

# BACKPACKER'S NICHE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM AND IT'S IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY OF AUSTRALIA AND IT'S REGIONAL AREA

**Turenko Ye.A. (Ukraine) Email: Turenko234@scientifictext.ru**

*Turenko Yelyzaveta Aleksandrovna – Graduated Master of Management Organizations,  
TOURISM DEPARTMENT,  
DONETSK INSTITUTE OF TOURISM BUSINESS, DONETSK, UKRAINE*

**Abstract:** *the article analyzes backpacker tourism as a part of sustainable tourism. It shows positive impact of it on the sustainability of the destination on the example of Australia. Definitions of backpacker and their types were mentioned from different literature sources. Likewise analyze of backpacker's statistic from Tourism Research Australia was conducted. Which showed backpackers impact on the Australian economy and tourism. Numbers of backpacker visitors to Australia was analyzed from 2007 till 2017 and compared to the non-backpacker visitors, during 2017. Number of night and spending by backpacker visitors were examined too. Graphics and tables showing statistic content were created.*

**Keywords:** *analysis, backpackers, sustainability, local communities, impact, Tourism Research Australia.*

## НИША БЭКПАКЕРОВ В РАЗВИТИИ УСТОЙЧИВОГО ТУРИЗМА, ЕЁ ВКЛАД В ЭКОНОМИКУ АВСТРАЛИИ И ЕЕ РЕГИОНАЛЬНЫХ ОБЛАСТЕЙ

**Туренко Е.А. (Украина)**

*Туренко Елизавета Александровна – магистр менеджмента организаций,  
кафедра туризма,  
Донецкий институт туристического бизнеса, г. Донецк, Украина*

**Аннотация:** *в статье анализируется бэкпэкерский туризм как часть устойчивого туризма. Он показывает его позитивный вклад в устойчивость туристического направления, на примере Австралии. Определения Бэкпэкера и их типы, взятые из разных источников, указаны в статье. Анализ статистических данных, взятых из источника Туристические Исследования Австралии, проведен во время написания статьи. Он показывает вклад бэкпэкеров в экономику и туризм Австралии. Количество бэкпэкеров, посетивших Австралию в период с 2007 по 2017 годы, и их сравнение с остальными туристами в 2017 году были проанализированы в разделе Анализ статистических данных. Количество ночей с днем на одного бэкпэкера и изменение сумм, потраченных бэкпэкерами в период с 2007 по 2017 годы, было проанализировано так же. Графики и Таблицы, содержащие статистические данные, были также созданы.*

**Ключевые слова:** *анализ, бэкпэкеры, устойчивость, местные жители, вклад, Туристические Исследования Австралии.*

### **Introduction**

Economic situation in the world was having hard times during last decade. Just recently it starts to rapidly grow and reached 3 per cent during 2017. That makes it stronger then most of the previous years. But still it has not been successful evenly across the globe [1].

One of the fastest growing industry is Tourism. It is developing very fast every year, the total amount of tourists from year 2017 was 1,322 billion tourists, what has increase in 7% compare to the year 2016 [2]. According to the UNWTO (2018) tourism makes 10 per cent of worlds GDP and creates 1 of ten jobs on the job market.

As any modern industry, tourism makes its impacts on the destination. Some of these impacts are positive and some are negative. One of the main negative impacts is an environmental impact on the local ecosystem. It can be on any level, local, regional or global. And the end results of these impact can lead to the damage of biological diversity.

Another major negative impact is socio-cultural, as tourism brings changes to the communities, and in most of the cases they are affecting the routing of the residents, and make changes, which are not welcomed by them. For example, loosing of the tradition [3, p. 5]. Big floats of tourists can affect prices, taxes, and crime growth too.

That is why it is very important to keep tourism as much sustainable as possible, that it would bring more benefits, then negatives to the local communities.

What is sustainable tourism? The UNWTO has made a definition of it:

"Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support system." [4, p. 19].

It includes four main features:

- Improving economic situation of the local communities.  
Motivating tourists to use locally owned businesses for their needs, such as buy local products, eat in local restaurants, stay in local accommodation, etc.
- Protection of the environment of the destination.

