

MEDIA RELEASE**Travel in the era of uncertainty: Australians packing bags for holidays abroad, but cost of living, health and safety threats persist**

New research reveals how recent global events are shaping today's travel trends, including the top holiday destinations Australians over fifty are travelling to and their top concerns before jet-setting abroad.

Sydney, August 2022 – Seniors are ready to shake off their cabin fever and return to international and domestic travel, but not without a small dose of scepticism, two years on from the first border closures.

According to new research by Australian Seniors, while nearly three-quarters (74%) of over 50s are already planning their next big holiday, their outlook on travel has changed. The pandemic, ongoing international conflicts, effects of climate change, and widespread uncertainty have altered travel patterns and preferences. And, with cost-of-living pressures on the rise, it's no surprise most seniors (90%) don't feel comfortable travelling abroad without travel insurance.

Commissioned by Australian Seniors in partnership with consumer research group, CoreData, [The Travel Trends Report](#) surveyed more than 1,000 Australians over 50 to uncover how the seniors community is engaging with travel in a post-pandemic content, uncovering how recent global events have created a sense of uncertainty when planning holidays and reaped long-lasting shifts in perceptions around travel destinations.

For instance, the findings suggest that the majority (74%) of Australian seniors are wary of visiting Eastern Europe due to threats of the war in Ukraine, and similarly deterred from travelling to Turkey and the Middle East due to ongoing conflict and terrorism (64%). Likewise, nearly two-thirds (63%) are concerned about travelling to Hong Kong, China, and South Korea due to ongoing COVID-19 health orders and lockdown measures in those regions.

With most (66%) having waited three years or more since their last big holiday, it's unsurprising that a trip to Europe tops the list as the most popular destination, with nearly a third (29%) planning a European getaway in 2022. However, with more than half (54%) still mindful of COVID-19 related risks, it's hard to overlook the security of domestic travel plans, with interstate Australian destinations following closely in second (23%). In fact, more than a third (36%) are more likely to consider travelling around Australia now than two years ago.

Associate Professor in Tourism at The University of Queensland, Gabby Walters, comments on sustained interest in domestic travel among Australia's over fifties community: *"This is great news for the Australian tourism sector, particularly regional and coastal tourism locations that can continue to expect steady visitation from the seniors market. Traveling domestically presents significantly less risk and more certainty around travel planning for seniors. Traveling to overseas destinations at the current time requires a lot more planning and preparation compared to pre COVID times. There is also uncertainty in relation to foreign COVID related policies and travel restrictions, access to medical treatment if required and many foreign countries are still very much in recovery mode."*

It's also clear that many over 50s are using the resurgence in travel as an opportunity to recover after a difficult few years, with almost two in three (65%) saying that relaxation was the main motivation for their travel plans. According to the survey, nearly half (40%) are seeking historical and cultural immersions for their next holiday, with Europe taking out the top spot for this type of experience. Other popular holiday experiences include wildlife and nature discovery (34%), quality

time with the family (31%), and relaxation (29%), with North America, Australia and South East Asia being preferred destinations for these encounters, respectively.

Interestingly, cruises are making a comeback after falling out of favour with the Australian public following the events of 2020, with more than three in five (61%) seniors considering a cruise in 2022.

On the other hand, seniors are also wary of the increasing unaffordability of travel amid the rising cost of living in Australia, with most (80%) agreeing that holidays are getting more difficult to afford these days. Interestingly, while nearly nine in ten (86%) over 50s say they usually dip into their personal savings to fund holidays, one-fifth (21%) have accumulated travel credits due to cancellations over the past few years, though more than a third (35%) admit the process of redeeming these credits is hard.

In addition, around three in five (58%) Australians over 50 agree that they're more likely to consider travel insurance now than they were pre-COVID-19, with top concerns including requiring hospitalisation (68%), facing unexpected medical costs (65%) or accidents (59%), or encountering a new disease outbreak (41%) while on holiday.

Associate Professor in Tourism at The University of Queensland, Gabby Walters, offers sage advice for those Australians feeling anxious about travel plans: *"The travel sector is very much in the early stages of recovery and COVID-19 is still causing great disruption, however there are a number of actions travellers can take to ensure they are protected should things not go to plan. Pay close attention to cancellation policies, whether these be from accommodation providers or airlines. Some will offer a credit while others will offer full refunds. If a credit is the only option, it is important to check the terms and conditions of the credit redemption - some are more restrictive than others. If travelling overseas, checking the status of the intended destination via online sources such as smartraveller.gov.au and the equivalent host destination site is wise as COVID-19 related regulations and policies will differ country to country. Finally, travel insurance is highly recommended and is a good way to add some peace of mind to your next holiday, so it's worth paying close attention to the terms and conditions as they vary significantly between providers."*

More key findings from the research:

