

# **TOURISM RESTART TASKFORCE**

## **Key Issues Meeting #1, 1 May 2020**



It was firstly acknowledged that since the Taskforce was announced the feedback from the tourism industry had been very supportive of its work given the urgent need for there to be a coordinated plan and immediate action and advocacy to assist tourism in restarting in the best way possible.

### **Terms of Reference**

The members reviewed the Terms of Reference and acknowledged the need to embrace issues faced by industry sectors such as business events, major events, sporting events and cultural activities all of which are strongly connected to tourism. The status of bushfire recovery support should also form part of the considerations. With these changes, the Terms of Reference were agreed (see below).

### **Relationships with Industry and Government**

The Taskforce was updated on the members of Australian Chamber Tourism who will play a critical role in providing input to the Taskforce as well as an important communication channel to the broader industry. Taskforce members also undertook to use their extensive networks to ensure their deliberations were informed by a broad cross section of industry operators and stakeholders. The notes of each meeting will be issued publicly and posted on the website to encourage comment from the broader tourism community.

The taskforce reviewed the large number of government bodies that are relevant to the COVID crisis and recovery and was made aware of the existing ACCI relationships with these bodies. A key relationship will be with National COVID Coordination Commission (NCCC) as well as through the Tourism Minister. It was acknowledged that roles were dynamic with, for example, the Minister for Industry in the last few days seeking input from the hospitality sector on barriers to restart.

### **Restart – 3 phases**

It was agreed that the Taskforce would consider recommendations for both Industry and Government in all three phases of the restart process:

Phase 1 – Hibernation

Phase 2 – Immediate Road Out

Phase 3 – Medium to Long term recovery

### **Protocols for Restart**

Noting that the importance of sector hygiene and safety protocols had been highlighted by the head of the NCCC, Nev Power, the Taskforce recognised that some sectors had already moved to look at best practice protocols and encouraged others to do the same.

There was a need to reach out both within our own sectors and internationally for work already undertaken on appropriate protocols for reopening, including the plan formulated in New Zealand

as well as the Singapore accommodation model. Other sectors, such as mining had also moved early to put protocols in place.

There was some discussion about the balance between accepting the Government's restrictions or influencing them as appropriate and within the important constraints of the health advice which should be respected. At the least, the Taskforce should make Governments aware where on-going restrictions or requirements would likely make many sector's businesses non-viable. The example discussed was the 4 sq m rule that had been briefly included within the restrictions. This rule, if adopted on the path out, would present a significant challenge for not only restaurant viability, but also air travel, coach transfer/touring, hotels, events, ferry/marine transportation, cruising. Government working with industry to achieve social distancing in other ways should be encouraged.

It was noted that the new norm post-COVID-19 world will not be the same as before and businesses will need to adapt. Commercial viability must remain a critical goal.

### **Restrictions Roll Back**

The NT Government roll back plan was provided to the Taskforce, and SA had also announced that they were going to issue a timetable for easing restrictions. Most states had made some changes, with the National Cabinet due to meet on 8 May 2020 to consider changes one week ahead of their original schedule.

### **Importance of Certainty**

While recognising that things can change if the health situation deteriorates, it is exceptionally important that Governments are aware of the importance of greater certainty in the timetable for the easing of movement restrictions. Major conferences, exhibitions, events and the packaging and marketing of tourism product, even at the domestic level, requires forward planning with as long lead times as possible. The Taskforce will reach out to health authorities to deliver this message and try and obtain a more certain view of the progressive roll back and likely criteria going forward.

### **State Border Movement Restrictions**

This was identified as priority area for Taskforce action, and Governments should be encouraged to act as soon as health advice allowed to remove cross border movement. Permitting movement across state borders will assist the tourism industry in a staged, well controlled Restart. The COVIDSafe app, which everyone should be encouraged to take up, provided an important mechanism for contacts made by an infected person to be traced. A letter to Government about this issue should be sent.

### **Taskforce Workplan**

Priority engagement should be:

- Tourism Australia to understand the likely consumer demand for tourism once restrictions are eased, as well as their timetable for demand activity. This should be a high level strategic briefing and it was agreed would not be about marketing messages.
- Nev Power from the NCCC,
- Health officials in order to understand the inhibitors and inform the protocols for restart

- Airline expertise to discuss what limitations will arise from the protocols that airlines are planning to adopt.

## **Future Meetings**

It was agreed that the work of the taskforce required early action so at least initially it would meet weekly. The next meeting was set for Friday, 8 May 2020.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE as approved 1 May 2020**

The Tourism Restart Taskforce is established by the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry under the auspices of the Tourism Committee (Australian Chamber – Tourism). Its role is to:

- With regard to actions from Australian Governments in relation to border opening and reductions in movement restrictions, provide advice on a supply-side action plan for restarting domestic and international tourism, and where appropriate related industries such as hospitality and business, sporting and major events;
- Provide advice on the medium and long-term strategic supply-side issues for restarting domestic and international tourism in Australia;
- Provide regular progress reports to the Australian Chamber and engage with members of its Tourism Committee on the development of the plan and emerging issues;
- Provide advice to Governments (primarily the Federal Government) on the current status of tourism sectors, including bushfire impacts, as well as needs of the agencies, businesses, communities and individuals in tourism during hibernation as well as the restart phase;
- Provide guidance to the National COVID19 Coordination Commission and the Coronavirus *Business Liaison Unit* in Treasury through the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in relation to the tourism restart;
- Provide guidance to the Tourism Ministers' Meeting forum through the Federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment;
- Seek views and input from the organisations and networks in tourism, and
- Consider demand-side strategies proposed by Tourism Australia and their supply-side implications in developing the plan.

## **Timeframe**

It is envisaged the Taskforce would operate until the International Tourism Restart has commenced (estimated to be January 2021).

## **In attendance:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Jeremy Johnson AM (Chair) (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry)</li> <li>• The Hon. Bruce Baird AM (Business Events Sydney, TTF)</li> <li>• Sarina Bratton AM (Ponant)</li> <li>• Geoff Donaghy (BECA, ASM Global, ICC Sydney)</li> <li>• Bob East (Tourism Australia)</li> <li>• The Hon. Martin Ferguson AM (Tourist Accommodation Australia)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nikki Govan (Star of Greece)</li> <li>• Denis Pierce (Australian Tourism Export Council)</li> <li>• Graham (Skroo) Turner (Flight Centre)</li> <li>• Jacqui Walshe (The Walshe Group)</li> <li>• John Hart (Australian Chamber – Tourism)</li> </ul> <p><b>Secretariat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jenny Lambert , Director – Tourism at ACCI</li> <li>• Sophie Lebang, Policy Officer</li> <li>• Jennifer Low, Policy Director WHS, ACCI</li> </ul> |
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