



AUNZ REPORT

JULY 2026

Prepared By:

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ABOUT TSUSA

Global Partner Programming

Visitation to the USA. June 2026 i-94 arrival data (released July)

Australia:

- Australia recorded **90,870 arrivals to the USA in June, up 6% year on year**. This was a significant turnaround following several months of declining visitation, although arrivals for the first six months of 2026 remained 6.5% below the same period last year.
- Australia **ranked eighth among long-haul international markets in June**, compared with approximately 12th place during much of the year to date.
- The June increase is particularly notable given the broader decline in Australian travel to the USA during 2026. Based on the average year-on-year decline recorded in the preceding months, June arrivals may otherwise have been expected to fall by approximately 11%. This suggests the **FIFA World Cup potentially generated around 13,500 additional Australian visitors above the expected baseline**.
- While the event did not have the same impact across every international market, the results indicate that it was a particularly strong travel motivator for Australians.
- The impact was also evident beyond the arrival data. The FIFA World Cup generated more positive sentiment around travel to the USA and created a strong, timely reason for Australian media to cover US destinations. This helped unlock travel coverage in mastheads that had shown limited appetite for US travel stories in previous months, demonstrating the power of major sporting events not only to drive visitation, but also to shift the broader media narrative and re-engage audiences with the destination.

Ports of Entry – Australia to the USA:

- Texas recorded the strongest percentage growth among the major gateways, with arrivals increasing **29% in June and 13% year to date**. This result was also likely influenced by World Cup travel and associated value and airlift.

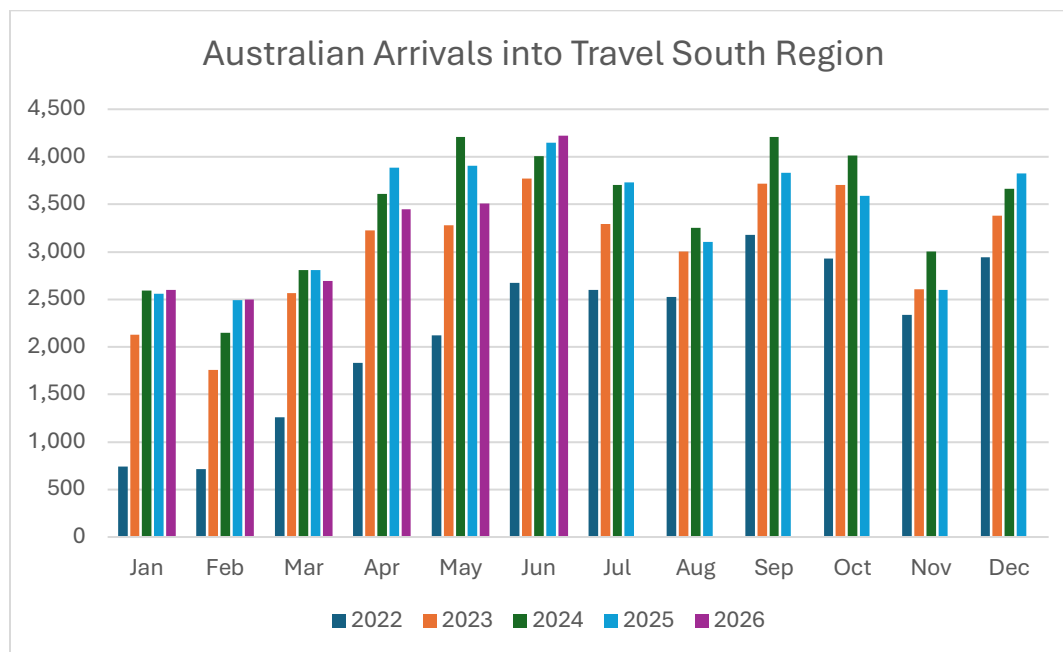
Port of entry	June arrivals	June 2026 vs 2025 difference	YTD Arrivals (Jan – June)	YTD, YOY difference
California	44,222	10%	205,735	-7%
Hawaii	8,099	-21%	53,759	-14%
New York	8,325	-5%	31,258	-18%
Texas	9,628	29%	54,596	13%
Florida	1,343	-24%	15,308	-11%
All other ports	19,253	10%	77,396	-6%





First intended address – Travel South

- A total of 4,224 Australians listed a Travel South state as their first intended address in June, up 2% year on year.
- While more moderate than the total increase in Australian arrivals, the result represents positive growth during a period when year-to-date travel from Australia to the USA remained below 2025 levels



New Zealand:

- The USA recorded **17,380 arrivals from New Zealand in June**, down **24% year on year**. Arrivals for the first six months of 2026 were also **24% below the same period in 2025**.
- The contrast between the Australian and New Zealand results reinforces the likely impact of the FIFA World Cup on Australian visitation. Australia's strong sporting interest, targeted market activity and greater participation in World Cup-related travel appear to have helped reverse the market's recent downward trend, while New Zealand visitation continued to decline.

