

MATURE AGE VISITORS IN AUSTRALIA 2008

snapshot



Tourism Australia
Tourism Research Australia

Definition)

Mature age visitors are domestic day, domestic overnight or international visitors aged 55 years and over. This snapshot presents a profile of the mature age visitor in Australia in 2008.

What are the recent visitor trends?)

While international mature age visitation continues to grow (average annual growth of 4% since 2000), it is still a predominantly domestic market. In 2008, there were 19.7 million domestic overnight visitors and 43.8 million domestic day visitors compared to 1.2 million international mature age visitors.

Domestic overnight mature age visitors decreased by around 1% in 2008. However, total domestic overnight visitation during this period declined by 4%. Overall, domestic overnight mature age visitors have been increasing at an average annual rate of around 3% a year since 2000. This is to be expected as the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates the population over 55 years has increased at an average annual rate of 4% between July 2000 and July 2008.

Domestic day visitors are the largest mature age market, taking 43.8 million day trips in 2008. While this was a decline on 2007, overall this is a fairly stable market showing minimal growth since 2000.

Who are they?)

Around 23% of all international arrivals are mature age visitors, with the largest number of mature age visitors coming from Australia's top four markets;

Table 2 Expenditure by item, 2008)

Expenditure item)	Domestic overnight)		Domestic day)		International)	
	Mature age	Younger	Mature age	Younger	Mature age	Younger
	Per average visitor \$					
Accommodation, food and beverages	376	394	42	48	992	1 629
Shopping	192	226	128	145	397	515
Domestic airfares	460	484	np	326	371	398
Other transport	150	145	43	50	1 851	1 803
Organised tours	367	236	46	np	477	494
Education	408	407	np	np	7 291	8 794
Entertainment	110	129	52	55	149	197
Other expenditure	352	151	89	89	1 962	1 289
Total average per person	615	640	90	114	4 322	5 489
Total average per night	123	188	na	na	206	153
Total expenditure (\$ million)	12 106	32 519)	3 927)	10 487)	5 227)	21 723)

New Zealand, UK, USA and Japan. UK, USA and Canadian visitors were the most likely to travel as mature age visitors with 35%, 31% and 31% respectively of visitors from these countries being mature age. Nearly half of international mature age visitors travelled *as part of an adult couple* (44%) and were more likely to do so than younger visitors (17%). A large per cent (41%) of mature age visitors also travelled *unaccompanied*.

Domestic overnight mature age visitors also travelled *as an adult couple* (48%) and were more likely to do so than younger visitors (20%). Mature age visitors also travelled *unaccompanied* (25%) and with *friends or relatives* (16%).

How much do they spend?)

Across almost all international markets, mature age visitors spent more per night than younger visitors. However, their shorter length of stay resulted in a similar or lower trip spend. International mature age visitors spent proportionally less than younger visitors on items such as *accommodation, food and beverages* and *education*, although they spent a greater proportion of their money on items such as *transport*.

Domestic overnight mature age visitors had a similar spend pattern to younger visitors with their greatest total expenditure on *accommodation, food and beverages* (50%); *transport* (17%); *airfares* (10%); and *shopping, gifts and souvenirs* (9%).

How long do they stay?)

International mature age visitors stay for shorter periods than younger international visitors (an average of 21 nights compared to 36 nights). Mature age visitors from India (47 nights) and China (38 nights) had the longest average length of stay of all international visitors, while those from Korea (7 nights) and Japan (8 nights) had the shortest.

In 2008, mature age domestic overnight visitors stayed 5 nights compared to 3 nights by younger visitors. There has been a decrease in the average length of stay by younger visitors, while mature age visitors remained unchanged.

Table 1 Mature age visitors, 2000–2008)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Average annual growth
Domestic overnight)										
Visitors (million)	15.6	15.9	16.7	16.9	17.9	17.7	18.9	19.9	19.7	3 %
Visitor nights (million)	88.0	86.7	91.5	92.9	97.4	91.2	96.6	100.5	98.5	1 %
Average length of stay (nights)	6	5	5	6	5	5	5	5	5	
Domestic day)										
Visitors (million)	39.7	35.4	36.4	37.1	35.7	36.0	39.0	45.4	43.8	1 %
International)										
Visitors (million)	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	4 %
Visitor nights (million)	20.1	19.4	18.6	17.8	23.0	21.7	23.6	24.1	25.4	3 %
Average length of stay (nights)	23	22	21	20	22	19	21	20	21	

Table 3 Expenditure by country/region of origin, 2008)

	Expenditure per visitor \$		Expenditure per night \$		Average length of stay (nights)	
	Mature age	Younger	Mature age	Younger	Mature age	Younger
United Kingdom	5 639	6 140	207	170	27	36
USA	6 181	5 827	370	244	17	24
New Zealand	2 279	2 175	164	154	14	14
Japan	3 787	4 382	461	186	8	24
Germany	6 802	7 349	279	143	24	51
Canada	5 985	7 019	252	150	24	47
Singapore	3 406	4 743	245	197	14	24
Other Asia	3 206	6 619	114	129	28	51
Other Europe	6 948	7 603	271	150	26	51
Other countries	3 952	5 880	149	152	27	39
Total	4 322)	5 489)	206	153)	21)	36

Why do they travel?)

