

Zali Steggall hears from local travel agents



L-R: Australian Federation of Travel Agents CEO Darren Rudd, Mosman Travel owner Sharyn Kitchener and Member for Warringah Zali Steggall at Mosman Travel

(August 17) With COVID-19 restrictions and border closures continuing, Member for Warringah Zali Steggall today heard firsthand from local travel agents about the devastating impact and need for greater tailored support.

The meetings were coordinated by the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA), with AFTA CEO Darren Rudd also attending.

Mosman Travel owner, Sharyn Kitchener, discussed with Ms. Steggall MP the unique challenges travel agents are facing as a result of COVID-19.

“We’ve been in local business for over 25 years and our clients have been wonderfully understanding throughout this time, many even checking in on us and looking for opportunities to travel within NSW and pass some money our way.” says Sharyn.

“We were starting to get traction on domestic bookings to QLD and WA, but since the second wave began in VIC these have dried up. The stop start approach to border shutdowns will impact many Australian tourism operators.”

“We’ve got bookings for the next few months including accommodation and flights, but we have no idea if clients will be able to travel or not. We’re still spending time on postponing bookings made in 2019 well into 2021. The reality is some may not happen until 2022, and we don’t earn any commission on these until weeks after the trip.”

Media Release

Mark O'Neill, owner of Cremorne based The Adventure Specialists, agrees cashflow is the major challenge for travel agents during COVID-19.

"I don't see any income on the horizon as our industry wasn't setup to work in reverse," says Mark.

"The sheer volume of bookings being cancelled and postponed means we're stuck waiting on suppliers, and with international borders a long way off agents need a light at the end of the tunnel as we continue working to get the best outcome for clients."

"A lot of agents are holding on at the moment because history shows travel always bounces back, but we need people to understand the timeline to recovery is much longer for travel agents," adds Mark.

"If international travel reopened tomorrow – many would want to wait and see, which is why government support is critical as a rebound in travel demand won't be instant."

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L-R: Mark O'Neill, owner of The Adventure Specialists agency in Cremorne, with AFTA CEO Darren Rudd and Zali Steggall.

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Notes to Editors:



Media Release

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.