Global Travel Demand from Australia.

May 2026 data was released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) showing where returning residents spent most time abroad.

Just over 922k Australians returned from an overseas trip in May, a decrease of -5% YOY. The decline most likely in response to the war in the middle east impacting both fare prices and deferred travel to Europe.





The top 10 countries as follows:

Rank	Country	May Visits	Percentage growth YOY	Ranking compared to this time last year
1	Indonesia	153,220	3%	à
2	New Zealand	94,680	14%	à
3	Japan	78,270	-6%	à
4	China	60,730	-1%	á from 5
5	USA	57,800	-17%	â from 4
6	Vietnam	48,960	22%	á from 8
7	Thailand	47,630	-8%	â from 6
8	UK	36,850	-23%	à
9	Fiji	36,830	3%	á from 10
10	India	33,570	-13%	â from 9





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Annual Plan Presentation
- The Shire Cluster Training
- International Showcase recruiting
- June Newsletter
- International Showcase Australian/New Zealand Buyers
- Travel South Mission Coverage Follow Ups
- EOY Report





		July	August	Sept	Q3 TOTAL		
9 partners AL/KY/LA /MS/MO/ NC/SC/TN /ROTS	Australia						
	Trade						
	Trade Meetings/Trainings	22					
	Number of Agents Trained	30					
	Travel Trade Newsletter Recipient	N/A					
	Trade Newsletter Open Rate	N/A					
	Managed Media						
	Media Meetings	2					
	Total number of articles published	2					
	Impressions	8,475,371					
	PR Newsletter Recipient	N/A					
	PR Newsletter Open Rate	N/A					
	Social Posts						
	Facebook Page						
	Followers	9114					
	Likes	9114					
	Facebook Posts						
	Reach	336					
	Views	136					
	Likes	3					
	Comments	0					
	Shares	0					
	Instagram posts						





	Reach	11					
	Views	82					
	Followers	28					
	Likes	4					
	Comments	0					
	Shares	0					





II. COMMUNICATIONS & PR

- Earned media Coverage Book
- Annual Plan & Budget Presented
- Media Meetings
- Travel South Mission Coverage Follow Ups
- EOY Report





PR COVERAGE

explore

Comment / Opinion

It's not just Trump: the real reasons we're falling out of love with the US

The US is breaking our hearts and wallets but can it win us back?

Save Share



"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" ... the Statue of Liberty in New York. Picture Shutterstock





By [Michael Turtle](#)

Updated July 9, 2026, first published July 3, 2026

Happy birthday, USA! 250 is pretty impressive, so I thought about getting you a cake. But that's a lot of candles to buy ... and, anyway, I hear everyone is on Ozempic these days.

Still, with the massive July 4th celebrations this weekend, it's an opportune time to have a look at tourism to the United States, because there have certainly been a lot of fireworks in the industry over the past couple of years. But is it just noise?

As we all know by now, international tourism to the US is drastically down over the past couple of years, with official figures showing a drop of about five per cent, while the rest of the world has gone up by about 10 per cent.

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When the Founding Fathers wrote the Declaration of Independence 250 years ago and said one of the truths they held to be self-evident was "the pursuit of happiness", they probably weren't thinking about holidays (they would've called them "vacations" anyway), but that's exactly what travel is.

Yet so many of us look to the US on this semiquincentennial and are more concerned with the other self-evident truths of life and liberty.

There's no doubt that Donald Trump's presidency is creating fear, with stories of heavy-handed border officials and proposals to search the social media of visitors.

Yet despite media hype of tourists being arbitrarily detained or denied entry, keep in mind that 68 million international visitors went to the US last year without being turned around at the border.





Trump may be easy to blame (and much of that blame is warranted) but the Republican president is not the only elephant in the room.

We also have to acknowledge that America is just really bloody expensive right now.

An unfavourable exchange rate and high inflation are putting off a lot of people.

Trump's price hikes for foreigners visiting the top national parks doesn't help either.

Perhaps the reason we care so much, the reason why we talk about boycotts to the US yet hypocritically travel in huge numbers to other countries with authoritarian leaders, is because we've had such a special and close relationship with America.

We watch its movies, listen to its music, emulate its fashion. And now it seems to be breaking up with us.

But the country has form - what was the Declaration of Independence if not the world's most famous break-up letter?