International mature age visitors travelled for the purpose of *holiday* (49%) and *visiting friends or relatives (VFR)* (37%). Mature age visitors were more likely than younger visitors to travel for *VFR*, but less likely to travel for the purpose of *business*. Despite this, the number of mature age visitors travelling for *business* has increased at an average annual rate of 7% since 2000.

Domestic overnight mature age visitors also travelled for *holiday* (44%) and *VFR* (40%). Like the international market, they were less likely to travel for *business* (12%) than younger visitors (22%).

In 2008, domestic day visitors travelled for *holiday* (48%) and *VFR* (31%). Since 2000, there has been an average annual growth of 1% in total mature age day visitors. However, over this same period day visits by younger visitors has been declining at an average annual rate of 3%, resulting in a decrease in the total domestic day trip market.

Where do they go?)

International mature age visitors were more likely to spend more of their nights in Western Australia (16%) than younger visitors (11%) and less nights in New South Wales (29% of nights compared to 36% of nights). Mature age visitors spent more of their nights in regional areas (29%) than younger visitors (21%).

Travel by domestic overnight mature age visitors reflected that of the total domestic overnight market in 2008. The most visited States were New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. Domestic overnight mature age visitors spent two thirds (66%) of their nights in regional Australia compared to 62% of younger visitors.

In 2008, 12% of domestic day visitors to the Northern Territory were mature age, while 38% of day visitors to Tasmania, and 36% of day visitors to South Australia were mature age. This is most likely due to the Northern Territory having the lowest population percentage over the age of 55, and Tasmania having the highest population percentage over 55 years as at 30 June 2008.

Where do they stay?)

Both domestic and international mature age visitors stayed with *friends or relatives* (40% and 59% of nights respectively) and were more likely to do so than younger visitors (36% and 20% of nights respectively). This was followed by *hotel, resort, motel or motor inn*.

Domestic mature age visitors were more likely to stay in *caravan or camping accommodation* (17%) than younger visitors (13%), and international mature age visitors were less likely to stay in a *rented house* (7%) than younger visitors (40%).

How did they get information?)

International mature age visitors were most likely to gather information for their trip using the *internet, travel agents, previous visits* and from *friends or relatives living in Australia*. While the *internet* was the most used information source for mature age visitors (30%), they were less likely to use this as an information source than younger visitors (43%). Mature age visitors were more likely than younger visitors to use *previous visits* (28% compared to 18%) and *travel agents* (29% compared to 21%).

The most commonly used information sources by domestic overnight mature age visitors were the *internet* and *previous visits*.

Table 4 Accommodation by nights, 2008)

Accommodation)	Domestic overnight)		International)	
	Mature age	Younger	Mature age	Younger
	%		%	
Friend or relative's property	40	36	59	20
Hotel, resort, motel, motor inn	22	30	24	12
Caravan or camping	17	13	3	3
Rented house	8	10	7	40
Own property	5	3	3	1
Guest house or B&B	1	1	1	1
Other	7	6	4	24

Data sources)

Tourism Research Australia National Visitor Survey (NVS) and International Visitor Survey (IVS) 2008 (unpublished data)
Through the looking glass: The future of domestic tourism in Australia (2008), Tourism Research Australia, Canberra
 Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories, June 2008, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra
 All figures refer to persons over the age of 15 years

Key)

na not applicable
 np not publishable

Key findings)

-)In 2008, there were 19.7) million domestic overnight) visitors and 43.8 million) domestic day visitors,) compared to 1.2 million) international mature age) visitors.)
-)The largest number of) international mature age) visitors were from Australia's) top four markets; New) Zealand, UK, USA and Japan.)
-)Across almost all) international markets,) mature age visitors spent) more per night than younger) visitors. However, their) shorter length of stay) resulted in a similar or lower) trip spend.)
-)In 2008, mature age) domestic overnight visitors) stayed 5 nights compared to) 3 nights by younger visitors.)
-)Domestic overnight mature) age visitors spent two thirds) (66%) of their nights in) regional Australia compared) to 62% of younger visitors.)

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