



8 - 11 August 2022 • Melbourne Zoo  
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## **THRIVE 2030: AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY**

Presented by

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### **ABSTRACT**

Austrade is the Australian Government agency responsible for developing tourism policy, managing grant programs to support the visitor economy, and providing research through Tourism Research Australia to support the industry and grow Australia's visitor economy market share.

The visitor economy is much more than leisure travel – it also includes visiting friends and relatives, travel for business including meetings, conferences and events, and travel for work and education including international students. The visitor economy generates employment, investment, and growth in communities across Australia. Zoos and aquariums play an important role within the visitor economy, driving domestic and international visitation. In 2019, Australians took over 2.6 million daytrips to zoos and aquariums.

In recognition of the impact of COVID-19 restrictions which had significant effects on visitation and revenue for zoos and aquariums, Austrade created and administered the Supporting Australia's Exhibiting Zoos and Aquariums Program (SAEZA). This program provided funding for zoos, aquariums, and wildlife parks to maintain their animal populations. The program provided \$139.6 million to 141 zoos, aquariums, and wildlife parks from April 2020 – June 2022.

As we emerge from the pandemic, Austrade led the development of the national long-term strategy to help the visitor economy recover and sustainably grow. Growing sustainably means appropriately balancing economic, social and environmental factors in pursuing industry growth. *THRIVE 2030* was developed in close consultation with industry and provides a vision for the industry to build back better across priority areas including data and insights, workforce, business practices, infrastructure and product development. Collaborating, modernising and diversifying are key themes in the Strategy.

### **BIOGRAPHY**

Samantha Palmer is the General Manager of Austrade's Visitor Economy and Client Programs Division. She leads the nation's visitor economy policy and programs and oversees strategic reforms to Austrade's client-centred grants schemes including the Export Market Development Grant program.

Samantha started her public service career as a wildlife ranger and led an innovative wildlife sanctuary in Brisbane. She now brings 20-plus years of diverse experience in senior executive service roles having led policy, programs and corporate transformations in the Queensland, Western Australia, and Commonwealth governments in areas including environmental protection and national parks, fair trading and consumer protection, Indigenous and rural health, land transport and road safety, therapeutic goods, housing, disability, child support and communities.

Samantha is a National Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA), serves on the National and ACT IPAA Councils and has been nationally awarded for her work in Diversity.

Samantha has a Master of Public Administration and a Bachelor of Business (Communication).