Despite talk of tourists being detained or denied entry, 68 million international visitors still went to the US last year. Picture Shutterstock





Perhaps these cultural connections will be enough to save the relationship. Maybe we're just on a break, rather than it being a break up.

After all, it was exciting to see the celebrations in New York last month when the Knicks won the NBA Championships, like a reminder of the fun and energy that we once fell in love with, before the bickering started.

The FIFA World Cup has also focused international attention on the US, with the country hosting a global celebration at the same time as its 250th anniversary.

Although data suggests hotel occupancy for many host cities is well below expectations (between 60 to 80 per cent in Atlanta, for example), Australians are apparently doing their bit to lift the rate.

FIFA says Aussies were the sixth-highest nation for ticket sales after the host countries, while travel data shows the number of us going to host cities doubled compared to the same time last year.

So, we will go to the US if it's worth it, is that the takeaway?

Well, it certainly seems like principles and finances can be trumped by a good time (which is encouraging news for the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles).

And, although they probably wouldn't phrase it that way, that's what a lot of people in the American tourism industry are hoping.

"FIFA says Aussies were the sixth-highest nation for ticket sales after the host countries, while travel data shows the number of us going to host cities doubled compared to the same time last year."

A couple of weeks ago, I met delegates from some of the southern US states - places like Louisiana, Tennessee and North Carolina.

Despite the "noise", as one person described it, they were all promising warm welcomes and lots of incredible experiences, whether it's the food in New Orleans, the music in Nashville, or the nature of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.





I chatted with Liz Bittner, the president of Travel South, which is the umbrella group for these 12 states.

She told me that their tourism numbers haven't gone down (although neither have they gone up) and part of the reason is they're offering better value than other parts of the country.

But they've also spent a while promoting to Aussies the appeal of a US holiday with a bit more character.

"We feel like we're a 10-year overnight success, and you can quote me on that!" she says.

Who knows what's going to happen with US tourism over the next couple of years – after all, the White House seems to announce new policies for foreign visitors out of the (red, white and) blue.

But I suspect we will start hearing more about the states and less about the States.

If the national image is tarnished, it will be up to each region to convince you to visit, to show that it's worth it even in a climate of political and economic trouble.

Maybe that's actually one of the strengths of the USA that's worth celebrating. By creating a single country yet still empowering the states, they are in a position to pursue our happiness in their own ways.

Whatever the reason for this current slump in tourism, don't forget there are 50 of them, each with their own reasons to visit. Hip hip hooray.

• You can read more on Michael Turtle's [Time Travel Turtle website](#).

Read More



I'm a full-time travel editor and this 'James Bond' moment in Alaska blew my mind





Australia World Sport Lifestyle **Travel** Entertainment Shopping

Travel International North America

Underrated American city named one of the most ‘beautiful’ spots in the country

CNN Staff
July 4, 2026 - 5:00am

[Nature](#) is a master at transforming water, woods, stone and even ice into awe-inspiring landscapes. Yet man-made creations also count among [America's](#) most stunning spaces.

And when the two converge – those rare places where human civilisation actually complements what nature created – it’s absolute magic.

While beauty is often subjective, there are certain places in the [United States](#) that leave even the most jaded travellers at a loss for words. So, from sea to shining sea, here are 25 of the nation’s most beautiful places.



Natchez Trace, Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee *Getty / CNN Newsource*





Natchez Trace, Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee

Stretching 444 miles (714km) from Nashville to the Mississippi River, [Natchez Trace](#) is a woodsy ramble through the heartland of the American South. The name was conferred during pioneer days when “trace” was a common term for a trail blazed by animals or people.

Along the way are numerous rivers and lakes, campgrounds and picnic areas, Civil War battlefields and Native American archaeology sites, plus plenty of places to hike, bike and swim.

It's also a drive through American musical history, from the country tunes of Nashville and Mississippi's Delta blues to Tupelo, the city that spawned Elvis Presley.



Caddo Lake in East Texas immerses visitors in the eerie atmosphere of a flooded bald cypress tree forest. Getty / CNN Newsource

Caddo Lake, Texas and Louisiana

It's not hard to see why [Caddo Lake](#) is shrouded in mystery and legend. It's the flooded bald cypress forest, moody on even the best of days, but especially creepy when mist hovers above the water.

The waterway is best explored via the 8.8-mile (14km) Hell's Half Acre Paddling Trail or one of the nine other canoe and kayak routes on Caddo Lake and the labyrinth of bayous that surround it.

Keep a lookout for gators and bizarre-looking paddlefish, as well as the mythological monsters and ghostly apparitions that are said to haunt Caddo.

