

**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**18 December 2020**

**ATIC welcomes new Federal Tourism Minister**

Peak tourism body ATIC has welcomed Dan Tehan as Australia's next Tourism Minister pointing to his seniority, track record in policy reform and keen interest in Australia's visitor economy.

ATIC Executive Director Simon Westaway said Tourism's retention in Federal Cabinet and the senior Ministerial appointment was critical given ongoing COVID related issues facing industry.

"Tourism is a major economic pillar, employing 1 in 12 Australians, but the financial and operational challenges now before us due to the impacts of COVID remain," Mr Westaway said.

"Sustaining open domestic borders and the confidence that they stay open is what gets Australians truly travelling and again call for a nationally consistent approach to virus hotspots.

"The latest national domestic tourism numbers have reinforced how deep the hole our industry fell into in 2020, losing tens of billions from the impact of the COVID pandemic and bushfires.

"Australian tourism's recovery and its sustainable future, still with a hard international border closure, will require future targeted support to industry including through *JobKeeper's* extension.

"Long-standing issues haven't gone away in the COVID economy and the attention of government is needed to address market failure of affordable, accessible small business insurance products.

"Real labour and skills shortages remain across parts of industry through the COVID-19 impact on the international backpacker workforce and our stalled Working Holiday Maker Program.

"A new national tourism and visitor economy strategy and plan, beyond the completed *Tourism2020*, also must be expedited into 2021 including a sharp focus on sustainable recovery."

ATIC's national membership thanked outgoing Tourism Minister Simon Birmingham and Assistant Minister Jonathon Duniham for their collective efforts as they now transition to new portfolios.

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