

Member for Berowra hears from Beecroft travel business



L-R: Julian Leeser MP, Member for Berowra, with AFTA CEO Darren Rudd, and Ross Garden Tours founder Graham Ross.

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

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

Travel businesses like Beecroft based Ross Garden Tours are in a unique position due to a reliance on forward planning and open international borders.

Kent Ross, Managing Director, spoke with Mr. Leeser MP at a breakfast about the need for continued support from Government for small travel businesses like his.

"I'm incredibly grateful for the JobKeeper extension, because domestic tours won't support our industry in a sustainable way," says Kent.

"We've got over 4 decades worth of international business relationships and some of our staff have been with us for 20 years. We're a tight knit, family owned business, and we're working hard to help our customers reschedule their international tours."

Media Release

Kent says the majority of his business is built around international garden tours to destinations like the UK, USA, Japan and Europe, and most of his customers have postponed tours.

“We have 300 customers waiting for postponed tours,” said Kent. “ We survived SARS, this isn't our first pandemic, but the confusion over borders isn't helping,” says Kent.

“A vaccine isn't confirmed and it may be years away. That's why tailored government support like JobKeeper is important, because it helps us cover some costs while we manage the multitude of bookings we have in the meantime.”

Kent says his business is in a good position compared to many travel companies thanks to a loyal customer base, but the time lag in receiving commissions on bookings means there will a significant wait for the business to fully recover.

“Once international borders reopen, the time lag in receiving money on our bookings is generally 12 months.”

“That's why tailored Government support like JobKeeper and a strategy to move towards open borders is critical to until that time comes.”

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L-R: Ross Garden Tours Managing Director, Kent Ross, with founder Graham Ross.

Media Release



Local travel agents joined Julian Leeser MP for breakfast to discuss COVID-19

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.