COMMUNICATIONS & PR



TravelSouth
All Y'all Are Welcome **USA**



Media Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Interest/Status	Follow-up/Next step
Kate Armstrong (Freelance Journalist)	We had a call with Melbourne-based freelancer, Kate Armstrong, a regular contributor to key travel publications such as Traveller and Explore; Kate lived in Washington DC and has a strong understanding of US travel. She has a keen interest in regional US destinations and storytelling beyond major US gateways.	Continuing to share relevant press content and staying connected for any upcoming US trips that we might be able to leverage.
Amanda Upton, Nine Travel	Met with Amanda Upton from Nine Travel to explore editorial opportunities and partnership potential across the wider Nine portfolio. Given Nine's extensive national reach and influence across travel, lifestyle and news content, the discussion provided valuable insight into upcoming content priorities and identified opportunities to increase visibility for Travel South destinations among Australian travellers.	Follow-up for content calendar to be able to support with our pitching calendar and supporting case studies for any paid activity.





III. TRAVEL TRADE

Trade Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings).

Contacts	Interest/Status	Follow-up /Next step
Sarah Clements Sales & Campaign Manager Travel Monitor & Cruise Monitor	Addition information relating to Travel South Mission press release on trade support for New Zealand market.	N/A
Sarah Fenton Mobile Travel Agent MTA	Itinerary support and training on Travel South region	N/A
Andy Young SVP Sales Oceania The Travel Corporation	Update and info on Travel South with discussion on marketing opportunities with TTC touring brands Contiki and Trafalgar.	Ongoing
Troy Coelho Operations Manager Travel Managers	Follow up on attendance at International Showcase. Waiting to see if it aligns with the Signature conference in Florida.	N/A
Shannon Foggerty Global Head of Product The Luxury Collection	Follow up on attendance at International Showcase. Unfortunately is unable to attend this year.	N/A
Jennifer Mikkelsen Personal Travel Manager Travel Managers	Update on Travel South product with training and links for client queries.	N/A
Adam Schwab CEO Founder Luxury Escapes	Invitation and proposal for International Showcase with details itinerary, notes on objectives and suggested through starters for key note address.	Ongoing
Rebecca Mason Owner & Senior Advisor Mr Chocolate's Travel	Support and connections with Brandon Barnes for clients visiting Altana and wanting to do the following tours • Stranger Things Tour • Vampire Diaries Tour • Walking Dead VIP Tour	N/A





Teniesha Gill Business Leader	Info and training on Travel South with specific queries on Virginia and potential other south destinations.	N/A
Travel Associates Geelong		
The Shire Cluster Training	Travel South training with 22 agents from the Shire	N/A
Rosemary Church Carolyn Owens	Information, training and support for large group going to the south.	N/A
Ittravel Southerland		
Marie Devitt Loyalty Partnerships	Meeting and update on Flight Centres 360 loyalty program.	N/A
World 360		
Belinda Condon National Sales Manager	Update on United loading into the US, with feedback that they are seeing positive sales out of Australia.	N/A
United Airlines		
Leeanne Groves Marketing Manager	Info, logos, maps, images and road trips for Travel Manager campaign.	Ongoing
Travel Managers		
Giselle Byrne Travel Specialist	Training and update on the Travel South region.	N/A
Spencer Travel		
Visit USA Mid-Year Market Review	Attendance at Visit USA mid-year market review.	N/A
Kim Newton Luxury Travel Advisor	Training and update on the Travel South region.	N/A
MTA Travel		
Lee Anne Hosking National Product Leader	Final discussion and confirmation of attendance at Internation Showcase in Nashville	N/A
Envoyage Travel		
Nicole Laurie National Sales Manager	Discussion on loads, capacity and forward looking into the USA – which is looking quite promising.	N/A
Delta Airlines		



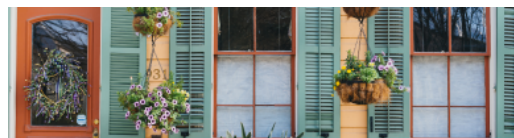
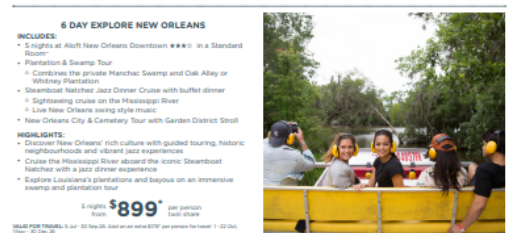
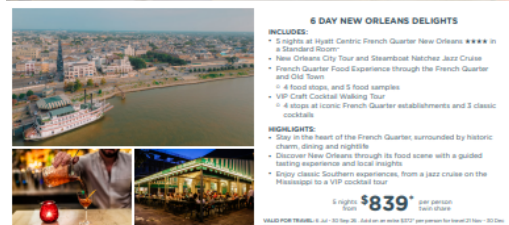


