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Flying solo: more Australians taking holidays alone

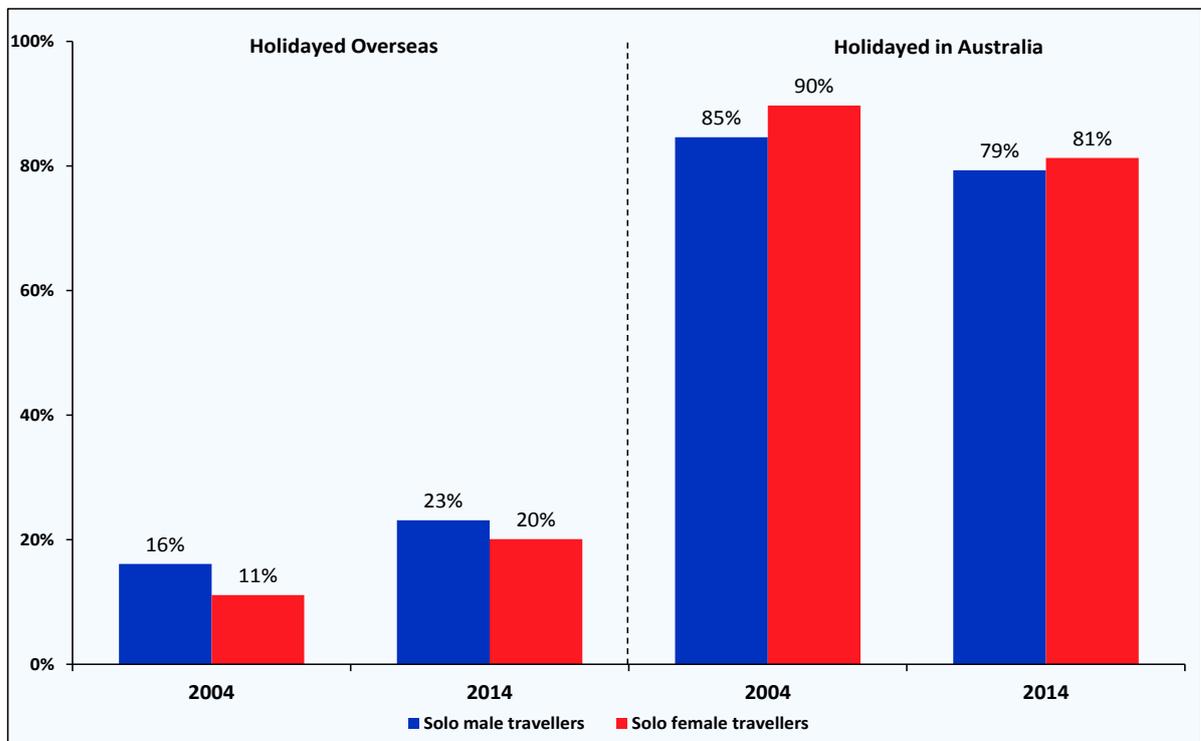
As American author Henry David Thoreau once noted, “The man [or woman] who goes alone can start today, but he [or she] who travels with another must wait till that other is ready.” Unlike those who take holidays with their family, friends, partner or tour group, the solo traveller is free to go wherever they want, whenever they want – and do whatever they want once they get there. Could this be why solo holidays are gaining in popularity among Australian travellers?

Some 12,642,000 Aussies took at least one holiday in the 12 months to March 2014. Of those who specified who they travelled with, 16% went by themselves – up from 12% a decade ago. The proportion whose last holiday was with their partner fell slightly in the same period, from 36% to 35%; as did the proportion who holidayed as a family with kids (28% to 27%). Travel with other family and/or friends (13%), with a tour group (1%) or school/university group (1%) remained static.

Solo travel hot spots

While the vast majority (80%) of solo travellers took their last holiday in Australia, this figure has fallen from 87% over the last decade. New South Wales is the most popular state overall for solo domestic holidays, but it has lost considerable ground (31% to 24%), as more male solo travellers visit Queensland and their female counterparts head to Victoria.

Australia’s solo travellers: where they went in the last 12 months



Source: Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), April 2003-March 2004 (n=2,196) and April 2013-March 2014 (n=1,634). **Base:** Australians 14+ who travelled alone in the last 12 months who gave destination. Percentages add to more than 100% because a small number of solo travellers holidayed both overseas and domestically

Meanwhile, the proportion of solo holiday-makers who went overseas for their last trip has risen markedly from 14% to 22%, with much of this growth being due to increased travel to Asia.

Fun for one

So what do solo travellers actually do on their holidays? Proving that unaccompanied does not mean lonely, 75% visited friends or relatives in the 12 months to March 2014 — by far the most popular holiday pursuit. Rest and relaxation (48%), other social activities (32%) and meeting/mixing with other people (25%) also rated highly.

Our data also reveals that an increasing proportion of solo travellers (27%, up from 23%) are timing their holidays to coincide with special events or festivals.

Jane Ianniello, International Director of Tourism, Travel & Leisure, Roy Morgan Research, says:

“Solo travellers represent a potentially lucrative market for tourism operators, airlines and accommodation providers. They may account for a smaller proportion of Australia’s holiday-makers than those who travel with others, but they’re the only segment that has grown in the last decade – and which shows no sign of declining any time soon.

“Far from being the footloose and fancy-free young backpackers that one might expect, these independent spirits are largely on the other side of 35, with 43% of them being 50+. In fact, the proportion of solo travellers aged under 35 has declined slightly in the last decade: it’s older Aussies — men and women alike — who are leading this trend.

“More often than not, these mature travellers are single, divorced, separated or widowed, with their main parental responsibilities behind them, and are keen to get out there and enjoy their newfound freedom. The world really is their oyster!”

For comments or more information please contact:

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Related research findings

Want to know more about the solo traveller? Check out our profile of [Travellers who Travelled by Themselves](#).

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Margin of Error

The margin of error to be allowed for in any estimate depends mainly on the number of interviews on which it is based. Margin of error gives indications of the likely range within which estimates would be 95% likely to fall, expressed as the number of percentage points above or below the actual estimate. Allowance for design effects (such as stratification and weighting) should be made as appropriate.

| Sample Size | Percentage Estimate | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | 40%-60% | 25% or 75% | 10% or 90% | 5% or 95% |
| 5,000 | ±1.4 | ±1.2 | ±0.8 | ±0.6 |
| 7,500 | ±1.1 | ±1.0 | ±0.7 | ±0.5 |
| 10,000 | ±1.0 | ±0.9 | ±0.6 | ±0.4 |
| 20,000 | ±0.7 | ±0.6 | ±0.4 | ±0.3 |
| 50,000 | ±0.4 | ±0.4 | ±0.3 | ±0.2 |