

TOURISM RESTART TASKFORCE

Key Issues Meeting #19, 2 July 2021



Summary of National and State Announcements

The Taskforce noted that most of the country was still in lockdown or under some form of restrictions. The constantly changing nature of such measures was reflected in the summary of restrictions and lockdowns already being out of date. Queensland had eased restrictions for some LGAs whereas NT had extended its lockdown.

Guest Session with Singapore High Commissioner, His Excellency Fook Seng Kwok

Singapore's High Commissioner to Australia, his Excellency Fook Seng Kwok addressed the Taskforce on Singapore's handling of the pandemic and a safe travel bubble between the two countries. With Australians currently being able to travel to Singapore (one-way travel), there is great opportunity to expand to a safe travel bubble once the requisite infrastructure and protocols are put in place along with a ramp up in vaccination rates in both countries.

Variant Restrictions

The Secretariat provided a brief of the Australian Chamber-Tourism Committee's roundtable with Minister for Trade and Tourism, the Hon Dan Tehan with a range of issues discussed, the most prominent being the need to gain clarity and transparency from the First Ministers and Chief Health Officers on the principles used to inform decisions to impose lockdowns and restrictions since the response to any outbreaks from the States/Territories was so varied. The need to exclude vaccinated Australian from restrictions was also discussed.

Vaccine Rollout Update

The Chair noted that the previous National Cabinet mandated that all aged care workforce had to be vaccinated by end of September and a new indemnity for employers who would like to provide vaccination for their employees. Both of these moves are welcome and have been recognised as significant barriers in the vaccination drive. The Taskforce noted that the rhetoric used by the National Cabinet that 'a vaccine would be available for those who want it' as opposed to pegging the target to a percentage of the population will likely create opportunities to reopen travel sooner but measurement will likely prove to be hard.

With the National Cabinet announcing a 'National Plan' and the reduction of arrival caps by 50 percent, the Taskforce emphasised that this would likely further tarnish Australia's reputation on the international stage as a difficult country to do business with – being closed and very slow to roll out vaccines. This reflects a 180-degree shift in the perception of Australia, with many countries already fully open, ready for business and likely poaching business from Australia. The Taskforce reinforced the need to progress pilots, including cruise while there was the safety net of quarantine to prove success.

Reimagining the Visitor Economy Expert Panel

The Secretariat provided an update on stakeholder consultations organised and moderated by ACCI around the country with discussions centred on the long-term vision for the visitor economy to 2030. It was acknowledged that the current state of the sector made it difficult to move past the support needed

for the short term, but ACCI's submission and the work of the panel was looking at the future of the sector. The next phase would be Austrade putting together a report based on discussions and submissions, with Government's Response likely later this year or early next year. ACCI is continuing to push for industry input into the drafting process.

Next Meeting will be Monday, 16 August 2021.

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)
- Nikki Govan (Star of Greece)
- Graham (Skroo) Turner (Flight Centre)
- Jacqui Walshe (The Walshe Group)
- Denis Pierce (Australian Tourism Export Council)
- Michael Johnson (Tourism Accommodation Australia)
- Bob East (Tourism Australia)
- John Hart (Australian Chamber – Tourism)

Secretariat

- Jenny Lambert, Director – Tourism, ACCI
- Jen Low, Director - WHS, ACCI

Observers

- Margaret Bowen, DFAT
- Victoria Maigre, Tourism Australia
- Roslyn Bell, NCC