

## Ireland

### **Key Market Message**

*Overseas trips by Irish residents fell by more than 15.4 per cent in March compared with the same month of last year, according to the latest figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO). So far this year trips abroad by Irish residents have fallen by almost 12.6 per cent to 1,539,800. This is a complete reversal of the growth in numbers achieved last year. The Irish Travel Agents' Association said the drop in trips abroad was expected as the growth in overseas trips had been "really dramatic" in the early part of last year.*

*Visa applications from Ireland to Australia declined over February, improved slightly in March 2009 and fell again in April compared to the same months in the previous year. The Working Holiday Maker sector represents around 25 percent of Irish arrivals and these visa applications have increased strongly during February and March however were down in April. Total applications for leisure and business visas are a reasonable leading indicator for total arrivals from Ireland.*

*Overall, sellers in Ireland note a decline in the levels of bookings and enquiries, although there was considerable variation among trade. Sellers have commented that the recent negative press and word of mouth on job scarcity could be a key impediment for Irish demand for Australia. Key sellers have observed a decrease in working holiday visa enquiries as well as an increase in flight only bookings.*

Source: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2009/0408/1224244212835.html>  
[http://www.tourism.australia.com/content/essentials/090522/May\\_per\\_cent202009\\_per\\_cent20Global\\_per\\_cent20Market\\_per\\_cent20Monitor.pdf?ta\\_intcmp=220509:gmm](http://www.tourism.australia.com/content/essentials/090522/May_per_cent202009_per_cent20Global_per_cent20Market_per_cent20Monitor.pdf?ta_intcmp=220509:gmm)

### **1. Key Market Results and Achievements**

- Tourism Australia launched a two week campaign with USIT, Ireland's leading youth operator, which featured advertisements on tram platforms along one of Dublin's most popular commuter routes.
- Tourism Australia sponsored a team of travel agents from Trailfinders and Austravel to play in a charity Touch Rugby event, hosted by Wine Australia. The event was in aid of Focus Ireland and the Victorian bushfire victims. It also

presented a strong networking opportunity for key industry in the Irish market for a very good cause.

## 2. Australian Travel Market

### 2.1 Market performance

- Irish arrivals in March were 6,500, a decrease of 14 per cent relative to March 2008. In the year ending March 31 2009, there were 67,300 arrivals, a decrease of three per cent relative to the previous 12 months.
- Irish arrivals in April were 4,700, an increase of 20 per cent relative to March 2008. For the four months to April, visitor arrivals totalled 23,000, unchanged relative to the same period in 2008. In the year ending April 2009, there were 68,100 arrivals, a one per cent decrease relative to the previous 12 months.

### 2.2 Airline Issues/Changes

- None to report.

### 2.3 Trade Information Summary (including Business Events)

- Feedback from Irish trade partners is that the environment is increasingly competitive, with consumers shopping around for quotes and booking conversions taking longer. Tactical airfares in the market mean that attractive packages to Australia can be produced by tour operators to encourage bookings.

Source: [www.travelbiz.ie](http://www.travelbiz.ie) 13<sup>th</sup> May 2009

- The Thomas Cook group has decided to close two retail shops in Dublin, making over 20 staff redundant. Although Thomas Cook retail shops are separate from Thomas Cook Holidays, it is believed that Direct Holidays will also be closing with the loss of over 15 staff from the tour operating arm in Dublin.

Source: [www.travelbiz.ie](http://www.travelbiz.ie) 13<sup>th</sup> May 2009

- Etihad Airways has appointed two Irish executives to its new seven-man management team, extending the already-widespread reach of Irish nationals in international aviation circles.

Source: <http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/irish-bosses-appointed-to-new-etihad-airways-team-1684860.html>

- As at April 2009, there were 140 Aussie Specialist agents in Ireland with a further 106 agents are in training.

