

### **AFTA Officially Launches the ATAS Brand**

The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) officially launched the “ATAS” brand in Sydney last night. The AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) will elevate travel standards in Australia.

The event was attended by the Hon. Anthony Roberts, Minister for Fair Trading in NSW, AFTA Board Directors and suppliers who have worked on the scheme’s development. The event was a celebration of the 5 year journey to reform and to recognise that the new accreditation scheme is rapidly gaining momentum.

“The launch of the brand “ATAS – Travel Accredited” now gives life to a cornerstone element of the Travel Industry Transition Plan and delivers something that travel agents across Australia can now become very proud of”, said AFTA Chief Executive, Jayson Westbury.

Gary O’Riordan, General Manager - Accreditation, believes that the launch of the ATAS brand is evidence that significant progress has been made and that AFTA is well on track to delivering the new accreditation scheme in 2014.

“In early July, AFTA announced it had been granted Government Funding to establish the scheme. Yesterday we reflected on the significant progress we have made. This includes the establishment of the participant criteria, development of a governing Charter and Code of Conduct, critical staff recruitment, development and launch of the scheme’s brand and an industry consultation roadshow to over 650 travel agents and suppliers”, said O’Riordan.

AFTA embarked on an extensive process to develop the brand, which involved both trade and the consumer testing to refine and develop a brand and brand strategy that would have longevity and relevance to both target audiences.

The ATAS brand provides the necessary positioning to support travel agents, be they branded or trading with their own name, to ensure that consumers understand the benefit of dealing with an accredited agent. ATAS will elevate travel standards so that consumers can deal with ATAS accredited travel agents who are highly experienced, trusted and professional.

“We are in a unique position. We have a opportunity to engage with consumers via this new brand and provide reasons for consumers to book travel through an ATAS accredited travel agent”, said O’Riordan.

O’Riordan and the ATAS team hit the road again in mid November to deliver Transitional Workshops. These workshops will help travel agents and suppliers navigate changes to the industry and will address the scheme’s final criteria, the application process for participants, new compliance processes and membership categories and fees.

All travel agents and suppliers are welcome to register for a Transitional Workshop at [www.atas.com.au/workshop](http://www.atas.com.au/workshop)

Ends.

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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.

Further information about AFTA may be found at [www.afta.com.au](http://www.afta.com.au)