

## Local travel agents doing it tough welcome Federal MP

(July 20) The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) CEO Darren Rudd accompanied The Hon. Chris Bowen MP, Member for McMahon, on a visit to Western Sydney travel agents



**Wetherill Park travel agent Bina Williamson (centre), and the Travel Plans International team with AFTA CEO Darren Rudd**

With daily changes around borders given the new COVID-19 cases in South West Sydney, local travel agents are facing an uncertain future.

Even with her travel business at a standstill, Wetherill Park travel agent, Bina Williamson, and her team of 3 haven't stopped working throughout the pandemic because they haven't had the option to shut down. Bina says she is working hard to support her clients and navigate complex rebooking and cancellation policies.



## Media Release

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"None of our corporate customers are travelling, there's no hotels or cars to book," says Bina.

"2020 is the first year we haven't grown our profits in more than a decade. As a small agency it's been difficult for us to organize refunds from big suppliers, in one case it took six weeks for a partial refund, and we still have overheads like rent to pay."

"We have a lot of money on credit with major suppliers, and I need at least 12 months' worth of assistance to continue the business. I think an ideal solution is tapering off JobKeeper based on my earnings rather than stopping payments in September."

Bina discussed the reality of running a travel business during COVID-19. With borders shut there is next to no earning potential for her business, which is why tailored Government support is still a necessity.

"As travel agents we need the Federal decision makers to support us as we continue to support our customers during COVID-19. Continued Government support is an important first step in helping agents like us restart the travel industry and the Australian economy."

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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.

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