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Please personalise this letter to Prime Minister, The Hon Scott Morrison

The Prime Minister, The Hon Scott Morrison
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

And/or upload here <https://www.pm.gov.au/contact-your-pm>

**Without Government Support, we won't still be here to support travelling
Australians**

How to use this: the highlighted sections in italics are guidance for you to develop your own content. This is important for the letter to have impact and not be dismissed as a form letter.

Dear Prime Minister,

It's important when beginning your letter to thank the Prime Minister for the grant and support that has been extended to travel agents during the pandemic. If you received support, acknowledge and thank.

As the list of country restrictions and bans in response to the Omicron variant rapidly grows, the calls and emails we are getting from our Australians clients already caught up is growing and growing rapidly. They need our help to get through being stranded, delayed and diverted. Then we have all those bookings where travel hasn't yet started. Never have our clients needed us more than now.

Yet my business is in the worst state it has ever been and that won't improve until at least the middle of next year when some semblance of decent revenue starts to flow through. As someone who knows the Travel sector, I know you understand this and the fact that we only receive the bulk of payment after travel takes place. Rescheduling travel, chasing credits and refunds and handling the same booking multiple times is something we continue to do willingly to help our clients despite the fact it doesn't generate revenue for us.

I know too that you know that, pre-COVID, our sector was thriving. In fact, 70% of all international travel booked by Australians was booked through their local travel agent. This is already on the rise given the complexities of travelling globally in these times. Australians are turning to us in droves including to secure the remaining \$2Bn still outstanding in credits for COVID impacted travel from hotels, airlines, cruise lines and tour operators.

Give an example

I like so many other travel agents across Australia have been in hard lockdown since international travel was banned in March 2020. **Because international travel is such a significant part of our revenue, we will only see normal revenue from July 2022.**

- Give an overview of your business – where it's located, number of employees, age of business, profitability (as in " pre-CV, we were a very successful business as shown by ...")
- Almost immediately, my revenue fell by 90%/95% plus
- Explain impact on your team and whether you had to let team members go or stand them down.
- Explain the work you have been doing on refunds and credits and how complex and time consuming that is.

I have never faced a tougher period. The next two quarters will be the toughest ever
Here's where you need to outline why additional help is needed.

(Choose which is your scenario) We have been lucky enough to benefit from the Government's Grants Program *provide detail*/ Unfortunately while we had hoped to benefit from the Government's Grants Program, we were not found to be eligible despite being a travel business of X years./ Unfortunately the support we have received through the Government's Grants Program has been minimal

Here you can re-iterate AFTA's calls for support:

Your Government has already recognised the unique circumstances of Australia's travel agents through the Grants Program and we are really grateful as a sector but we are now in an even worse situation than we were when that support was provided.

Prime Minister, we ask please that you urgently implement a recovery package to enable our sector to rebuild. **Prior to COVID 70% of all international travel Australians booked was through their local travel agent, and we know from our own experience that this has already increased. BUT without Government support, we won't be here to help and these bookings will go offshore to non-Australian companies. We have already lost at least a third of our workforce of skilled travel professionals – 15,000 jobs – we need them back and more to meet the needs of travelling Australians now and moving forward.**

Our ask

- **Travel Sector Skills Retention and Recovery Package** – an additional \$90 million on top of the remaining unallocated \$60M from the COVID Consumer Travel Support Package to support travel agencies, tour operators, wholesalers or consolidators as a one-off payment in rebuilding our workforce and skills base
- As with aviation, our team members are the crucial link to reconnecting Australia to the world and delivering economic growth. This potential support package is tied to payroll and the costs of employment and reemployment of the sector and will support Australian consumers through the refund process.

I thank you for your continued advocacy of travel agents and the support to date and look forward to your ongoing support for our entire sector.

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Sincerely,