
Australian Travel Industry pauses for MH17 at 2014 AFTA NTIA

- *Industry extends condolences to those affected by the tragedy*
- *More than 1300 attend Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) NTIA 2014*
- *34 winners named in their respective categories for excellence*

[19 July 2014:] The Australian Travel Industry tonight paused to remember those lost in the MH17 tragedy and extend sympathies to those affected.

Addressing the 2014 Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) National Travel Industry Awards tonight, AFTA CEO Jayson Westbury said the industry's thoughts were with those who had lost loved ones.

"As you would all be aware the loss of the 298 people yesterday has had an impact across the globe. Indeed, 28 Australians have lost their lives in this despicable act against the freedoms of the globe and the innocence of civilians. We mark this moment and recognise this tragedy as we begin our event tonight."

More than 1300 industry leaders and representatives gathered at Sydney's Hordern Pavilion in Moore Park for the Awards Event with a record 34 travel industry individuals and groups named number one in their respective categories.

Awards for excellence were announced across a record number of categories with helloworld Limited taking out the Best Travel Agency Group, Bicton Travel were awarded Best Travel Agency Retail – Single Location and The Travel Authority were named Best Travel Agency Corporate – Multi Location, to name a few.

The list of all 34 winners is attached.

Australian superstar, Timomatic was the surprise guest entertainer.

"Tonight has been a true reflection of the camaraderie, strength and commitment of the people who make up the Australian Travel Industry," Mr Westbury said.

"Each year our judging panel must choose from a finalist pool of incredible talent. The fact that these awards have attracted such a diverse range of travel intermediaries and individuals demonstrates the skill and expertise within the industry and the competitive nature and passion of its participants vying for the award."

"The Australian Travel Industry is powering forward, and the willingness of these travel professionals to adapt, innovate and continuously grow with the times is a strong reminder of this. Congratulations to all finalists and winners."

The evening was hosted by Australian actor, author and TV personality, Andrew Daddo for the second year in a row.

The winners across all 34 categories were highly praised for their efforts. "On behalf of AFTA, I would like to thank all our sponsors and award nominees for their participation in the 2014 NTIA. We look forward to your continued support in 2015." Mr Westbury said.

Qantas is the major sponsor of the 2014 NTIA, providing much valued support in recognising and celebrating the best of the best in the Australian Travel Industry.

AFTA was pleased to have launched their brand new AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) TVC on the night to the full room of travel industry professionals in attendance. Watch it here www.atas.com.au.

Follow AFTA on Twitter at @AFTAOfficial and join the conversation using #NTIA2014.

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 2014 AFTA NTIA Gala Dinner will be held on Saturday 19th July at the Hordern Pavilion, Moore Park.

AFTA is proud to operate the AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) which is the accreditation scheme for Travel Agents operating in the now de-regulated Australian travel industry. www.atas.com.au

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