

## Media Release

# Member for Berowra meets with Hornsby travel agent



*L-R: Sandie and Chris Suchet-Pearson, from Travel Africa in Hornsby, met with Julian Leeser MP at a breakfast with local travel agents*

**(July 28) 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 Western Sydney, local travel businesses face an uncertain future and Government support is critical.

Travel agents like Chris Suchet-Pearson are in an extremely difficult position business-wise due to a reliance on forward planning and open borders.

The owner of Travel Africa, Chris 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 it gives our industry the time and space we need to recover," says Chris. "We're all playing the waiting game to get commissions on any trips we organise, so government support is critical."

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"International travel is obviously what my business is built on. My clients need 6-12 months to plan their trips to Africa, so we need patience and support until travel can resume."

Chris says the majority of his clients have postponed their African safaris.

"One customer of mine had booked a 2 month trip through Africa, and we've had to work to juggle their plans and postpone without any solid dates."

"Around 2/3 of our clients have postponed because these are once in a lifetime trips. We've been able to successfully manage cancellations for the others thanks to our close relationships with suppliers."

Chris and his wife Sandie both work in the business, and Chris says Africa is their passion and they want to keep sharing their expertise of the destination with local customers.

"However, we're not like a traditional retailer; travel is an intangible product that can be difficult to classify when applying for small business grants" says Chris.

"That's why tailored Government support like JobKeeper is absolutely critical for our business."

- ENDS -



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

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*Chris and Sandie joined other local travel agents to meet with Julian Leeser MP.*

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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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