Motivating to use the natural and cultural resources for getting profit, but with a minimum damage to them as possible.

- Identifying product value and tourist's feedback.

Qualifying the product or service not only buy quality points, but also buy welcoming and hospitality level of the community.

- Acceptable management and monitoring of the tourism development.

To create organisations and tools which would monitor and control, that tourism would develop in a sustainable way [3, p. 9-10].

### **Backpackers and Sustainable tourism**

Backpacker tourism was recognised as one of the most rapidly growing types of tourism in the world [5, p. 109-120] and according to Forbes (2013), they are making 20% of total tourists in the world [6].

Who are these Backpackers? Different sources are having similar definitions. According to one of the sources backpackers are independent travelers, who are travelling low- budget, for a longer period, which can vary from several weeks till several years and can include more than one country and seeking for exclusive, authentic experiences [7].

There are existing different types of backpackers, but in most of the sources were three most common:

- Ultralight backpackers – who are travelling with the minimum of their luggage in their backpacks.
- Flashpackers or “stylish backpackers”, their preferences are places from the guide books and not always budget way of travelling. That makes them not so different from the usual tourists.
- Backpackers RTW Travel – budget travelers for long period of time and for far distances. Who are the most common known backpackers.

Australia is one of the countries, where backpacker's tourism is on a very high level of development. According to the Tourism Western Australia, backpackers are travelers who are taking trips for long period of times, travel to the big number of Australian regions and spend more money during their trip than other tourists, they usually stay in backpacker's accommodation at list one night. [9].

Different sources are arguing about the negative and positive impacts of the backpacking tourism into the economy of the local communities. [8]. This article will analyze the positive impact of the backpackers on the economy of the Australia and especially its regional areas. The analysis of the official statistic data from Tourism Research Australia was used. As well it would show positive sides of the backpacking tourism as a sustainable way of tourism.

According to the definition of the backpackers it is already clear that they prefer to travel to the unusual destinations and they are looking for the unique experiences, “out of the tourist route” [10, p. 2-4].

Backpackers are preferring more sustainable way of travelling, they prefer to interact more with locals [9], and find information from them, not from the guide books.

They prefer to use local, public transport and stay in a local accommodation, eat and buy products from locally owned businesses [11, p. 639-660], what brings great benefit for the regional areas, especially the one which is remote and depends only on tourists [12, 144-164].

According to the resident's surveys, locals are also defining backpackers as adventurous, authenticity seeking sustainable travellers. As well they agree that backpackers are making positive impact on the development of the local community. Residents see more benefits from the backpacker's tourism than negative sides, though not everyone shares that opinion [13, p. 292-305].

Another useful feature, provided by backpacker's tourism is a destination promoting. They are going not only to the usual tourist's destination, but further to the regional and rural areas, after they are coming back home they are sharing their experience and knowledge of that places, what actually increase social awareness about their host environment [14, p. 191-206], what creates a word-of-mouth promotion of that place.

### ***Analysis of the statistic***

According to Tourism Research Australia data, during 2017 nearly eight million tourists visit Australia. The majority of them were having a holiday there (holidaymakers) or visiting friends and families. Backpacker tourists were the part of each of these groups. During 2017 - 645,420 backpackers have visited Australia, what makes approximately 8 per cent from the total 7,878,024 number of visitors (Table 1).

On the other hand, number of non-backpackers 7,232,605, what is in more than ten times more than backpackers. Still backpackers niche is on the forth place of the reasons of visiting Australia (Graph 1).

The number of backpacker visitors has increased on 33,509 compare to the year 2016. During the last decade we can see significant changes in the backpacker's niche of tourism market. It was growing till 2012, when it dropped from 592,142 visitors to 547,162. What makes 44,980 backpacker visitors less. Then in 2013 the number starts growing again. And for ten years it has grown from 565,040 till 645,420, that makes growth on 80,380 backpacker visitors in ten years. As we can see significant growth started just recently (Graph 2).

