



PRESS RELEASE – For immediate release

Tuesday 18th December, 2012 SYDNEY

**AFTA
Travel Industry Transition Plan
Working Group
(TITPWG)**

- ***AFTA forms formal sub-committee of the AFTA Board to be known as the Travel Industry Transition Plan Working Group (TITPWG)***
- ***Members of the working group to be representative of the industry***
- ***A special consultative committee of suppliers will be established to be known as the Travel Industry Transition Plan Working Group Supplier Consultative Committee (TITPWGSCC)***

SYDNEY, 18th December 2012: The Australian Federation of Travel Agents today formally announced the formation of the working group which will be tasked with the important role of developing the industry-led accreditation and interacting directly with the Ministerial TITP.

At the recent AFTA board meeting it was agreed that a sub-committee which would include board members and non-board members would be established to work on the future plans which fall under the TITP. This group known as the TITPWG will set the course and develop the necessary aspects of how a future accreditation scheme will work for the travel agents across Australia. It will also look at many other aspects relevant to ensuring an appropriate, industry-led scheme and system is delivered for the travel industry in consultation with suppliers, governments, consumer groups and other relevant stakeholders.

“The AFTA board is determined to ensure that we get a new scheme that is fit for purpose and delivers value for travel agents across Australia” Jay Westbury AFTA Chief Executive said.

“This group will firstly work with the TITP to establish what is needed to be awarded the grant announced in the Ministerial communiqué to develop the accreditation scheme and other aspects necessary for the future of the Australian travel agent” Westbury said.

Members of the TITPWG are:

Mike Thompson – CEO Travelscene American Express
Elizabeth Gaines – COO & CFO of Jetset Travelworld LTD
Trena Blair – GM & Vice President Australia, American Express Business Travel
Andrew Macfarlane – Chief Executive Officer Magellan Travel Group
Phil Hoffmann – Phil Hoffman Travel MD & Owner
David Smith – Company Secretary Flight Centre Ltd
Jayson Westbury – Chief Executive AFTA

"This group offers a diverse experience from all aspects of the travel agency community and includes AFTA Directors and non-directors" said Westbury

"As we move forward with the development of the new scheme and in consultation with the government TITP, we will of course call on others from the industry to contribute in a range of ways going forward" he said.

In addition to the TITPWG, the group has established a broader consultative committee to embrace the views of suppliers and other stakeholders. The broader group will be known as the Travel Industry Transition Plan Working Group Supplier Consultative Committee (TITPWGSCC). This group will include representatives from cruise, airline and wholesalers and we will also be approaching CATO, CLIA Australasia, IATA and ATEC.

"We will also be working with the suppliers across the travel industry to ensure that they are a part of the new scheme and understand the values being built into the scheme. That is why the TITPWGSCC will be a very important part of the process going forward" said Westbury

"Many suppliers have already express interest in being a part of this group and we will confirm the specific details in the New Year" he said.

"This process of working groups will allow the industry to come together to form a really important new scheme that I hope everyone will be a part of. It is critical that we get this right and over the coming 6 or so months I am sure that together the travel industry can create something that works for everyone" said Westbury.

Further details of the work plan, timetable and next steps will be announced in the New Year once the Ministerial TITP releases more detail about the specific needs of the transitional arrangements and the grants process.

END.

Contact: Jayson Westbury 0414 906 767

Notes to Editors:

The Australia 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.

Further information about AFTA can be found at www.afta.com.au