Michelle Ashcroft COO Mary-Anne Guest Head of Product Phil Hoffman Travel	Discussions with Michelle and Mary-Anne on attending International Showcase. They are currently trying to work out availability and will get back to us soon.	Ongoing
Jordan Carpenter Travel Partnerships Manager Helloworld	Discussion on potential campaigns for 2027 along with fam support for	Ongoing
Gordy Bayne General Manager Marketing World Traveller	Update on TVNZ marketing segment aligned with the release of the new Michelin Guide. We have booked in Nov 3 rd for our TV segment launch, aligned with 2 product edms covering all partner states.	Ongoing



CAMPAIGNS & ACTIVITY

Helloworld Campaigns: New Orleans



HELLO WORLD
EXCLUSIVE OFFERS

FEEL THE RHYTHM OF
NEW ORLEANS

VISIT THE
USA

8 DAY JAZZY JAMBALAYA
ADVENTURE SELF-DRIVE

NEW ORLEANS - NEW ORLEANS

INCLUDES:
• 8 nights drive in 2-4 star hotel/petrol accommodation
• Digital documentation and access to App with maps, driving instructions and a baggage check
• 10 day Avis car hire in a Toyota Camry or similar

HIGHLIGHTS:
• Drive through New Orleans, moments from the French Quarter and Bourbon Street
• Explore Jackson Square, ornate mansions and vibrant Marigny and Garden District neighborhoods
• Journey north to Natchez and Vicksburg for antebellum houses and Civil War history

\$2,255*

8 DAY RHYTHMS OF THE SOUTH
ESCORTED TOUR

NEW ORLEANS - ATLANTA

INCLUDES:
• 7 nights drive in 2-4 star hotel/petrol accommodation
• Services of an actual tour director
• Transport by air-conditioned coach

HIGHLIGHTS:
• Nashville half day walking tour
• Tour the Natchez Trace Parkway
• Visit a magnificent plantation house in Natchez
• Stay Memphis, known worldwide as 'Home of the Blues' and the birthplace of Rock 'n' Roll
• Explore local charm, exploring Fredericksburg, Kentucky and Montgomery, Tennessee

\$2,485*

13 DAY MUSIC & HISTORY
OF THE SOUTH SELF-DRIVE

NEW ORLEANS - NEW ORLEANS

INCLUDES:
• 12 nights drive in 2-4 star hotel/petrol accommodation
• Digital documentation and access to App with maps, driving instructions and a baggage check
• 14 day Avis car hire in a Toyota Camry or similar

HIGHLIGHTS:
• Stay in historic New Orleans, close to the French Quarter and main attractions
• Experience New Orleans jazz, Creole cuisine and Mississippi Riverfront city nights
• Follow civil rights history through Jackson, Birmingham and Montgomery, Tennessee

\$3,149*

NEW ORLEANS - BATON ROUGE - NATCHEZ - VICKSBURG - NATCHITOCHES - LAFAYETTE - NEW ORLEANS

NEW ORLEANS - ATLANTA

NEW ORLEANS - JACKSON - BIRMINGHAM - MONTGOMERY - BIRMINGHAM - MOBILE - NEW ORLEANS

VIVA
HOLIDAYS

Store Name
Address
Phone / Email Address

FEEL THE RHYTHM OF
NEW ORLEANS

VISIT THE
USA

8 DAY RHYTHMS OF THE SOUTH

NEW ORLEANS - NATCHEZ - MEMPHIS - NASHVILLE - ATLANTA

INCLUDES:
• 2 nights at Hilton New Orleans Riverside ***** in a Standard Room
• 1 night at Magnolia South Casino Hotel, BW Signature Collection, Natchez ***** in a Standard Room
• 1 night at Crowne Plaza Memphis Downtown ***** in a Standard Room
• 2 nights at The Inn at Opryland, A Gaylord Hotel ***** in a Guest Room or similar
• 1 night at Holiday Inn Express Atlanta Airport - North ***** Standard Room
• Nashville Walking Tour
• Services of an ATI tour director

HIGHLIGHTS:
• Travel the Natchez Trace Parkway
• Full day to explore New Orleans, a melting pot of French, African and American cultures
• Tour Memphis, known worldwide as 'Home of the Blues' and the birthplace of Rock 'n' Roll

