

## Hills district travel agents welcome local MP and JobKeeper extension



*L-R: Julian Leeser MP, Member for Berowra, with AFTA CEO Darren Rudd*

**(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 in The Hills, local travel businesses face an uncertain future and Government support is critical.

Travel agents are in a unique position due to a reliance on forward planning and open borders.

Owner of Cherrybrook Travel Monique Monsees said she spoke with Mr. Leeser MP about the need for continued support from Government.

“We were the first industry to be shut down,” says Monique. “We’ve been processing cancellations since February, making phone calls in the middle of the night to fix bookings, and we’ll be the last industry to recover from the pandemic. ”

“After 3 decades in business in The Hills I want to keep going for my staff and my clients, and the JobKeeper extension is the first part of the support I need. If the Government could open travel bubbles in the Pacific region, that would be an ideal next step.”

## Media Release

Paul Lechner, co-owner of Dural based Addicted to Australia, also welcomed the JobKeeper extension and agrees a strategic framework for open borders is essential.

"As travel businesses we need a strategy for setting dates and expectations around future travel to restore consumer confidence," said Paul.

"While the JobKeeper extension is a godsend to retain all my staff, we need to kickstart our industry with a travel bubble program with our Pacific neighbours."

Monique and Paul agree business won't fully recover until international travel resumes.

"We've all diversified to make ends meet and are focusing on domestic bookings for now, but we need people to book through local travel agents like me," said Monique.

"A week after 9/11, I was booking someone to go to New York – if we had a reopening strategy around borders we'd be able to plan bookings, but we're stuck in limbo."

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*Paul Lechner, co-owner of Dural based Addicted to Australia, spoke with Mr Leeser MP at the breakfast.*

## Media Release

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*Hills District travel agents joined Julian Leeser MP for breakfast*

**Media Contact for interviews: LJ Loch 0488 038 555 or [ljloch@alphaconsulting.global](mailto: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.

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