

MEDIA STATEMENT

18 September 2020

ATIC supports lifting arrivals cap to 6000 to bring Australians home faster

The Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) supports an urgent lift in the cap for returning Australians to 6000 weekly arrivals to help bring our citizens and residents home faster.

ATIC Executive Director Simon Westaway said a 50% cap lift to allow 6000 Australians to return weekly from overseas is backed by the role of industry supporting strong quarantine outcomes.

“We urge the National Cabinet to outline and deliver the solutions to enable an immediate lift in the current 4000 per week cap of international arrivals to 6000,” Mr Westaway said.

“A 50% cap increase to 6000 weekly arrivals of stranded Australian citizens and residents is the just and right thing to do and it is also a means to keep our travel and tourism industry going.

“Raising the international arrivals cap to 6000 supports tourism jobs as our industry works hard to again secure a sustainable footing and a future.

“Participating Australian hotels have worked well in supporting return traveller quarantine arrangements and international airlines are flying here despite highly restricted passenger loads.

“The effective role industry has played in continually delivering against tough self-quarantine arrangements for returning Australians is further proof positive the arrival cap can be lifted.

“Our travel and accommodation sector has clear capacity to support more international arrivals into Australia and far greater volumes are badly needed to sustain airline and airport operations.

“This capacity includes plenty of vacant hotel rooms in capital cities including Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. National CBD hotel capacity remains unsustainably low and well below 50% occupancy.

“Utilising such spare accommodation capacity for greater numbers of returning Australians from overseas moving into managed self-quarantine directly supports tourism businesses and jobs.

“Without an immediate arrival cap boost we are sending a very poor message to international airlines servicing Australia and creating real risk of a permanent loss of future flights and capacity.

“Such a scenario will have substantive long-term impacts on Australian tourism, our largest services export sector, and will directly cost tens of thousands of current and future jobs.

“The consequences of doing nothing more on the arrivals cap greatly impacts a still-estimated 25,000 Australians trying valiantly to find an air seat to fly back home.

“Without more international flights that pain also spreads to our exporters. Out of markets such as South Australia air freight volumes have halved due to the arrival cap imposition!”

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