered sites ('000)	147	144	143	141
- Un-powered sites ('000)	41	41	41	40
- Cabins, flats etc. ('000)	31	32	33	36
Total capacity	237	235	234	233
Persons employed ^b	10 016	10 164	10 453	10 734
Sites occupied by long term guests ('000)	37	35	35	35
Other sites permanently reserved ('000) ^d	43	42	41	41
Site nights occupied (million) ^d	45	44	45	45
Site occupancy rate (%) ^c	51	51	53	53
Takings from accommodation (\$ million)	827	881	966	1 036

Data sources

Tourism Research Australia National Visitor Survey (NVS) and International Visitor Survey (IVS) 2000-2008 (unpublished data)
 ABS, Tourist Accommodation, December Quarter 2008, Cat. No. 8635.0
 All figures refer to persons over the age of 15 years

Key

- ^a Only includes establishments with 40 or more powered sites and cabins, flats, units and villas
- ^b Measured at the December quarter of each year
- ^c The average over four quarters
- ^d Total number of nights that each site was occupied (includes sites occupied by long-term guests who have stayed permanently for two months or more)

Key findings

- International caravan or camping visitors' average length of stay in Australia has been decreasing, while total international length of stay has been increasing.
- Domestic caravan or camping visitors had similar spend patterns to other domestic travellers.
- International visitors who stay in caravan or camping accommodation mostly travel alone (51%) or as an adult couple (29%).
- Domestic caravan or camping visitors who stayed in a caravan park were most likely to travel with a caravan (and stay in a park) (30%), or stay in a cabin (22%).
- There has been a recorded increase in the number of cabins, flats, units and villas available over the last few years.

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