7 nights
from
\$2,485*

per person
twin share

13 DAY MUSIC & HISTORY
OF THE SOUTH

NEW ORLEANS - JACKSON - BIRMINGHAM - MONTGOMERY - BIRMINGHAM - MOBILE - NEW ORLEANS

INCLUDES:
• 2 nights at Holiday Inn New Orleans Downtown Superdome *****
• 1 night at Hampton Inn & Suites Jackson Downtown-Coleman *****
• 2 nights at Homewood Suites by Hilton Birmingham Downtown near UAB *****
• 2 nights at Hampton Inn & Suites Montgomery - Downtown *****
• 2 nights at The Inn at Opryland, A Gaylord Hotel *****
• 2 nights at The Inn at Opryland, A Gaylord Hotel *****
• 1 night at Holiday Inn New Orleans-Downtown Superdome *****
• 14 day Avis car hire in a Toyota Camry or similar

HIGHLIGHTS:
• Try a beignet at Café Du Monde
• Stroll down Dauphin Street for live music and entertainment in downtown Mobile
• Enjoy fresh Gulf seafood at one of many different eateries along the coast

12 nights
from
\$3,149*

per person
twin share

VIVA
HOLIDAYS

Store Name
Address
Phone / Email Address

FEEL THE RHYTHM OF
NEW ORLEANS

VISIT THE
USA

9 DAY JAZZY JAMBALAYA ADVENTURE SELF-DRIVE

NEW ORLEANS - BATON ROUGE - NATCHEZ - VICKSBURG - NATCHITOCHES - LAFAYETTE - NEW ORLEANS

\$2,255*

from

per person
twin share

VIVA
HOLIDAYS

Store Name
Address
Phone / Email Address

Travel South
All Y'all Are Welcome
USA



The Shire - Breakfast Cluster Training



You're invited to our

DESTINATION COFFEE CLUSTER

Join us for coffee and breakfast to hear destination updates
from Universal Studios Hollywood, Los Angeles,
Visit California, Travel South, Louisiana and New Orleans.

Where: Hazel Kitchen & Bar, GyMEA
(Inside the Hazelhurst Arts Centre)

When: July 16, 2026 | 9:30AM-10:30AM

RSVP by July 6th: jade@gate7.com.au

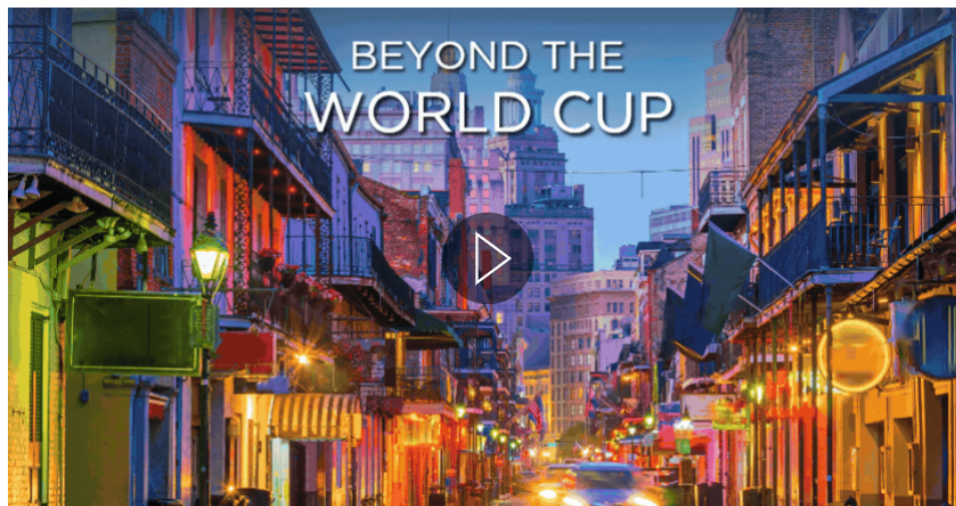
PRIZES TO BE WON!







Chris Watson Travel



New Orleans

Few cities reward spontaneity quite like New Orleans. You might head out for dinner and find yourself following the sound of a brass band through the French Quarter or stumble across a tiny bar where the music is so good you forget what time it is. The city's biggest attraction isn't a landmark, but instead it's the atmosphere.



Ask about our 2027 Hosted Tours to North America

CMA Fest & Nashville.. With over 20 years experience, We know CMA fest Best! Join Chris in Nashville for the ultimate country music fan experience. 2027 will be on sale soon why not join the pre registration VIP List? Contact our team now to be added groups@chriswatsontravel.com.au





SOCIAL CONTENT UPDATE

Gate 7 Private AU/NZ Travel Trade Community – 724 Members



Gate 7 Private AU/NZ Travel Trade Community



Penny Brand

Admin

Group expert

Top contributor

July 21 at 8:47 AM · 🌐



If you're looking for one place to find everything you need to sell the Southern USA, this is it!

