

TOURISM RESTART TASKFORCE

Key Issues Meeting #9, 27 July 2020



JobKeeper 2.0

The Taskforce acknowledged the importance to tourism and hospitality of the Government's extension of JobKeeper to March 2021 and expressed gratitude to the Government for the support. There were two important changes to the settings for JobKeeper 2.0 which ACCI was seeking through representations to Treasury that are important to tourism:

- **Business eligibility test for ongoing support:** JobKeeper 2.0 requires a business to meet the 30/50/15% threshold test for each of the two, or in the case of the extension beyond December, the three quarters preceding. Eligibility instead should be assessed based on a business meeting the threshold in the September quarter, plus an average over both the June and September quarter, and in the case of the extension beyond December, meeting the threshold in the December quarter and the average over the June, September and December quarter.
- **Employee eligibility:** The new settings only support employment relationships in place as at 1 March (permanent plus casuals over a year). This is not likely to provide the support that businesses in hospitality and retail need to survive as a number of employees may have moved on despite the JK support given the nature of the industry. Government is urged to either shift the date to 22 July or better yet provide the support for the number of employees who were eligible in 1 March even though some of the actual workers may have changed. Changing the date will still keep the JK support in place for those employees previously eligible and will additionally pick up casuals whose year-anniversary with their employer ticked over between March and July as well as permanents who have commenced in that time. The idea of providing support based on the number of employees eligible in March provides wage subsidy for the number of employees needed at a bare minimum to operate.

Tourism Restart Proposals

The Taskforce was updated on progress with the restart proposals before Government and national authorities such as the NCCC. It was noted that the business events sector met with the PM since the last meeting, and ACCI had followed that up through pressing the need for national guidelines to maximise the possibility of jurisdictions issuing workable rules. The expedition cruise industry was having good engagement with some of the State Governments, but still required the federal government to exempt the ships that would deliver the service from the ban on international cruise ships entering Australia. There had been progress with the issuing of national guidelines in the bus and coach industry that removed the capacity restrictions.

NZ/Aust Travel Bubble

An opening once hoped for in the three-step plan for July is being pushed further out by the Victorian situation, despite many other regions in Australia being largely COVID free. Wellington and Canberra remained good options for testing the protocols and processes but travel between any two cities would be welcome.

Meeting with the Federal Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment

The Taskforce was joined by Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment. He said that the focus of the government was on the JobKeeper support and retaining the IR flexibility for both JobKeeper recipients and after September previous JobKeeper recipients. The October Budget will focus on recovery. The Minister invited the Taskforce to put forward recovery ideas. Once more state borders are reopened, Tourism Australia will ramp up its marketing to encourage Australians to travel beyond their usual comfort zone to experience some of the activities that international tourists previously gravitated towards. The Taskforce raised the problems being experienced with seeking exemptions to travel overseas and bringing skilled people in as well as the negative signal being sent by imposing lower caps on quarantine places. The Minister encouraged the industry to work with the State Governments on having the caps increased. The two issues with JobKeeper were also discussed and the Minister invited more detail be sent for follow up. The Minister also invited domestic expedition cruise operators for detail of state approvals with a view to amending the biosecurity orders to allow for small ship domestic operations.

Achieving Certainty

ACCI updated the taskforce on work being finalised to draft a document that would align possible movement and business restrictions responses to stages of the health outcomes, so that there can be greater community understanding and well as business certainty. It was also to prompt action that was more targeted rather than an overreaction or one size fits all approach.

GoPassport

The Taskforce noted the information about GoPassport, an Australian based process to use data and digital as an efficient way of managing travel in a post-COVID world. There was an acknowledgement by members that it was important for tourism to demonstrate it was taking proactive measures to manage travel in a way that provided greater assurance for travellers. This was particularly important for corporate travellers as well as the international education market. It was agreed that a session be set up to look at the approach in more detail.

Next Meeting was set for Friday, 14 August 2020 or as an alternate Monday 17 August 2020 with a target to engage with the NCCC and discuss the likely state of the industry going forward and what further supports may be needed beyond JobKeeper.

In attendance:

- Dr Jeremy Johnson AM (Chair) (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
- The Hon. Bruce Baird AM (Business Events Sydney, TTF)
- Sarina Bratton AM (Ponant)
- Geoff Donaghy (BECA, ASM Global, ICC Sydney)
- Bob East (Tourism Australia)
- The Hon. Martin Ferguson AM (Tourist Accommodation Australia)
- Nikki Govan (Star of Greece)
- Denis Pierce (Australian Tourism Export Council)
- Graham (Skroo) Turner (Flight Centre)
- Jacqui Walshe (The Walshe Group)
- John Hart (Australian Chamber – Tourism)

Guests

- Senator Simon Birmingham, Minister for Trade, Investment & Tourism

Secretariat

- Jenny Lambert, Director – Tourism at ACCI

Observers

- Margaret, Austrade