

PRESS RELEASE

Mainland Australia is free of travel agent licensing

- **The WA Government has repealed the Travel Agents Act**

[21 AUGUST 2014:] Late last night the Western Australian parliament repealed the Travel Agents Act 1985 removing the need for licensing for travel agents in Western Australia.

The Government Bill passed with bipartisan support of all parties and will now be presented to the Western Australian Governor for royal ascent. The Western Australian act agrees to the transitional arrangements as the Consumer Affairs Ministers agreed on 7 December, 2012.

AFTA CEO, Jayson Westbury applauded the WA Government on this monumental decision. "After extensive and careful consultation with industry, consumers and within government itself, the decision has been taken to end licensing for all travel agents which brings Western Australia in line with decisions made by all the other mainland States and Territories. The Government came to the conclusion that WA could not go it alone and retain a State-based licensing system and compensation fund, as this would put travel agents at a distinct disadvantage when competing with interstate and overseas agents," Westbury said.

Transitional arrangements will be managed by the WA Consumer Affairs Department. AFTA is seeking further information on the process of refunds and communication to WA Travel Agents.

The industry-led accreditation scheme ATAS launched last month and will promote to consumers the benefits of booking travel through an accredited agent. To date over 200 WA based agents have been accredited under the scheme which will elevate travel industry standards. In coming weeks Australian consumers will start to hear about the changes to the travel industry and as brand awareness of ATAS builds, begin to actively seek out accredited agents which have met strict criteria to become a scheme participant.

Further details can be found at:

<http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/bills.nsf/BillProgressPopup?openForm&ParentUNID=8A3A269C4933690348257CD1002A7782>

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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.

ATAS -TRAVEL ACCREDITED: The AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) is an industry accreditation scheme that sets the benchmark of quality for the travel industry.

AFTA is committed, through ATAS, to elevating travel industry standards in Australia by driving increased and continued participation by travel intermediaries in ATAS and raising consumer awareness of the benefits of booking travel through an ATAS accredited agent.

The accreditation scheme is open to all travel intermediaries (those that buy and sell travel).