



1. In the movie Toy Story, what is the name of the toy cowboy?
2. True or false – the speed of light is faster than the speed of sound.
3. In which Olympic event would you perform a Fosbury flop?
4. Bananas are a good source of what element on the periodic table?
5. How many dots are on a standard dice?
6. Mt Everest is in which mountain range?
7. The hammer, the stirrup and the anvil are all bones in which part of the human body?

Figures show change

By **KERRIE ALLEN**

PERSPECTIVE

LATEST National Visitor Survey data just released by Tourism Research Australia, shows birdwatching brings even bigger bucks than previously thought.

The data released in June, shows year ending March 2022, the number of domestic tourists who birdwatched in our country has skyrocketed by 40 per cent in 12 months, up to 751,000 people.

And tourists who birdwatched helped the Aussie economy by spending \$414 million in that one year alone.

At least four years' worth of data now shows nature-based activities consistently dwarf active outdoor sports activities in terms of number of participants and spend.

The domestic data is in addition to international figures which pre-covid, showed a further 608,000 international tourists birdwatched in Australia and

spent a whopping \$2.6 billion. This latest nature-based tourism data comes just after the Commonwealth Government's State of The Industry report published last month, which warned: "The visitor economy faces serious labor shortages and increased international competition".

So, what does Australia have that other countries don't, which we could effectively market to ensure our financial futures?

"Our Unique Wildlife and Landscapes Studies by Tourism Australia have shown our wildlife is a number one attraction.

Better still, it is already here – if we look after it - there's no infrastructure investment required. This data is proof we have just one component of wildlife

watchers – birdwatchers – bringing us over \$3 billion already.

The Government's Thrive 2030 Strategy aims to see the visitor economy spend reach \$230 billion by 2030.

Currently Victoria lags Queensland and New South Wales for the number of jobs and spend associated with tourism. In 20/21, Victoria saw roughly half the Gross State Product derived from tourism, as New South Wales. This does not appear covid related, because it was also roughly half in 2018-2019.

The solution is obvious. It's time we protected and valued our wildlife.

Kerrie Allen is a spokesperson for Regional Victorians Opposed to Duck Shooting