

AFTA CEO and Federal Member for Berowra meets with Hills District travel agents

(28 July) The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) CEO Darren Rudd and Julian Leeser MP, Member for Berowra, joined local travel agents for breakfast.

With growing uncertainty around a second wave of COVID-19 cases all across Sydney, travel businesses face an uncertain future and Government support is critical.

Owner and founder of The Impulse Travel Group, Stephanie Savage, spoke with Mr. Leeser MP and AFTA CEO Darren Rudd about the importance of continued support from the government and the need to send a strong message to the general public to support travel businesses that employ Australians who pay tax here and contribute to the Australian economy.

"The JobKeeper extension is welcome news and I am very grateful to the Federal and State governments for their support. But with the whole world locked down it's impossible for us to begin to recover without further assistance for at least the next 6-12 months" says Stephanie.

"The value of my business is in my loyal, knowledgeable staff and retaining those staff is my utmost priority. Our client relationships are the lifeblood of my business and, like every one of my industry colleagues, virtually all of our time over the last 4 months since COVID started has been spent looking after our clients' needs and preserving our ties with our loyal, long standing, highly valued customers. But without a single cent coming in the door".

"The reality is, however, the general public don't look at travel agents the same way they do their solicitor or accountant where they pay for their services by the minute. They don't see the enormous amount of time and effort we have all been putting in to manage our clients' travel plans during this pandemic."

"The general public need to be mindful about where they buy their travel in future. Supporting their local travel agent supports the local economy and, by default through our taxes, the whole Australian economy".

Stephanie has diversified her business during COVID-19, opening a new South Pacific brand, and believes a strategic framework for open borders is essential.

"We all know that a vaccine will solve everything but this could be years away," said Stephanie. "So until this happens there will be a major challenge for us to restore consumer confidence for our industry."

"Until the government comes up with a plan to reopen the borders we don't have an end date to begin reassuring our clients and restarting our industry."



Media Release

Stephanie says the industry and the various state and federal governments need to send a strong message to encourage people to book through their local travel agents. "I know people are already fired up and ready to travel, but truly great travel experiences begin with a great conversation with a great travel advisor."

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Media Contact for interviews: LJ Loch 0488 038 555 or ljloch@alphaconsulting.global

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.
