Formulating government policy using statistics

Why do statistics matter?

“in simple terms, they are the evidence on which policies are built. They help identify needs, set goals, and monitor progress. Without good statistics, the development progress is blind: policy makers cannot learn from their mistakes, the public cannot hold them accountable”.

(World Bank, 2000)
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Evidence-based policy making

Australian government policy is driven by an approach that is:

• Responsive to the real needs of the community
• Highlight the urgency of a problem
• Enables sharing of information such as the success or failure of policies and programs

Governments are responsible for making decisions that improve quality of life for individuals and the population wellbeing

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Evidence-based policy making

Australian tourism policy is developed based on "evidence-based policy" principle

key actions in the National Long-Term Tourism Strategy demand a broader research base for the industry and improve industry’s access to the information needed by operators:

• “Informing Industry and Government”
• “Measuring Our Performance”
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Issues that impact on Australia’s tourism industry

Tourism is impacted by a wide range of issues

- Tourism within the overall socio-economic development of Australia
- Taxation – types and levels
- Product development and maintenance
- Regulatory practices and restrictions: access, infrastructure,
- Environmental practices and restrictions
- Industry image, credibility
- Community relationships
- Labour and skills
- Marketing
- Foreign travel rules

Robust data is required to measure these issues to ensure industry and government is adequately informed

Source: RET; ABS (cat no 1500.0)

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Assessing data quality and “fitness for purpose”

Data varies from one source to another - a ‘quality framework’ can assist evaluate data quality...

Data Quality Online (DQO)

- Assist people use the Data Quality Framework (ABS cat no 1520.0) to:
  - define quality of data
  - assess fitness for purpose
  - identify data gaps and areas for improvement

www.nss.gov.au/dataquality
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A framework for evaluating outcomes of policy decisions

Policies need to be evaluated to determine their effectiveness

The ABS *Measuring Wellbeing, 2001* (ABS cat no 4160.0) provides a list that effective assessment indicators should consider.

- Relevant/ reflective of issue
- Available as a time series
- Meaningful and sensitive to change
- Summary in nature
- Able to be disaggregated
- Intelligible and easily interpreted
- Able to be related to other indicators

Further information…

www.abs.gov.au
The Strategy…

• micro-economic reform agenda - offering opportunities to meet current industry challenges
• demonstrates unprecedented co-operation between governments
• sustained long-term approach working across portfolios, jurisdictions, and a diverse industry

An example from Australia:

The National Long-Term Tourism Strategy (the “Strategy”)

The Strategy…

• supply side focus – enhancing productive capacity to meet demand
• elevating tourism to national status as a key driver of Australian economy – Tourism Minister at the Cabinet table
• Tourism Ministers’ Council is a forum of all state, territory and federal tourism ministers
The Strategy...

- Fundamental challenge – building the evidence base for reform
- Since June 2010 - $2.2m additional funding in shared Commonwealth-State support for key projects
- New Australian Government funding of $6m allocated to the Strategy

The Strategy...

- progressed through nine Working Groups, majority led by states and territories
  - Labour and Skills Development
  - Investment and Regulatory Reform
  - Destination Management Planning
  - Tourism Access
  - Industry Resilience
  - Tourism Quality Council of Australia
  - Indigenous Tourism
  - Digital Distribution
  - Research and Development Advisory Board
- government and industry represented on Working Groups
**Labour and Skills Development**

- **Strong growth in industry labour required**
- Increasing labourforce participants
- Strategy to identify regional workforce profiles and labour and skills 'hot spots'
- Focus of mobility of skilled labour

![Labour and Skills Development Graph]

Source: Access Economics

**Investment and Regulatory Reform**

- **Increase industry investment**
- Regulation and tourism investment consultancy
- Framework guide to facilitate investment
- Planning guide to facilitate assist process for tourism land use

![Investment and Regulatory Reform Graph]

Source: RET
Stronger growth expected in tourism reliant regions

- Developing 'Best Practice' destination management planning guide
- Pilots to improve heritage engagement in National Landscape

Source: Access Economics

Tourism Access

Ensure optimal access to Australia

- Improve cruise industry data to capitalise on growing sector
- Industry-driven strategies for regional airports
- Increasing awareness of Tourist Refund Scheme

Source: Access Economics
Plan for shocks, demographic and other changes

- Shocks are inherent in any industry
- Study of economic impacts of climate change on tourism industry
- Developing information on climate change

Source: ABS; RET

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Tourism Quality Council of Australia
Over half those surveyed in the International and National Visitor Survey were very satisfied overall but significant room for improvement.

- Industry led – established April 2010
- Roll out National Tourism Accreditation Framework – launch to industry April 2011 and to consumers mid 2011
- Ensure a quality tourism experience

Source: TRA

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Increase awareness and access to indigenous tourism

- Audit of funding programs completed – dissemination strategy in development
- Optimise ways to employ Indigenous people in tourism
- Facilitate skills transfer between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses

Source: TRA

Digital Distribution

Assist businesses take advantage of technology

- National Online Strategy for Tourism (NOST)
- National Online Distribution Action Plan
- Enhancing industry’s online capability

TRA surveys show that online bookings are increasing annually

Source: TRA
Tourism Research and Development Advisory Board

Deliver strategic research that is timely, relevant and reliable for industry decision-making

- National Research Agenda (including its four pillars and research database)
- Supply-demand focussed research (and productivity) eg State of the Industry
- Coordination – informing the researcher

The Strategy…

- Vital body of work to achieve long-term, sustainable reform
- Evidence-base supported by industry participation
- Crucial to achieving reform