

Ireland

Market Summary

Total visitor arrivals for the February calendar year to date show further decline comparative to the same period in 2009. This reflects the continued tough economic climate and poor consumer confidence being reported by trade partners in the market. In terms of leisure arrivals, Holiday visitors, representing half of total arrivals from the Irish market, are significantly down for the two months to February 2010 and this reflects the overall state of the travel sector in Ireland. For the same period, Visiting Friends and Relatives visits, the second largest segment, continues to show an increase. The previously resilient youth sector (15 to 29 year olds), the largest Irish visitor age group, has had a turnaround from the past two years of growth and is now in decline for the two months to February 2010.

Recent closures of retail travel agencies have compounded the confidence in the travel and tourism sector which is already competing for share of wallet when consumers are struggling to justify any non-essential purchases.

The recent Iceland volcanic eruption and ensuing flight disruptions across Europe have had a significant impact on consumer transportation to and from Europe as well as economic impacts for the countries affected. It is too soon however to assess and report on the full impact on Australian travel and tourism.

1. Market News

- The Bank of Ireland says that the Irish economy contracted by 7.1 per cent in 2009, much higher than the Euro zone average of 4.1 per cent.
Source: The Irish Examiner, April 8, 2010
- Ireland's economy is set to contract further this year, keeping the country mired in Europe's longest running recession, with the next full year of growth not expected until 2011.
Source: Reuters April 12, 2010
- Irish unemployment is still rising. It jumped from less than 5 per cent of the workforce at the end of 2007 to 12 per cent by June 2009.
Source: www.economist.com January 21, 2010
- With unemployment rising, particularly amongst young males, there are fears that they are being forced to emigrate to find work. Although there are no up to date figures on the number of people who have emigrated so far in 2010, there are anecdotal reports of unemployed construction workers travelling to England,

Australia and other overseas destinations to find work. *Source: Irish Independent 4 March, 2010*

- The wealth of each Irish family has dropped €85,000 on average in the recession, as reflected in the fall of the value of property, pensions, savings, possessions and other stocks and shares. This virtually wipes out all their gains since 2003. *Source: The Sunday Independent April 11, 2010*

2. Consumer Insights

- Irish residents took 2,232,000 foreign trips in Q3 2009, down 9.7 per cent from Q3 2008. Irish residents spent a total of €1,809.2m on foreign travel in Q3 2009 and this fell by just over a 25 per cent from a year earlier. However, travellers favoured shorter stays. Trips involving a stay of up to three nights increased by 8.6 per cent to 480,000 while longer stay trips fell by 13.7 per cent to 1,752,000. *Source: www.cso.ie/releasespublications February 3, 2010*
- Despite rising unemployment and a lagging economy, Irish consumer confidence edged higher in March 2010 with shoppers slightly less worried about their household finances and more inclined to loosen the purse strings, according to the Economic and Social Research Institute. *Source: Press Association, April 12, 2010*
- The Irish are still keen on traveling despite the recession. An EU survey shows that 78 per cent of Irish consumers are still planning to travel for leisure. *Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism>, March 2010*
- Irish consumers are spending more time on the internet, but spending less money on fixed-line and mobile phone services, according to a survey conducted by Millward Brown Lansdowne. Home internet access has remained relatively steady at 66 per cent, with the average time spent online up from 10 hours per week in December 2008 to 13.2 hours per week in January 2010. *Source: Telecompaper Europe, March 25, 2010*
- Some 76 per cent of Irish consumers have been targeted by an online scam and 18 per cent of them have lost money or valuable personal information in this way. *Source: Irish Independent, April 1, 2010*
- EU research shows that Irish people are the most pessimistic about the economy and employment situation in their country and most people expect the situation to get worse in 12 months time. *Source: Business and Finance Daily News Service, February 3, 2010*
- A new culture of saving has taken hold in Ireland with three quarters of all adults putting away an average of 283 Euros a month and four in ten adults are now completely debt free according to research from Irish bank, Post Bank. *Source: Irish Examiner, February 3, 2010*
- The recession has brought about a new way of shopping in the Republic of Ireland with two-thirds of consumers spending more time hunting for value, says a survey from PricewaterhouseCoopers. It says 65 per cent of Irish consumers

are now buying 'clever' and spending more time hunting for value, approximately 55 per cent are buying less.

Source: <http://www.pwc.com/ie/en/retail-consumer/press-release-18-01-2010.jhtml>
January 18, 2010

For the latest in visitor arrivals, please visit 'Research and Statistics' at www.tourism.australia.com

3. Trade Update

- Travelmood launched in Ireland on 1 March 2010. Owned by TUI, Travelmood in Ireland is an amalgamation of Tropical Places and Austravel. www.travelmood.ie will be the first and only worldwide holiday booking engine in the Irish market. Source: *Travelmood press release 9th March 2010.*
- Club Travel has confirmed that they have bought the name, databases and computers of Budget Travel after the latter ceased trading in November 2009. A final decision is yet to be made on the plans for Budget Travel but if the brand continues to operate it will be through the trade. Source: www.travelbiz.ie February 2010
- As at March 2010, there were 172 Aussie Specialist agents in Ireland, of which 67 per cent were fully qualified.

