

Dave Sharma MP. visits Wentworth travel agents



Front, L-R: Beverley Cohen, CEO & Founder Wentworth Travel, Anna McMurtrie, MD, Dave Sharma MP, Member for Wentworth, outside Wentworth Travel in Double Bay. Back: Wentworth Travel team and Australian Federation of Travel Agents CEO, Darren Rudd.

(July 30) The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) CEO Darren Rudd and Dave Sharma MP, Member for Wentworth, visited local travel agents to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the industry.

With a second wave of COVID-19 cases hitting the Eastern Suburbs this week, local travel agencies like Double Bay based Wentworth Travel face an uncertain future.

“Our goal is to be there at the end of this to continue looking after our clients,” says Anna McMurtrie, Managing Director at Wentworth Travel.

Anna spoke with Mr Sharma MP. about the need for tailored support from Government to get businesses like Wentworth Travel through the pandemic.

“Over 3 decades in business, we’ve built loyal client and international supplier relationships we know will be there for us once borders open,” says Anna.

“The JobKeeper extension will also help us as we continue working collaboratively to support one another through this downturn. But it doesn’t cover all our costs.”

Media Release

Anna says 95% of the business relies on international travel, and significantly more work has gone into cancelling travel plans than making new arrangements for her clients.

“Unravelling a booking takes so much longer than putting it together for a client due to the terms of airlines and suppliers constantly changing,” says Anna. “We’ve needed to become part-time lawyers to work through it.”

Anna says ongoing uncertainty around domestic borders has eroded new bookings.

“We were starting to pick up new bookings, then the Victorian second wave hit, and we have lost more bookings with the closure of the QLD border to Greater Sydney.”

Anna believes interim measures like travel bubbles with Pacific countries are critical.

“Our team have mortgages and families to support, but with no confirmed international travel bubbles at present we’re budgeting around no overseas travel for 12 months.”

“Right now, the message from Government needs to be for Australians to support Australian companies like us when purchasing domestic travel, rather than overseas based providers.”

“We’re not just selling a hotel room, we’re creating an experience.”

AFTA CEO Darren Rudd said ongoing tailored support for travel agents is key, and stressed the importance of using local travel agents like Wentworth Travel.

“When you book Australian travel with your local accredited ATAS travel agent, you get experience you can trust.”

- ENDS -



Media Release

L-R: Dave Sharma MP, Member for Wentworth, listens to Wentworth Travel MD Anna McMurtrie discuss her concerns and ideas on how to move forward as a travel business during COVID-19.



L-R: Beverley Cohen, CEO & Founder Wentworth Travel, Anna McMurtrie, MD, Dave Sharma MP, Member for Wentworth.

Media Contact for interviews: Andrew Stewart 0400 964 222 or astewart@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.