The Travel South USA Sales Kits & Training Tools hub is packed with ready-to-use resources to help you create unforgettable Southern itineraries, save time, and sell with confidence. You'll find:

- ✓ Destination sales kits for each Southern state
- ✓ Regional maps and planning resources
- ✓ Downloadable road trip itineraries and presentations
- ✓ International visitor planners
- ✓ Fact sheets, images, collateral and more

Whether you're planning a music pilgrimage through Tennessee, a foodie adventure in Louisiana, a Route 66 escape through Missouri, or a coastal getaway in the Carolinas, these resources are designed to make your job easier and inspire your clients. The hub also includes multilingual resources and over 35 Southern road trip ideas to help tailor every itinerary.

Take a look and bookmark it for your next USA booking: [See less](#)



INDUSTRY.TRAVELSOUTHUSA.COM

Sales Kits & Training Tools





Market Update

Economic & Market Update

The following economic announcements were made in June:

- **Monthly CPI eased further (29 Jul):** Annual inflation slowed to 3.8% in June, down from 4.0% in May, while prices fell 0.1% over the month. However, trimmed mean inflation remained unchanged at 3.6%, indicating underlying price pressures are easing only gradually. Housing costs remained the largest contributor to inflation, reinforcing continued pressure on household budgets. [Source](#).
- **Unemployment remained at 4.4% (23 Jul):** Employment increased by 76,000 people in June, driven largely by a 47,000 increase in part-time employment. The unemployment rate remained steady at 4.4%, indicating the labour market continues to support consumer confidence despite persistent cost-of-living pressures. [Source](#).
- **AUD/USD remained below US70c (July):** The Australian dollar averaged around US69.6c by 28 July, compared with approximately US70.2c at the end of June. The currency remained below US70c for much of the month, continuing to increase the relative cost of US travel and reinforcing the importance of clear value, inclusions and differentiated experiences. [Source](#).

Visitation to the USA.

Australia: June 2026 i-94 arrival data (released in July)

- Australia recorded **90,870 arrivals to the USA in June, up 6% year on year**. This was a significant turnaround following several months of declining visitation, although arrivals for the first six months of 2026 remained 6.5% below the same period last year.
- Australia **ranked eighth among long-haul international markets in June**, compared with approximately 12th place during much of the year to date.
- The June increase is particularly notable given the broader decline in Australian travel to the USA during 2026. Based on the average year-on-year decline recorded in the preceding months, June arrivals may otherwise have been expected to fall by approximately 11%. This suggests the **FIFA World Cup potentially generated around 13,500 additional Australian visitors above the expected baseline**.
- While the event did not have the same impact across every international market, the results indicate that it was a particularly strong travel motivator for Australians.
- The impact was also evident beyond the arrival data. The FIFA World Cup generated more positive sentiment around travel to the USA and created a strong, timely reason for Australian media to cover US destinations. This helped unlock travel coverage in mastheads that had shown limited appetite for US travel stories in previous months, demonstrating the power of major sporting events not only to





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Top 10 countries in 2025

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7	Thailand	47,630	-8%	↓ from 6
8	UK	36,850	-23%	→
9	Fiji	36,830	3%	↑ from 10
10	India	33,570	-13%	↓ from 9

Tour Operators & Travel Agencies

- **Expedia predicts strong APAC travel growth despite rising industry complexity and expectations.** Expedia Group research found 76% of Australian travel professionals expect demand growth over the next two to three years. [Source](#)
- **Australian SMEs prioritise purposeful business travel despite ongoing economic and operational pressures.** New Corporate Traveller data shows Australian SMEs continued travelling throughout FY26 despite rising costs and uncertainty. [Source](#).
- **Luxury Travel Collection expands New Zealand network with eight agencies.** Luxury Travel Collection has added eight independent New Zealand agencies, marking its largest expansion in the market to date. [Source](#)
- **FCTG celebrates global achievers as Sydney secures Global Gathering 2027 hosting.** More than 2,200 Flight Centre Travel Group employees and supplier partners gathered in Bangkok for Global Gathering 2026, celebrating top performers, strengthening supplier relationships and unveiling Sydney as the 2027 host city under the theme 'Be Iconic'. [Source](#)

Traveler Insights

- **IATA data reveals premium travel growth and strengthening Australian outbound aviation demand.** IATA's 2025 World Air Transport Statistics show international premium travel grew 4.5%, while Japan and Vietnam recorded strong passenger growth among Australians' preferred outbound markets. The report also highlights continued fleet modernisation with Boeing 787s and Airbus A350s driving long-haul connectivity. [Source](#)





