

CHINESE TOURISTS IN AUSTRALIA GET SECOND-CLASS TREATMENT



Chinese tourists in Australia are treated like second-class citizens according to a travel expert. Visitors from China are charged much more for visas than European and American tourists. Such policy affects the amount of Chinese tourists coming to the country.

Tourism experts point out that some tourists in Australia don't receive fair treatment. **Visitors from China, India, Indonesia and Brazil have to pay \$135 for visa application, while those from EU, USA and Hong Kong are only charged \$20.** The cost of a 10-year multiple entry visa for Chinese tourists is \$1,000 while similar products from USA cost \$215, from Canada \$105, and from Singapore \$28. When deciding about their next travel destination, Chinese holidaymakers thus have much cheaper options than exploring Australia.

According to Margy Osmond, the chief executive of Tourism & Transport Forum, the overcharging of the Chinese tourists sends the wrong message that the country does not value them as much as it does other visitors. The number of Chinese tourists in Australia might decrease if they felt that their contribution to the tourism industry is not being valued.

The Australian tourism industry has experienced a rapid growth in the past few years, with the international arrivals increasing by 6.7% to 6.7 million and spending by 13% to \$34.8 billion in the 12 months ended September 30.

This has come as great news to the country's economy, especially with the decline currently being experienced in the mining industry. However, Ms. Osmond claims that **the number of tourists in Australia may increase by 5 to 25% in the next 3 years if competitive visa reforms were introduced.** With respect to the Chinese visitors, the country could see an extra 255,000 tourists over 3 years on top of the 20% annual growth of the recent years.

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