

Australia Celebrates Travel

[EMBARGOED UNTIL 11pm, 20th JULY 2013:] Researching your next holiday with a travel agent rather than online is still the most popular way for Australians to research an overseas holiday, according to a recent Roy Morgan survey¹, which found 37% of holidaymakers sought the expert advice of travel agents, more when relying solely on information from the Internet in the planning stages. What's more, the majority of Australian overseas travellers end up booking with a travel agent.

Helping travellers find value in their holidays is what travel agents do best and, on Saturday night the "best of the best" in the industry gathered together to celebrate their achievements at Sydney's Hordern Pavillion at the biggest night of travel Australia has ever seen.

Hosted by the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA), the 10th Annual National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) 2013 kicked off at 6.30pm sharp with the largest disco ball in the southern hemisphere glimmering on 1200 travel industry experts as they walked the red carpet.

Andrew Daddo hosted the night of nights, and guests were entertained with a surprise performance Jessica Mauboy, sponsored by Qantas. Awards for excellence were announced across 33 categories – the full list is attached.

"Without a travel agent, you're on your own' is the AFTA motto, and the latest Roy Morgan results clearly reflect this," Jayson Westbury, AFTA Chief Executive said. "Travel agents are an unrivalled source of information - they offer piece of mind, save travellers time and money, and provide expertise in all things travel. That's a huge part of the celebration tonight and we're thrilled to have staged such a milestone event."

"Tourism makes up a substantial part of Australia's economy, and the fundamental role that travel agents play just can't be replaced. Travel retailers and their wholesale partners provide the backbone that supports the industry and their success means a healthy future for Australian tourism."

"Tonight, the best in travel were recognised for all their hard work in a very competitive, yet dynamic industry and it is incredibly rewarding to see. Their efforts serve as strong reminders that the Australian travel industry is powering forward as travel professionals continuously adapt and innovate with the changing landscape. Well done to all of our winners."

Qantas is the major sponsor of the 2013 NTIA, providing much valued support in recognising and celebrating the travel industry's best.

Following the award night, guests kicked up their heels at the exclusive 'AFTA' Party at the Hi Fi, Moore Park, sponsored by Singapore Airlines.

Join in the conversation on Twitter @AFTAOfficial

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¹ <http://www.roymorgan.com/findings/travel-agents-overseas-holidays-201302270608>

Notes to Editors:

The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) is the peak body in Australia representing the retail travel industry. Founded in 1957, AFTA represents the majority of travel agents in Australia and includes all of the major travel agency groups.

AFTA's role is to uphold the interests of members in matters relating to the operation of all travel agencies in Australia. In broad terms these issues are ones that are not addressed by agent chain or corporate entities on behalf of their members, and are ones that involve the industry as a whole.

The AFTA National Travel Industry Awards (AFTA NTIA) acknowledge the best of the best in the Australian travel industry – with categories covering travel agencies and individual consultants, as well as the various suppliers which support them and their businesses.

These awards are essential in providing encouragement and recognition to the businesses and personnel who demonstrate outstanding service, marketing excellence and business acumen to the travel industry.

The 2013 AFTA NTIA Gala Dinner will be held on Saturday 20th July at the Hordern Pavilion, Moore Park.

Contact:

AFTA's Event Manager, Alex Cook on 02 9287 9900 or alex@afta.com.au or LJ Loch, REPUBLIC on 0439 633 429 or ljloch@republic.net.au