

## **L'industrie touristique australienne pénalisée par une augmentation de 25 du coût des visas**

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The Australian tourism industry has been angered by the government's move of raising the backpacker's visa charge from \$280 to \$350. Tourism stakeholders argue that this latest move will negatively affect the industry that has already endured plenty of economic suffering as well as taxation increases in only one year.

John Lee, the Tourism and Transport Forum chief executive, said that the move by the government could make the backpackers seek other destinations to visit. Which he says will be a huge blow to not only the tourism industry but also the economy. According to Lee, tax increase and other charges added could make the tourist question the destination and seek alternative options such as New Zealand and Canada where visa fees are cheaper. He said that the move sends out a wrong message to the tourists out there.

The visa charge increase was part of the recent mid-year budget update. Lee further argues that the backpacker visa increase comes shortly after the government had increased the passage movement charge and introduced airport police tax earlier this year. He states that the tourism industry thought that the economic hardships were over earlier this year, only to be shocked by the new move to increase the backpacker visa charge. He notes that the tourism industry was not consulted over the matter nor did the government consider the weak state the tourism industry finds itself in regard to international tourists.

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