



ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



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Background

The Backpacker & Youth Tourism Advisory Panel (BYTAP) has a history dating back over twenty years as an unincorporated entity, initially being founded under the auspices of the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC).

On 8 June 2022 the association was registered under the Associations Incorporation Act (2009), and this report has been prepared in accordance with that Act.

The 3rd BYTAP Annual General Meeting will take place on 6 November 2025 at The Island, Gold Coast.

BYTAP is the peak national representative body for the Australian inbound Backpacker, Youth, Student and Adventure Tourism industry. The role of the association is to:

1. Act as the critical link between the youth travel industry, the states and territories and federal government in the interpretation of sector-specific issues
2. Represent the interests of the youth travel industry to other industry organisations, government and the community on a national level;
3. Facilitate an active and effective policy forum where key industry stakeholders present issues for development and action;
4. Raise the profile of the Australian youth travel industry;
5. Lead the way in the on-going development of growth strategies to maximise the contribution of the inbound youth market to Australia.

At the time of the AGM, BYTAP has nine members from all sectors of the industry including hostels/budget accommodation; adventure tours; transport, inbound program operators, and international education/exchange experiences. This includes three representatives of the respective State-based youth tourism associations, who support BYTAP, being Adventure Queensland (AQ), Youth Tourism NSW (YTNSW) and Youth Tourism Victoria (YTV).

This Annual Report presents the activities undertaken by BYTAP on behalf of its members from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 (being the end of the association's financial year).

This report is also available for download on the BYTAP website, www.bytap.org

If you have any comments or questions about this report, please contact contact@bytap.org

Panel members

Members of BYTAP have a strong background in the industry, enthusiasm and a vision for backpacking and youth tourism in Australia. They come from various sectors of the industry to ensure broad representation.

Panel members volunteer their time in giving direction to the Association and dedicate their energy, skills and experience for the benefit of the industry across Australia.

BYTAP members as at 6 November 2025 (AGM date)



Peta Zietsch
*Chairperson
& Treasurer*



Silke Kerwick
*Secretary &
Public Officer*



Wendi Aylward
Panel Member



Brendan McKenna
Panel Member



Andrew Cowan
Panel Member



Mark Baldwin
Panel Member



Alex Hill
Panel Member



David Thomson
Panel Member



Adam Ogle
Panel Member

Chairperson's Report

Peta Zietsch

I'm pleased to report that the backpacker and youth tourism industry's resilience was demonstrated in 2024-2025 with good growth in the number of Working Holiday Makers coming to Australia. For the first time since the scheme began exactly 50 years ago, there were over 200,000 young travellers on this reciprocal cultural exchange program onshore in Australia (peaking at 224,015 at 31 March 2025). The scheme now serendipitously extends to 50 countries in its 50th year, offering two-way youth mobility opportunities across several continents.

There was particular growth in the number of visitors from the UK following policy changes for their visa-holders, including increasing the eligible age to apply to up to 35 (from 30) and offering up to a 3-year stay without requiring work that is undertaken in specified industries and areas of Australia.

BYTAP continues to connect the wider industry, through bringing together the various State-based youth tourism associations into a national forum to address the challenges and opportunities facing this sector. BYTAP is pleased to have Memorandums of Understanding with Adventure Queensland (AQ), Youth Tourism NSW (YTNSW), and Youth Tourism Victoria (YTV) to financially support the important work that BYTAP does. This also includes having a representative from each of these State-based associations on the Panel.

Close connections also continue with aligned industry and related bodies, including Tourism Australia, the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) and the National Farmers Federation (NFF).

A major collaboration, aimed at fostering future industry leaders, was the second year of a youth-sector-focused development scholarship – the Tourism Australia Youth Sector ELITE Scholarship in conjunction with BYTAP and ATEC - see <https://bytap.org/winner-announced-of-2025-tourism-australia-youth-sector-elite-scholarship/> - with the winner announced as Charles Kinzbrunner of Drifter, based in Melbourne.

