



Australian  
Chamber of Commerce  
and Industry

## TRANSCRIPT

**Event:** Andrew McKellar interview with Ashleigh Gillion, NewsDay Sky News.

**Speakers:** Andrew McKellar, chief executive Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ashleigh Gillion, host NewsDay Sky News.

**Date:** 2 February 2022.

**Topics:** International tourism, international border reopening, Western Australia border closure, rapid antigen tests, close contact isolation requirements, staff shortages.

### E&OE

**Ashleigh Gillon, host NewsDay Sky News:** Australia's borders are set to reopen to international travellers in less than two weeks. It is, of course, welcome news for the tourism sector, setting the industry on a path to recovery. Joining us live is Andrew McKellar, he's the CEO of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Andrew, appreciate your time as always. Just how long a road will that recovery be?

**Andrew McKellar, chief executive Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry:** Yes. Hello, Ash. It's very welcome news for the tourism industry. As we know, it will be more than 700 days that our international borders will have been closed by the time we get to the 21st of February. I think the one thing we would say here is we can't expect that everything will spring back in a very short space of time. It is going to take some work over the next couple of weeks with the airlines, with the airports to ensure that all of the logistical arrangements are in place. And the arrangements, which have changed to some degree in terms of incoming arrivals, how to screen those, how to ensure that those are managed as they come from different parts of the world. So look, there's going to be a lot of work to do. The other thing that we will have to do is we will have to invest in promoting Australia much more heavily as an international destination. We can't assume that people are just going to be flocking to our shores, we are going to have to

do work to restore the image and to promote Australia once again as an international destination.

**Ashleigh:** Andrew what's next on the to-do list in terms of reducing restrictions of taking further steps to make the recovery happen faster, more broadly?

**Andrew:** Well, I think one of the most important things is obviously the Western Australian situation. So as that continues to develop we've got to get to the point where the country as a whole can be opened up and there needs to be a clear timetable to do that, some clear criteria for that to occur. So I think obviously there's more work to do in that space. Once we have that situation, that will be a very important step. There are other challenges addressing labour market shortages still, the situation has eased somewhat in recent days and we hope that that will continue to improve, but still a lot of work to do there.

**Ashleigh:** And in terms of day-to-day operations of businesses around the country, what's the major feedback you're getting in terms of the challenges that are causing grief? The rapid antigen tests, the supply's now there for businesses to test as they would want to, how are they coping in terms of the isolation rules for workers?

**Andrew:** Well, I mean, to get supplies of the rapid tests still remains very challenging. I think what's happened in large extent here is that businesses have tried to work around that. So yes, we've seen the changes in the close contact definitions, but the compliance that goes with this is very difficult for many businesses. So many of them, really, haven't elected to use those arrangements. They've tried to work around it as best they can. There are continuing pressures in terms of getting employees. It has started to ease somewhat as we've come down the other side of the wave, particularly the south-eastern states and really, I think now many businesses are looking at that as the key to improve the situation.

**Ashleigh:** Andrew, appreciate your time as always, thank you so much for joining us on NewsDay.

**Andrew:** Thanks very much, Ash.

**Media contact:**

P | 02 6270 8020

E l media@australianchamber.com.au