

**Question No: 20**

**Question: International Tourist Numbers**

**Date: 30/04/91**

**Member: Mr COLLINS**

**To: MINISTER for TOURISM**

1. Has the government's premise that having 3 Sheraton International chain hotels of high class built in the Northern Territory would provide the Territory with a continuous stream of international tourists, proved correct.
2. What evidence is there that the premise was correct.
3. How many international tourists in 1990 stayed at both the Alice Springs and Yulara Sheratons on the same trip.
4. How many international tourists stayed at the Darwin Sheraton as well as either or both of the southern Sheratons.

**ANSWER**

In seeking the involvement of an internationally known chain, such as Sheraton, to operate within the Territory, the Northern Territory government sought to fill a market niche that did not otherwise exist. To have a full range of tourist infrastructure appealing to all market segments (ie backpackers to 5-star) is a necessity. For a destination to have operators such as Sheraton (or for that matter Hyatt or Hilton) stamps it as truly international.

Valuable high spending segments of the international market, such as convention and incentive groups, will not travel in significant numbers unless they can stay at an internationally recognised chain. Likewise, certain nationalities, eg Japanese and many North Americans, seek the assurance of such a brand.

International visitors tend to spend more per day than the average domestic tourists. Figures for 1988-89 show that the expenditure per visitor night for visitors staying in the commercial sector was \$135 for overseas visitors, compared with \$94 for interstate and \$106.60 for intrastate.

Evidence of the success of the government's initiative is that the Northern Territory's share of international tourists continues to grow at a greater rate than that of any Australian state.

The Northern Territory's traditional 'off-peak' period is October-March - the Australian summer period, when Australians traditionally holiday at, or near, coastal destinations. It is during this period, ie the northern hemisphere's winter, that international visitors tend to travel to and within the Northern Territory. The net result is an extension of the period when tourism related plant and equipment can be effectively utilised. This minimisation of seasonality is a key objective in the Territory's tourism strategy.

Questions 3 and 4: The Northern Territory Tourist Commission advises that it is unable to provide this information as commercial confidentiality must be preserved.