## 3. Current and Upcoming Activities in Market

### 3.1 Consumer Marketing:

Dates	Project / Event	Partners
Bi-weekly from 03 March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue of Australia late deal release. New releases initiated by Tourism Australia to run in holiday columns, working with the Irish</li> </ul>	Trade industry

Dates	Project / Event	Partners
	trade industry to provide packages and prices to Australia.	
18 – 27 March 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Media Hosting Program visit to South Australia and Tasmania took place with the Sunday Tribune and the Irish Independent.</li> </ul>	QF / SATC and TTAS
6 April 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Release of Bebo &amp; Myspace WHV youth competition.</li> </ul>	TQ, TNSW, TVIC, SATC, TNT and TWA
March/ April 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism Australia has initiated the first Visiting Opinion Leaders Programme (VOLP) visit from Ireland for two people - Niall Byrne and Aoife. Both are involved heavily in the online and social media world and both will blog and create online coverage as a result of their visit to Australia in June 2009.</li> </ul>	None

### 3.2 Trade Marketing:

Dates	Project / Event	Partners
29 April 2009 - 13 May 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corroboree Europe '09: 307 Aussie Specialists from the UK/IRE/Nordic, Europe and South Africa flew to Australia thanks to our partnership airline Qantas, and joined one of 22 itinerary options prepared and hosted by Australia's State and Territory Tourist Organisations across Australia. Immediately following the famill, all agents travelled to Hamilton Island in the Whitsundays, to participate in workshops with 136 Australian tourism sellers to develop product and destination knowledge.</li> </ul>	All STOs, Qantas, Hamilton Island

## 4. Media Environment

- Coverage in the trade media of how the travel agent community blame the government for a fall in bookings. Economic uncertainty has generated a 20 per cent drop in holiday bookings compared with last year
- Report in *Sunday Independent* on 22 March 2009 that Australia will be cutting its intake of migrant workers for the first time in a decade. Headline: "Aussie dream turns sour as visas cut and work dries up"
- An eight page 'Enjoy England' pull out featured in the *Sunday Independent* on 29 March 2009, focusing on Northern England. A Tunisia themed four page advertorial featured in *Weekend Magazine* on Saturday 28 March 2009. Also a three page editorial spread in the *Irish Times* supplement *GO* and a four page supplement in *Sunday World* focusing on offers for holidays to Spain, sponsored by Budget Travel.

- Tourism Ireland to target high spenders in the Middle East, Asia and China in an attempt to halt the slide in visitor numbers to Ireland. Tourism Ireland research shows that visitors from these regions represent just four per cent of visitors, and generated an estimated €173 million in 2007. Tourism Ireland believes these earnings could double by 2013. *Source: Tourism Ireland*
- 2009 has been dubbed the year of the Staycation by Failte Ireland with a 38 per cent reduction in the number of people planning to take a short foreign break.

Sources: *Marketing Magazine, Irish Independent, www.thumbnailmediaplanner.ie, Sunday Business Post*

For more information on Tourism Australia's publicity, International Media Hosting Program (IMHP) and results, please visit [www.publicity.australia.com](http://www.publicity.australia.com)

Alternatively for general media information visit [www.media.australia.com](http://www.media.australia.com)

## 5. General Travel Outlook

### 5.1 Political and Economic Outlook

- CSO figures show a 20 per cent fall in retail sales, driven by a collapse in the market for new cars.
- IATA report stating that the world's airlines stand to lose as much as \$13.2 billion between 2008 and 2009 due to the rapid deterioration of the global economy.
- Income taxes to increase in emergency budget. €16 billion revenue deficit to be addressed in the budget.
- Unemployment levels have hit 11 per cent, with economists forecasting an increase to 16.5 per cent (500,000) by year end if the current rate of job losses continue.
- Insolvencies have surged by 140 per cent in the first three months of this year as firms are unable to meet their debt obligations.
- IMF has warned that Ireland will pay a higher price to stabilise its banks than any other developed country, with costs accounting for 13.9 per cent of Ireland GDP.

Sources: *CSO, Irish Sun, IMF*

### 5.2 Outbound Travel

- Budget Travel, Ireland's biggest package holiday operator, expects to record a 30 per cent decline in business volume this year as a result of the recession. This compares with an 11 per cent fall in passenger numbers in 2008, as consumer demand began to soften. The drop would represent a decline of almost one-third on last year and would mirror a decline in the Irish package holiday market as a whole this year.

