

Almost Half of Australians say they'll take the risk and Ignore Official Travel Warnings - Survey

September 12, 2006

Almost half of Australians surveyed say they have ignored official government travel warnings when considering an overseas holiday, a poll on the issue has revealed. The survey, conducted by Australia's leading holiday destination website totaltravel.com over the last four weeks and involving more than 500 respondents, asked: The Australian Government issues regular travel warnings. How much attention do you pay to them?

While just over half of those surveyed (293 or 53%) said they always followed the travel warnings, one in four travellers (148 or 26%) said they were willing to take a risk and only sometimes followed the advice.

And one in five (117 or 21%) believed they could look after themselves and rarely followed the advice.

Paul Fisher, spokesman for totaltravel.com - ranked the number one site for Australians seeking information about destinations - said the survey result will raise concerns in the Federal Government about the effectiveness of its official travel warnings.

"Clearly, many travellers are not taking these warnings seriously and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) should review why this is the case," Mr Fisher said.

Mr Fisher said the survey result was especially significant given it was conducted just weeks after the mass evacuation of Australian citizens from Lebanon and in the lead up to the fifth anniversary of the "September 11" terrorist attacks in the United States.

"Despite issues such as war, terrorism and diseases like bird flu being constantly in the headlines, almost half of those surveyed said they would still take the risk, believing they could look after themselves and ignore travel warnings," Mr Fisher said.

totaltravel.com currently has up to 60,000 visitors a day and is now bigger than Lonely Planet, AAA Tourism and all the State Tourism Authority sites such as Tourism Qld for Australians seeking information about destinations.

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Launched in 2002, totaltravel.com delivers both a travel guide and a place to find accommodation, activities, transport, restaurants and other visitor information.

Users can seek information about a destination and then be directed to a local business in the area.

The site now offers more than 300,000 pages with contact details for more than 100,000 Australian businesses.

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