

MEDIA STATEMENT

1 April 2021

JobKeeper end means lights out for over 1 in 3 tourism jobs and businesses.

Peak body ATIC said with the end of JobKeeper, over 1 in 3 tourism businesses are cutting staff and downsizing with many forced to close because of ongoing low consumer confidence in travel.

ATIC Executive Director Simon Westaway said: “38% of Australian tourism businesses have told us they are cutting jobs and reducing workforce hours to stay viable with the ending of JobKeeper.

“60% of tourism enterprises are in a weaker position since COVID-19, 47% remain open but have fewer staff, and travel bookings and business activity are nationally down 25% at March end.

“As predicted by Federal Treasury, the end of JobKeeper is having a major impact on exposed sectors. This includes Australian tourism and the tens of thousands of at-risk jobs connected to it.

“Just released Federal tourism figures is proof. Australia’s tourism industry lost an astonishing \$44 billion in domestic visitor spending in year 2020 plus \$34 billion in international visitor losses.

“With a workforce peak of around 1 million before the virus, our sector has lost over 185,000 direct and indirect jobs through the pandemic and is now the fastest falling employment category.

“The situation facing struggling tourism enterprises in our capital cities, where the bulk of these businesses exist, will see worsening levels of job losses and inevitable business closures.

“Operators of tours and experiences across Australia, many by small family businesses, remain heavily impacted by hard border restrictions and consumer confidence in travel hasn’t returned.

“This is a critical period for Australian tourism. Tourism businesses no longer have the protection of JobKeeper or a rapid national vaccine rollout to help rebuild confidence in travel,” he said.

Mr Westaway said ATIC had three demands for the Federal Government including more funding for discount flights, targeted support for affected tourism businesses and a faster vaccine rollout.

“The Morrison Government must invest more in domestic discount air seats, which are marketable to all destinations including every capital city, to bring confidence to interstate travel.

“All capitals and our entire domestic flight network need to be eligible for discount fares through the Government’s Tourism Aviation Network Support Program to help reset our industry.

“Ongoing border restrictions require further targeted federal financial assistance to still struggling tourism businesses until the risks of the virus outbreak are reduced by the vaccine rollout.

“Australia’s national COVID-19 vaccine rollout must be sped up. We urge for a greater focus on immediately vaccinating key workers including front-line health, hotel quarantine and at airports.

“We repeat the call for national consistency across Federal and State Governments to get the national vaccine rollout efficiently moving and a unified response to declared virus hotpots.”

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