- **Retirees emerge as Australia's fastest-growing and highest-value travel market segment.** Australia's growing retiree market is reshaping travel demand, with over-50s taking longer, experience-led journeys supported by greater financial security and flexibility. The demographic shift presents significant opportunities for destinations and travel businesses to tailor products, itineraries and marketing to this high-value segment. [Source](#)
- **Australia confirms nationwide rollout of digital entry card replacing paper arrivals process.** The Federal Government will replace Australia's paper Incoming Passenger Card with a nationwide digital entry system following successful trials. The modernised process will streamline border clearance, improve biosecurity risk assessment and deliver a faster, more seamless arrival experience for international travellers. [Source](#)

Air Lift

- **Qantas Project Sunrise moves closer as A350 enters final testing phase.** Qantas' Project Sunrise reached a major milestone as its custom Airbus A350-1000ULR entered advanced flight testing ahead of 2027 delivery. The aircraft will enable nonstop Sydney–London and Sydney–New York services, redefining ultra-long-haul travel and strengthening Australia's global aviation connectivity. [Source](#)

Media

- **Junkee Media closes Punkee as publisher pivots towards creator-led model.** Junkee Media has announced it will cease publishing its Gen Z-focused Punkee website and restructure the business around a smaller, creator-led model. The move has resulted in redundancies and reflects the increasing pressure on Australian digital publishers as advertising revenue continues to shift towards major social platforms. [Source](#).
- **Urban List expands travel focus with new Travel Editor appointment.** Urban List has announced the appointment of Isabel Croker as Travel Editor, creating its first dedicated roaming travel role. Social Diary
- **Glamour Australia has officially launched in Australia,** as a social-first media publication, skipping traditional print to debut on Tik Tok and Instagram. The media outlet launched to market with a campaign centered around a group of content creators described as guests of Glamour, representing a new phase of media publications. Style, beauty and culture-loving Australian women will engage deeply with Glamour Australia, finding community and connection through its trusted content, shared experiences and the conversations that matter to them.
- **Google says AI-generated answers, not keywords, will define the future of search.** At Google Marketing Live, Google signalled a major shift in how people will discover information online, moving away from traditional keyword-based searches towards AI-generated answers and conversational search experiences. Instead of optimising purely for keywords, brands will need to ensure their content is authoritative, trustworthy and useful enough to be referenced by AI-generated responses. Google says the future of search advertising will be centred on intent and context rather than exact search terms. [Source](#).
- **Are Media launches AI visibility platform as brands compete for AI recommendations**
Are Media has launched Are Visible, an AI visibility and content intelligence platform designed to help brands understand and improve how they appear across AI-powered search and recommendation





platforms. The tool aims to identify visibility gaps and help brands create authoritative content that is more likely to be surfaced in AI-generated answers. The launch follows Are Media research identifying “Joy Maxxing” as an emerging consumer trend, with Australians prioritising meaningful experiences and trusted recommendations. The research found 55% of Australian women expect to use AI alongside trusted publishers when planning Christmas, while 78% still rely on trusted publishers for inspiration.

[Source.](#)

■ **Man of Many welcomes AI crawlers instead of blocking them.**

Australian publisher Man of Many revealed it receives around 1.3 million AI crawler visits each week and has deliberately chosen not to block them. Rather than viewing AI platforms as a threat, the publisher sees them as a new distribution channel and an opportunity to increase visibility in AI-powered search and answer engines. Its strategy is focused on ensuring its journalism is discoverable, cited and surfaced by platforms like ChatGPT, Gemini and Perplexity, rather than restricting access.

[Source.](#)

■ **SBS jumps 29% in Ipsos News rankings thanks to FIFA World Cup coverage.**

SBS recorded a 29% increase in its news audience, according to the latest Ipsos iris rankings, driven by its extensive coverage of the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The tournament attracted more than 16 million Australians throughout the competition, with both live broadcasts and digital consumption contributing to significant audience growth. The uplift demonstrates the power of premium live sporting events to drive not only television audiences but also engagement across digital news platforms. [Source.](#)

■ **Nine restructures publishing division, cutting up to 30 newsroom roles.**

Nine announced a restructure of its publishing division, impacting around 30 editorial and production roles across its metropolitan mastheads, including The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, Brisbane Times and WA Today. The changes form part of Nine's ongoing transition to a digital-first publishing model, with the company investing in data-driven workflows and digital journalism while reducing legacy print operations. Nine cited structural changes in the media landscape, including the rapid impact of AI on news consumption, as key drivers behind the decision. [Source.](#)

Actions

- International Showcase Recruitment
- The Hills District – Breakfast Training
- Trade & PR Newsletter
- GMM Media Meetings & Planning