Source: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/finance/2009/0402/1224243862530.html>

- Dublin Airport Authority faces a €50million lawsuit over its handling of a lucrative tender for the €395million new Terminal 2 complex. Singapore-based engineering firm Inter Roller has launched a legal action claiming that Declan Collier's DAA awarded a €50m tender for baggage handling equipment to German firm Siemens despite Inter Roller submitting what it claims to be the best offer. Inter Roller, which has built baggage handling systems at Singapore's Changhi Airport and at a number of other European airports, has claimed that DAA did not conduct the tender process in a fair or transparent way.

Source: <http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/daa-facing-836450m-lawsuit-over-unfair-tender-process-1681968.html>

- The average price of a hotel room around the world fell by 12 percent last year, according to the latest Hotels.com Hotel Price Index. Hotel prices in December 2008 were more than one tenth lower than they were the year before and room rates were just one percent above their level in January 2004, when the Hotel Price Index was started. The 12 percent fall in room rates was driven by price drops across every continent.

Source: [http://www.travelmole.com/stories/1135367.php?mpnlog=1&m\\_id=s~nn\\_r~An](http://www.travelmole.com/stories/1135367.php?mpnlog=1&m_id=s~nn_r~An)

- Cathay Pacific has become the latest airline to ask staff to take unpaid leave over the next 12 months. Cathay Pacific said it would reduce planned passenger capacity by 8 per cent and that it also plans to cut cargo capacity by 11 per cent.

Source: [http://www.travelmole.com/stories/1135866.php?mpnlog=1&m\\_id=rv\\_rT\\_rn](http://www.travelmole.com/stories/1135866.php?mpnlog=1&m_id=rv_rT_rn)

- British Airways suffered a further steep fall in demand from business travellers in April. The airline's financial performance came under heavy pressure from the recession and it has already warned that it is facing two successive years of losses to March 2010. BA reported €60 million in revenues from the Irish market in 2008 compared with €88 million in the previous year.

Source: [http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e3337040-3a64-11de-8a2d-0144feabdc0.html?nclick\\_check=1](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e3337040-3a64-11de-8a2d-0144feabdc0.html?nclick_check=1)

- Singapore Airlines is offering free upgrades for its frequent flyers, with as few as two economy round trips required to qualify for the bonus. Existing and new KrisFlyer members who accumulate at least 25,000 'special upgrade points' for travel between April-June 2009 will automatically qualify for upgrade vouchers to destinations across Singapore Airlines' network. The special points will be awarded on top of the usual KrisFlyer miles, with up to four months to redeem the upgrade vouchers, which can also be transferred to other travellers.

Source: [www.traveldaily.co.uk](http://www.traveldaily.co.uk) 26/3/09

- Etihad Airways ran a radio advertising campaign on Newstalk radio station highlighting their one-stop Melbourne offer.

Source: *Newstalk radio*

- Reports on 2009 Working Abroad Expo, highlighting particular interest displayed towards Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

Source: *Sunday Business Post, Irish Mail on Sunday*

- CSO figures show that trips abroad by Irish residents fell by 13 per cent in February 2009 compared with February 2008.

Source: *Cso.ie*

## 6. Next 60 Days

Ireland						
START DATE	END DATE	MARKET	PROJECT/EVENT	TARGET AUDIENCE	LOCATION	PARTNERS
End May 09	June 09	Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-operative marketing campaign to run with USIT – details being finalised</li> </ul>	Youth market	Ireland	USIT
June 09	June 09	Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-operative marketing campaign with Australian Holidays (Club Travel). Media print advertising and newsletter campaign</li> </ul>	Consumers	Ireland	Australian Holidays
15 June	19 June	Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buyers from the Ireland will attend ATE in Melbourne, giving them the opportunity to meet with Australian sellers and gain valuable information to help increase sales to Australia.</li> </ul>	Irish travel trade	Australia	N/A
Next 60 days	Next 60 days	Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VOLP – Niall Byrne and Aoife McElwain to travel to Melbourne and Perth for food and music focus in return for consistent coverage on <a href="http://www.nialler9.com">www.nialler9.com</a>, <a href="http://twitter.com/nialler9">http://twitter.com/nialler9</a>, Niall facebook page; and Aoife on her blog <a href="http://icanhascook.wordpress.com/">http://icanhascook.wordpress.com/</a>; her myspace page and her twitter <a href="http://twitter.com/icanhascook">http://twitter.com/icanhascook</a>.</li> </ul>	Consumers	Australia	STOs