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MEDIA STATEMENT

JobKeeper must be for the keeping – Thousands petition for retention

ATIC has made a final call to arms for the Federal Government to maintain and extend JobKeeper beyond September with 10,000 people proactively petitioning for the Program's future to sustain tourism businesses and thousands of jobs.

ATIC Executive Director Simon Westaway said the peak entity's 5-point plan for a future JobKeeper highlighted how it can assist affected businesses get to the other side of COVID-19.

"JobKeeper is doing the job intended for our heavily-hit tourism industry and all its associated businesses to retain their core workforce until visitor demand recovers," Mr Westaway said.

"Retaining and extending JobKeeper is an absolute priority for tourism enterprises and tens of thousands of jobs within them and it has demonstrated community support backing this position.

"The collective economic impact of our international border closure and changeable State and Territory border constraints has smashed Australian tourism. Our industry needs far greater time than JobKeeper's September deadline to allow for a meaningful recovery."

Mr Westaway said with the ongoing border situation, ATIC was calling for the Federal Government to lead, through the National Cabinet process, to establish a framework around how domestic border restrictions should apply to future COVID hotspots. This should include agreed criteria into how restriction easings become seamless to retain industry and traveller confidence.

"ATIC's recent independent economic analysis of the impact of rolling domestic border restrictions found prior to Queensland's re-opening, the national cost of the restrictions was more than 700 jobs a day with a cumulative daily economic hit of \$84 million," Mr Westaway said.

"Despite the positives of Queensland, the NT and South Australia's border re-openings to most Australians, any upswing for our national visitor economy is neutralised and worsened by the absence of Victoria and people from many areas of Sydney. The retention and extension of JobKeeper is not negotiable beyond September if we want a recovering tourism sector."

ATIC's research has Victoria's stalled interstate tourism market as costing \$147 million in weekly gross state product, equivalent to a fully-reopened Queensland interstate market, whilst all States and Territories now retain staggered domestic border restrictions with no re-opening timelines.

ATIC's JobKeeper plan beyond September includes:

- Extend JobKeeper six months and until the international border reopens
- Extend JobKeeper to include regular seasonal employees
- Target JobKeeper based on a business turnover, not industry
- Review the JobKeeper payment level, to be maintained at \$1500 a fortnight, but cap JobKeeper at less than \$1500 where an employee did not previously earn that level
- Provide advance notice of JobKeeper extension for workforce retention.

Further Comment:

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