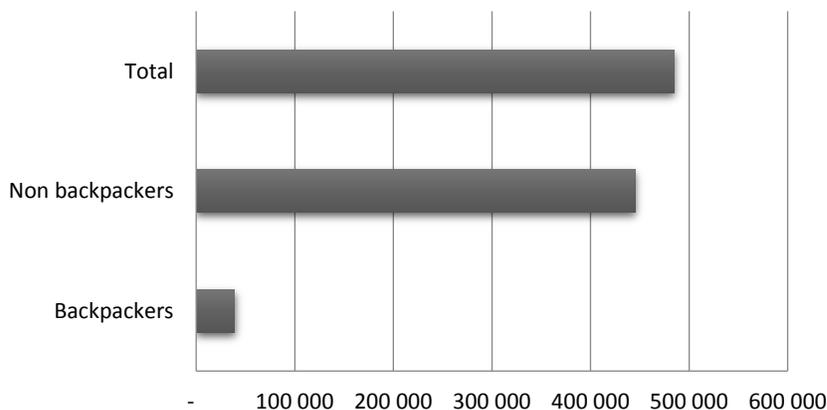
Backpackers prefer to stay longer period of times, and we can see, that compare to a non-backpacker tourist they stayed much longer in Australia. In 2017 average number of nights per one backpacker is 73 and per non-backpacker visitor 30, what makes more than double difference. Likewise, we can notice, that amount of nights backpackers is staying in the country is dropping from 2013, which was 85 and in 2017 it was 73, what makes 12 nights less (Graph 3).

The total spending of backpacker visitors is not stabile and during last decade, it was sometimes growing or dropping in numbers. During last three years (from 2014 till 2017), there is noticeable growth in the amount of spending. On the 2017 total amount of spending made 3,636,385 AUD. Compare to previous year spending has grown on 310, 581 AUD, and compare to 2007 it has grown on 592,318 AUD, what doesn't make such a big growth, but if to look that there were periods when spending was getting lower (Graph 4), statistic shows that currently backpacker tourism developing in the right track [15].

*Table 1. Reasons of visiting Australia and number of visitors*

| <b>Reasons of visiting</b>     | <b>Number of visitors</b> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Holiday                        | 3,926,513                 |
| Visiting friends and relatives | 1,973,245                 |
| Business                       | 834,603                   |
| Education                      | 549,780                   |
| Employment                     | 297,881                   |
| Other reason                   | 296,003                   |
| Backpackers                    | 645,420                   |
| Non-backpackers                | 7,232,605                 |
| Total                          | 7,878,024                 |

