

TOURISM RESTART TASKFORCE

Key Issues Meeting #23, 1 December 2021



Summary of National and State Announcements

The summary of restrictions was noted, including the delay in border reopening due to Omicron.

Guest Session with Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Shadow Minister for Sport and Tourism

Australian Chamber – Tourism Executive Chair John Hart welcomed the Shadow Minister for Sport and Tourism, Senator the Hon Don Farrell, who addressed the Taskforce on the current state of the industry, border restrictions and support measures.

The Shadow Minister encouraged members of the Taskforce to raise any areas of priority, in particular as there will be an election next year.

Tourism Business Support

The Chair, Dr Jeremy Johnson AM noted that the ongoing border closures, as well as the additional reduction in confidence caused by the Omicron variant, has reinforced the need for the Federal Government to provide assistance for businesses reliant on the international visitor market.

Taskforce members noted that most businesses that are primarily reliant on international tourist arrivals have recorded more than a 60 per cent fall in turnover. The Taskforce stressed the need for a Government to have a short term plan to support the industry, as well as a long term plan about how business support can be triggered, such as in the event of a new variant, bushfires, etc.

THRIVE 2030 (The Re-Imagined Visitor Economy)

The Executive Chair noted that majority of the feedback provided to Australian Chamber – Tourism was that the Federal Government's THRIVE 2030 Strategy for recovery and sustainable growth of the visitor economy could benefit from a greater focus on the commercial aspects of the industry, as well as including aspirational targets which could give us a competitive edge in the international tourism market.

The Taskforce agreed that Australian Chamber – Tourism should put out a public statement advocating for the strategy to reflect an understanding of how the industry operates and to include short, medium and long-term targets to ensure Australia returns as premier destination for international tourists.

Labour & Skills Shortages

The Taskforce received a briefing from Australian Chamber – Tourism on developments in relation to labour and skills shortages, noting that as the tourism industry restarts, the industry is facing critical

skills and labour shortages. Australian Chamber – Tourism in conjunction with Tourism Training Australia has developed a draft of a tourism and hospitality workforce development strategy, which was shared with the group.

Taskforce members showed support for the strategy and noted the need to have a promotional campaign to encourage people to take up jobs locally. In addition, it will be important to ensure appropriate entry for working holiday makers and international students, who not only provide an economic benefit to Australia, but are an important source of labour for the tourism industry. Members also noted the importance of having migration settings that ensure the regions can also benefit from skilled migration.

Guest Session with the Hon Stuart Robert MP, Minister for Employment, Skills and Small Business

The Executive Chair welcomed the Hon Stuart Robert MP, Minister for Employment, Skills and Small Business and provided an overview of the concerns the tourism industry is facing in terms of skills and labour shortages, and reinforced the need for solutions.

The Minister acknowledged that Australia is facing a significant skill and labour shortage, which is being keenly felt in the hospitality sector. The Minister noted while lifting border restrictions is important, an element of the solution relates to the new employment services model wherein Australians on benefits are encouraged and assisted to get necessary skills and take up jobs.

The Taskforce put forward a number of additional ideas to address the labour and skills shortages, including the opportunity to improve the outcomes of the PaTH model, to ensure that training is more vocational and inextricably linked to a job or hosted work experience opportunity.

Next Meeting will be held in January/February.

In attendance – Taskforce members:

- Dr Jeremy Johnson AM (Chair – Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
- John Hart (Australian Chamber – Tourism)
- Jacqui Walshe (The Walshe Group)
- Michael Johnson (Tourism Accommodation Australia)
- Geoff Donaghy (BECA, ASM Global, ICC Sydney)
- Denis Pierce (Australian Tourism Export Council)

Australian Chamber – Tourism members

- Peter Shelley (Australian Tourism Export Council)
- Andrew Hiebl (Association of Australian Convention Bureaux)
- Wes Lambert (Restaurant and Catering Industry Association)
- Dean Long (Australian Federation of Travel Agents)
- Brett Jardine (Council of Australian Tour Operators)
- Greg Binskin (Business NSW)
- Hugh Fitzpatrick (Caravan Industry Association of Australia)

- David De Garis (Australian Hotels Association)
- Rebecca Burdick Davies (VCCI)
- Bassel Tallal (Accommodation Association of Australia)
- Lauren Douglass (Australian Regional Tourism)
- Hugo Robinson (Restaurant and Catering Industry Association)
- Richard Munro (Accommodation Association of Australia)
- Coralie Bell (Australian Regional Tourism)
- Tim O'Callaghan (VCCI)
- Claudia Sangripanti (Exhibition Event Association Australasia)
- Joel Katz (Cruise Lines International Association)

Observers

- Victoria Maigre (Tourism Australia)
- Margaret Bowen (Austrade)

Apologies

- Sarina Bratton AM (Ponant)
- Nikki Govan (Star of Greece)
- The Hon. Bruce Baird AM (Business Events Sydney, TTF)
- Graham (Skroo) Turner (Flight Centre)

Secretariat

- Jenny Lambert, Director – Tourism, ACCI
- Ingrid Fraser, Associate Director – Tourism, ACCI
- Tanya Roy, Policy Officer – Tourism, ACCI