Travel Trends

- Around 74% of Australians are making plans for their next big holiday, with as many as 2 in 3 (66%) of Aussies having their last big trip at least three years ago or even longer.
- Among those who are already making travel plans, most are considering returning to similar locations that they travelled to before the pandemic. The most popular locations for pre-pandemic travel were interstate (30%), Europe (20%), intrastate (13%), Pacific Islands (including New Zealand) (10%), and Southeast Asia (9%).
- When we asked where seniors would go if they could go anywhere, Europe is the top choice (29%) followed by interstate (23%) which suggests seniors might miss travelling to the other side of the world but still love to holiday within Australia.
- In fact, over 1 in 3 are more likely to want to travel in Australia compared to two years ago (36%) while only 1 in 10 are more likely to want to travel overseas now (10%).
- **Top 5 types of holidays preferred for next destination:**
 - Self-driving holidays 31%
 - Beach holidays 28%
 - Indulgence and luxury holidays 24%
 - Wildlife, Nature or Eco holidays 23%
 - Cruise holidays 22%
- **Top 5 experiences preferred for next holiday:**
 - Historical/cultural 40%
 - Food and wine 35%

- Wildlife, nature or eco discovery 34%
- Family quality time 31%
- Relaxation/indulgence/health retreats 29%
- **Top 5 motivators for next holiday:**
 - A chance to relax 65%
 - Learning about the world 51%
 - Searching for new experiences 49%
 - Indulging oneself 46%
 - Having adventures and exploring 43%

Concerns with International Travel

- Around 74% of Australians over 50 are considering travel again in 2022, although around half are mindful of COVID-19 related risks.
- More than half (54%) of seniors worry about contracting COVID-19 while overseas, and just less than half (46%) consider COVID-19 regulations when deciding on their next overseas travel destination.
- Around 90% of seniors wouldn't feel comfortable travelling abroad without travel insurance up their sleeve.
- Around 3 in 5 (58%) are now more likely to get travel insurance (or more cover) now than before 2020 with only 2% now less likely.
- **Top health concerns when travelling**
 - Being hospitalised or requiring local medical services 68%
 - Unexpected medical costs 65%
 - Accidents 59%
 - Contracting COVID-19 54%
 - A new virus or disease outbreak 41%
- **Top ranked reasons for getting travel insurance**
 - Health cover 31%
 - General peace of mind 19%
 - COVID-19 related cover 16%
 - Cancellation cover 12%
 - Accident cover 11%
- Many seniors are still wary of security and COVID-19 and related safety threats around the world that deter them from considering travel to various destinations. The top threats and locations affected include:
 - War in Ukraine — Eastern Europe 74%
 - War and terrorism — Turkey and the Middle East 64%
 - COVID-19 lockdowns — Hong Kong, China and South Korea 63%

Financial Planning for Holidays

- Around 1 in 5 (21%) Australians have accumulated travel credits from cancellations over the past two and half years, leaving an opportune time to spend those credits.
- Almost 9 in 10 (86%) seniors dip into their savings to fund holidays.
- **How do you tend to fund your holidays?**
 - Savings 86%
 - Spending the kids' inheritance 14%
 - Drawing down on super 10%
 - Credit cards or personal loans 9%
 - Funding through work opportunities 4%
- Just over 1 in 2 (55%) have found redeeming credits is easy, 1 in 3 (35%) that it's hard and 1 in 10 (11%) still unsure. Holidays are clearly getting more expensive according to the perception of seniors.
 - Holidays are getting more expensive and difficult to afford these days 80%
 - I choose destinations with budget firmly in mind 79%

Cruising Holidays

- Around 3 in 5 (61%) of Australians over 50 would still consider travelling on a cruise in 2022, marking a return of the popular travel trend two years on from the first COVID-19 outbreaks.
- **Perceptions on cruise holidays:**
 - Have been and would again 36%

- Never been but would consider 25%
- Have been but never would again 12%
- Never been, never would 27%
- Attitudes to cruising polarised, as some seniors wouldn't consider this holiday option. (Wouldn't consider vs. Would consider cruising):
 - Cruising is one of the most sociable forms of travelling 76% (54% vs 90%)
 - Cruising suits less adventurous people who want to do things on their own 62% (58% vs 64%)
 - Cruising is more experience-driven than many traditional types of holidays 55% (37% vs 67%)
 - Living out your last days on a cruise seems like a lovely way to go 48% (18% vs 68%)

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For media enquiries, please contact:

Elizabeth Klanssek
Senior Account Executive
Hill+Knowlton Strategies
m: 0478 161 265
e: elizabeth.klanssek@hkstrategies.com

About Australian Seniors

Australian Seniors launched in 1998 to meet the needs of the often ignored over 50s market. Since then, we've helped countless Australians protect the most important things in life – whether it's their family's future, valuable assets, or even their long-planned retirement.

We strive to be different through the diverse offering of our life, funeral, car, home & contents, landlords, pet, and travel insurance products by carefully selecting underwriters that share our vision of providing insurance that's simple, easy to understand, and cost-effective. That's why our policies have helped everyone from hard-working over 50s to self-funded retirees take control of the things that matter most.

About the Australian Seniors Research Series

The Travel Trends report forms part of the Australian Seniors Research Series. In its latest instalment, this study explores how Australia's over 50s are looking to tackle retirement living decisions and the motivations behind it. It also explores the impact that COVID-19 has had on the priorities of Australian seniors.

The report is compiled based on research commissioned by Australian Seniors and conducted by CoreData between 14–16 May 2022. The research was conducted via a quantitative online survey, gathering 1,207 responses from Australians aged 50 and above.

The sample is representative of the general senior population of Australians in terms of age, gender, wealth, and state/territory.