### **Backpackers and non-backpackers, 2017**



*Fig. 1. Number of Backpacker and non-backpacker visitors, 2017*

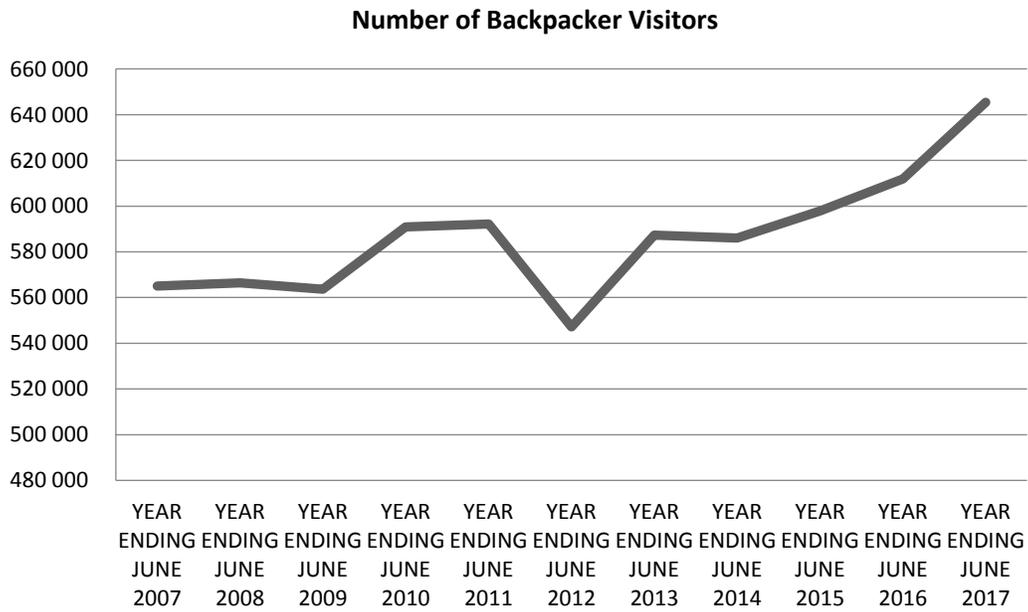


Fig. 2. Number of Backpacker visitors from 2007 till 2017

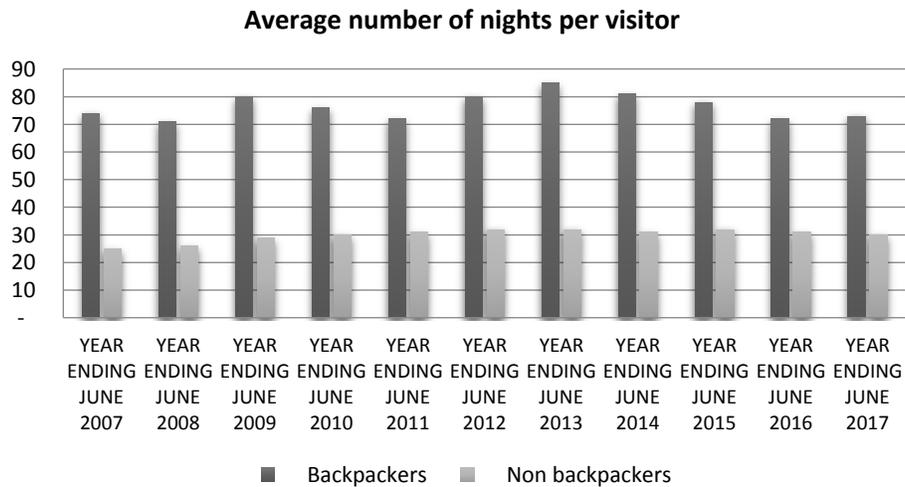
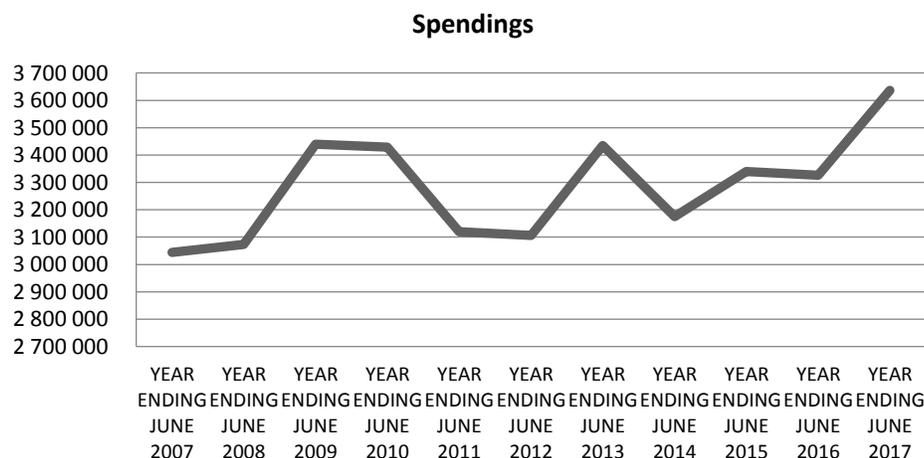


Fig. 3. Average amount of nights by one backpacker and by one non-backpacker visitor



*Fig. 4. Backpacker visitors spending's from 2007 till 2017*

### **Conclusion**

Year 2017 was proclaimed as a year of Sustainable Tourism by UNWTO. Tourism impact on the local communities increasing every year, that is why it is very important to make it sustainable. That it would bring positive impacts to the residents, such as economic development of the destination. That could be achieved by motivating tourists to buy local products and to use locally owned businesses for their needs. In this case one of the most sustainable type of visitors is a backpacker visitor. Who seeks the authentic and unique experience and plan his trip on a low budget. That makes him to interact with local communities, which brings him more knowledge about their traditions and way of life, what he can share back home with his social circle. As well backpacker prefer to buy local products, stay in locally owned accommodation, such as pub-hotel in Australia, or hostels. Buy and eat in locally owned restaurants and grocery shops, what helps economy of the regional towns, while some of them living mostly from tourism income. As well backpackers while looking for “special” experience is travelling “outside” top attractions to more “remote” areas. What gives them more knowledge and better image about the country they are visiting. What serves later as a promotion of these “remote” destinations, through their word-of-mouth advertisement through stories, or through their blogs. That type of promotion would attract other independent visitors.

