

## **Template for your letter/email to your local MP.**

*Please note that for this to have the impact we need, you need to personalise this as much as possible. Where you can rewrite the language below to mean the same but using your words, please do so*

*Subject Line: Why I and other travel agents need your help now*

I need your help please. We have learned that almost a third of the \$258 Million allocated to the Travel Sector *via the COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Program (CTSP)* has not been distributed.

### ***Explain about your business***

The Federal Government allocated those funds because it recognised 1) the unique position Travel professionals are in and 2) the importance of the work we are doing supporting travelling Australians through the challenges of COVID.

### ***Explain how much work you are doing to help your customers and how much of that involves credits. Why Australians need travel agents more than ever given the constant shift of COVID requirements especially internationally***

There are currently up to \$6 Billion worth of credits for travel booked through Australian travel agents and impacted by COVID which Australian travel businesses are managing on behalf of Australians. In the three weeks even before the Ukraine situation, there were around 200 changes to international requirements which impacted Australians travel and the bookings which we had to amend to accommodate. Reliance on travel professionals is greater than ever before and, because of the reality that international travel won't return to normal in terms of revenue flow for us until much later this year and because of the indefinite suspension of cruise, these two quarters are the toughest yet.

There were massive flaws in the Austrade process. They didn't understand what outbound travel was, how the payments flow through the system with a lag on revenue to us until after travel, and there was wide-spread inconsistency in application of the eligibility criteria.

### ***Add anything about your experience with the Grants application***

No other sector has been in hard lockdown for more than 700 days as a result of the international travel ban. No other sector is currently facing its fourth year of devastated cash flow (we have had to hand back commissions from bookings made in 2019 for travel unable to be undertaken on top of revenue falls of 90%+ in 2020 and 2021 and with the same for most of this year due to bookings being predominantly for travel from late 2022).

**Australians need Travel Professionals more than ever**

Importantly too without a healthy outbound Travel Sector, Australia won't have a healthy inbound Tourism Sector. It has to make sense for airlines and cruise ships to have full loads both ways. Pre-COVID 70% of all international travel taken by Australians was booked through travel professionals like me and it's already on the rise given the complications of COVID requirements. Without us, who will provide the customer support to these Australians in making the right booking, and amending it when things change?

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg on ABC's RN Breakfast show on 3 March talked about the \$6 Billion "war chest" the Morrison Government has. Given the Government's focus on skills, our ask of \$190 million in support via the implementation of a *Travel Sector Skills Retention and Impaired Recovery Package* as per AFTA's Pre-Budget submission seems very reasonable.

I note this ask includes the unallocated funds approved as part of the CTSP.

**My ask of you please**

Can you please take up the case and ask to have these funds released to businesses like mine given the Government's commitment in December 2019 to supporting us given our unique set of circumstances and the critical work we are doing to support Australians travelling domestically and internationally.