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## Cathy Wagstaff

**Travelling with children used to mean the idyllic family holiday at the beach, but nowadays it is big business for cash-rich but time-poor Australian families**

Most of us have fond memories of family holidays when we were kids. The destinations may not have always been glamorous – often basic caravan parks near the coast – but we can laugh now about the carefree times we had during those long vacations in the summer school holidays.

Fast forward to the 21st century and many of us are now parents organising the travel. And while we can still find carefree enjoyment on our family holidays, the nature of the getaways we take with our kids has changed dramatically.

Caravan parks have transformed into resort-type holiday parks with deluxe cabins and there's been a huge increase in the number of families choosing to spend their precious time together in luxury resorts in Australia, the South Pacific and Asia. And how many of us, as kids, dreamt of visiting Disneyland one day, and are finally realising those dreams today as adults as we jet off to Los Angeles in increasing numbers, with very lucky children in tow.

As the leading authority on family vacations, we at *Holidays with Kids* magazine can confirm that the family holiday market is booming.

According to Tourism Australia, the family travel segment is the fastest-growing sector of the nation's tourism industry.

A new survey by our magazine shows 95 per cent of the magazine's readers travel within Australia each year with 68 per cent enjoying a domestic holiday three or more times per year. And two thirds of our readers whisk their kids overseas for a vacation each year.

According to the Australian Institute of Family Studies, the proportion of families with dependent children who have both



parents in the labour force is now a record 57 per cent, boosting the family income.

As more mothers get well-paid jobs and family lives become even busier, we're finding more parents, especially the mums, are organising more short breaks around Australia throughout the year – not just in summer either – so they can relax and spend quality time with their children and restore the all-important work and life balance.

And mothers who work often don't want to cook and clean during the holidays so they are opting for more luxurious holidays where they and their families can get the pampering they feel they deserve for all their hard work.

Our annual Top 10 survey provides a handy guide as to what families rate as the best destinations and judging by the latest findings, Queensland and Fiji are the hotspots families are seeking most. ■

*Cathy Wagstaff is the editor of Holidays with Kids magazine*