

# WILDFIRES: NUMBER OF TRAVELERS HEADING TO AUSTRALIA DECREASED DRAMATICALLY



The number of travelers booking stays in Australia has plummeted since the fires started in September.

The raging wildfires in Australia will cause the country to lose billions of dollars in revenues from tourism. **The number of travelers booking stays in Australia has dropped from between 10% to 20% since the fires started in September.**

## Lost Billions

This fall will represent a shortfall of around \$4.5 billion, according to the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC). "International visitors cancel due to concerns about air quality, safety and the impact these fires have had on our tourism offer, as well as uncertainty about how long it will take for us to recover," said Peter Shelley, Executive Director of ATEC.

The international media have widely covered the crisis linked to the forest fires, unprecedented in their scale and duration. They have already killed at least 30 people and destroyed an area equivalent to two and a half times the size of Switzerland. Cities like Sydney and Melbourne have been enveloped in a cloud of toxic smoke.

## Stimulus Package

ATEC states that this dissatisfaction is more significant among travelers from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe. The period from December to February usually totals half of the annual bookings from these markets. Shelley said that the government and the tourism industry urgently need to send the message that many must-see tourist destinations have not been affected by the fires. "There is no doubt that our industry will be affected," he said, noting that "the sooner we can send a strong and positive message, the better".

**The Australian Conservative government announced a stimulus package of \$2 billion linked to the fires.** The Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, stated that it will include a substantial boost for the tourism industry. Details are to be announced soon.

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