4. Airline News

- Etihad Airways is to increase its flying program to Dublin following the success of its services to Ireland's capital city, moving from its current daily service to 10 flights per week from March 28, 2010. Source: www.traveldaily.co.uk, January

5. Competitor News

- Many young Irish people hoping to travel to Canada for work in 2010 are likely to be disappointed due to "phenomenal demand" for a limited number of working holiday visas this year. The complement of 1,000 places for Canada's 12-month working holiday program for people under 35 was filled in just two days. Source: www.irishtimes.com January 14, 2010
- In Vietnam, two of the country's premier interior destinations opened their runways in December to flights from abroad. Cam Ranh Airport near Nha Trang and Lien Khuong Airport on the outskirts of the Central Highlands town of Dalat unveiled architecturally advanced terminals capable of attracting international travel. Source: www.travelpulse.com, February 11, 2010
- Jamaica experienced a 3.6 per cent increase from January to December 2009 in tourist arrivals, compared to the same period in 2008, and is off to a promising start for 2010 says Jamaica's Director of Tourism John Lynch. Source: www.eturbonews.com, February 2, 2010

- British Airways has launched its new First Class service aboard a Boeing 777. The airline has invested £100 million in its flagship brand and key features include a 60 per cent wider bed; personal wardrobe; personal electronic blinds; and a 15-inch in-flight entertainment screen.
Source: www.travelpulse.com, February 11, 2010
- American Airlines will begin charging USD\$8 for blankets from May 2010. The airline says that blankets will remain free in business and first class.
Source: www.eturbonews.com, February 9, 2010

6. Key Campaigns and Activities in Market

January to March campaigns and activities				
START DATE	END DATE	DESCRIPTION	TARGET AUDIENCE	PARTNERS
July 2009	June 2010	<p><i>International Media Hosting Programme (IMHP)</i>: Tourism Australia continues to pitch stories to media, arranging visits to Australia for print/online/broadcast channels in return for destination coverage. In the January to March period the following visits were delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Sunday Independent, Irish Times</i> and the <i>Irish Examiner</i> travelled on a group press trip to the NT and QLD to write Aboriginal/Outback/Coastal Lifestyle features 	Irish First Time Experience Seekers	Various airlines, STOs and industry partners
18 January 2010	15 February 2010	<p><i>Promotion with Etihad Airways and Australian Holidays (Club Travel)</i> Print and online campaign promoting Australian Experience with Etihad Airways as the airline partner and Australian Holidays as the call to action. Print ads were published in the Metro, Herald and Sunday Independent.</p>	Irish Experience Seekers	Etihad Airways Club Travel
21 January 2010	21 January 2010	<p><i>Irish Travel Trade News Awards 2010</i>: Tourism Australia attended and hosted a table at the event for 10 trade partners. Location: Dublin</p>	Travel Trade	None
15 March 2010	30 April 2010	<p><i>Youth Facebook promotion</i>: Online campaign promoting the working holiday visa and encouraging peer advocacy for Australia. www.facebook.com/australianworkingholiday</p>	Irish First Time Experience Seekers aged 18-30	None
16 March 2010	18 March 2010	<p><i>European New Product Workshop</i>: A three day in-market briefing and workshop event for Australia's new tourism product and product managers from key wholesalers and tour operators across the European markets.</p>	Trade	DAP

April to June campaigns and activities				
START DATE	END DATE	PROJECT/EVENT	TARGET AUDIENCE	PARTNERS
April 2010	June 2010	<i>International Media Hosting Programme visits:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Travel Extra</i> is travelling to ATE (SA) and the NT 	Irish First Time Experience Seekers	Various airlines, STOs and industry partners
April 2010	April 2010	<i>Co-op campaign with USIT:</i> Focussing on the Working Holiday Visa and inspiring travellers aged 18-30 to travel and work in Australia. The creative will be seen on A2 posters on bus systems in Dublin, Cork and Limerick and also in insertions in daily newspapers in these areas.	Irish First Time Experience Seekers aged 18-30	USIT
26 April 2010	28 April 2010	<i>Australia training with Maui:</i> Tourism Australia will be on the road, travelling around the country in a Maui campervan spreading the word on the great Australian driving routes to agents in Dublin and Cork. The agents will experience an Aussie BBQ on board while they learn about driving around Australia and the many spectacular touring routes on offer. Location: Dublin and Cork.	Travel agents	Maui
2 May 2010	16 May 2010	<i>Corroboree 2010:</i> Training event for 300 Aussie Specialist Travel agents from across Europe. Workshops with Australian industry from 5 to 8 May in Melbourne followed by famils throughout Australia (22 itineraries in total).	Aussie Specialist travel agents throughout Europe	Qantas; Tourism Victoria; State & Territory Tourism Organisations; Australian tourism industry