Over the past year, BYTAP's focus has continued to be on industry engagement, along with federal and international advocacy work. Key achievements included:

- Government advocacy
 - BYTAP representation at quarterly Tourism Visa Advisory Group (TVAG) meetings
 - Representation at Tourism Australia industry roundtables

- Collaboration between BYTAP, ATEC and NFF, jointly commissioning original research into Regional Impacts of Working Holiday Makers for a submission/response to the federal government’s review of regional migration settings in the discussion paper “Supporting strong and sustainable regions” – see <https://bytap.org/bytaps-response-to-supporting-strong-and-sustainable-regions-review-of-regional-migration-settings-discussion-paper-june-2024/>
- International engagement – including regular meetings with BYTAP’s New Zealand equivalent, BYATA.
- Meeting with foreign consular representatives in Australia including discussing issues around Working Holiday Makers
- Media liaison
 - Joint release from BYTAP, ATEC and NFF in August 2024 regarding the research into Regional Impacts of Working Holiday Makers, including ABC radio interviews on the vital importance of this program.

Sincere thanks go to our members and industry partners for their support over the past year. In particular, the Committee would like to thank the inaugural Chairperson of BYTAP since its official incorporation three years ago, Wendi Aylward, who stood down from this role on 31 October 2024. Combined with her dedication, passion, and contributions to advocacy for this sector, Wendi’s legacy is enormous, and has strengthened our mission and impact, and immensely raised the profile of youth tourism in Australia among key stakeholders.

Peta Zietsch

Peta Zietsch, **Chairperson**

Secretary's Report

Silke Kerwick

Memberships

At the end of the financial year ending 30 June 2025, the association had nine members.

Two new members were elected at the 2024 AGM held on 7 November, being Adam Ogle and David Thomson.

Meetings

Attendance by the Panel members from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 is laid out below:

Panel Member	Attended	Possible
Peta Zietsch (Chairperson)	3	3
Silke Kerwick (Secretary & Public Officer)	3	3
Wendi Aylward	3	3
Mark Baldwin	2	3
Andrew Cowan	3	3
Alex Hill	3	3
Brendan McKenna	3	3
Adam Ogle	2	2
David Thomson	2	2

Silke Kerwick

Silke Kerwick, **Secretary & Public Officer**

Treasurer's Report

Peta Zietsch

For the financial year 2024-2025 (ending on 30 June 2025):

1. Annual membership fees of \$2.00 per member were payable (in addition to an initial joining fee of \$1.00 per new member).
2. Total income for the period was \$9,627.07 compared to \$7,207.59 the prior year.
3. Expenses totalled \$1,009.81 compared to \$8,470.71 the prior year, resulting in a net surplus of \$8,617.26 compared to a net loss the prior year of \$1,263.12.
4. Notable income items included financial support from the State-based youth tourism associations of \$9,600 compared to \$7,200 the prior year (mainly due to timing differences).
5. There were no notable expenditure items.
6. The assets of BYTAP are entirely held as cash with \$25,721.97 compared to \$17,104.71 the prior year being held in the association's account with ANZ Bank at 30 June.
7. The Panel have considered a projected budget for 2025-26. These forecasts indicate that BYTAP is expected to continue to operate, based on an assessment of predicted forward income and expenditure, and existing cash levels, which are being conserved with minimal expenditure outflow.

Peta Zietsch

Peta Zietsch, **Treasurer**

Acknowledgements

Thanks go to all BYTAP members. Without these volunteers, who invest a significant amount of their time for the greater good of the industry, our Association would not exist.

BYTAP would also like to express appreciation and extended our sincerest thanks to Tourism Australia for their support, along with Adventure Queensland, Youth Tourism NSW and Youth Tourism Victoria.

Finally, we would like to thank Allsopp Bunting Insurance for their support of BYTAP and the youth tourism industry.



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