The numbers from Tourism Australia Research statistic have shown that the number of backpacker visitors to Australia is increasing every year and in 2017 made 8 per cent from the total number of visitors to Australia. Likewise, the spending are growing during past three years, what, shows Australia as desirable backpacking destination. Only the amount of night has dropped compare to 2013 on 12 nights. But still average number of nights spend by one backpacker twice bigger then by non-backpacker visitor. Some gaps were found, there is no statistic information about backpacker’s tourism impact on the economics of regional areas in Australia. As well there is no information about their destination preferences.

### ***References / Список литературы***

1. United Nations // World economic situation and prospects 2018 [United Nations], 2017. [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/document\\_gem/global-economic-monitoring-unit/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-wesp-report/](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/document_gem/global-economic-monitoring-unit/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-wesp-report/) (date of access: 25.02.2018).
2. UNWTO // UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, 2018 [UNWTO], 2018. [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://mkt.unwto.org/barometer/january-2018-volume-16-advance-release/> (date of access: 23.02.2018).
3. UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe (BRESCE) // Sustainable Tourism Development in UNESCO Designated Sites in South-Eastern Europe, 2007. 43 p.
4. World Trade Organization // Annual Report, 1998. P. 19.
5. Richards G. & Wilson J. The Global Nomad: Backpacker Travel in Theory and Practice. Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2004. 298 p.
6. Mohn T. // Travel Boom: Young Tourists Spent \$217 Billion Last Year, More Growth Than Any Other Group [Forbes], 2013. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tanyamohn/2013/10/07/the-new-young-traveler-boom/#74ce31ec4ff1/> (date of access: 20.02.2018).

7. AsWeTravel // What is Backpacking? And who is someone called a 'Backpacker'? [AsWeTravel], 2018. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.aswetravel.com/what-is-backpacking/> (date of acces: 21.02.2018).
8. *Dr. Iaquinto B.* // Advantages and Disadvantages of Backpacker Communities [Bang the Teble], 2016. [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.bangthetable.com/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-backpacker-communities/> (date of access: 21.02.2018).
9. Tourism Western Australia // What is a Backpacker. [Guide]. 2008. [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/jumpstartguide/pdf/Quickstart\\_What%20is%20a%20Backpacker%2008LOW.pdf](https://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/jumpstartguide/pdf/Quickstart_What%20is%20a%20Backpacker%2008LOW.pdf) (date of access: 20.02.2018).
10. *Asweni K., Sahrilizia B.S., Chang X.Y., Guo K., Ouyang J.* Tutorial presentation backpackers.: Faculty of Business, Economics and Accounting University Malaysia Sabah, 2014. 15 p.
11. *Hampton M.* Backpacker tourism and economic development // *Annals of Tourism Research* № 25 (3), 1998. P. 639-660
12. *Scheyvens R.* Backpacker tourism and third world development // *Annals of Tourism Research* № 29 (1), 2002. P. 144-164.
13. *Luo X., Brown G., Huang S.* Host perceptions of backpackers: Examining the influence of intergroup contact // *Tourism Management* 50, 2015. P. 292-305.
14. *Ooi N., Laing J.H.* Backpacker Tourism: Sustainable and Purposeful? Investigating the Overlap Between Backpacker Tourism and Volunteer Tourism Motivations // *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18 (2), 2010. P. 191-206.
15. Tourism Research Australia // International Tourism Statistic. [Australian Government, Austrade]. 2018. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.tra.gov.au/research/international-visitors-to-australia/international-tourism-statistics/international-tourism-statistics/> (date of access: 23.02.2018).