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Auditor General finds that tourist numbers are not growing enough to meet targets

In his latest report, *WA State Tourism Strategy 2020*, Auditor General Colin Murphy found that while Tourism WA had delivered some strategy initiatives it was unlikely to achieve the target of doubling the value of tourism in WA by 2020, with a shortfall of \$800 million forecast.

Mr Murphy said tourism represents a major opportunity for Western Australia in terms of revenue and jobs.

'The State Tourism Strategy 2020 was intended to grow visitor numbers and double tourism spend to \$12 billion a year.

'Growth in international and interstate visitors has been insufficient, although performance has at times been bolstered by Western Australians travelling locally, but this has also dropped off recently.

'We found that Tourism missed opportunities because it did not pick up on underperformance quickly and effectively re-prioritise initiatives to attract more visitors.

'It needs to use information more effectively to monitor progress and adapt the strategy as the economic environment changes.

'We found that engagement with government agencies and industry partners was not always effective.

'This resulted in key initiatives being delayed or not delivered as the expectation of the other parties was not clearly explained or priorities agreed.

'If the difficulty with collaboration had been addressed it could have helped Tourism deliver a number of strategy outcomes,' Mr Murphy said.

This was an opportune time for the audit to have been undertaken as there is still time for Tourism to achieve the strategy goal although it will be challenging.

In the short term Tourism will need to deliver priority initiatives that have been delayed and longer term it needs to be well positioned to deliver in the challenging market it operates in.

The Auditor General's report, *WA State Tourism Strategy 2020*, (Report 24 – November 2017), is available on the Office of the Auditor General website at www.audit.wa.gov.au

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