

24 May 2020

## Victoria's tourism industry has lift off!

Finally, the tourism industry in Victoria has a timeline for its reactivation, with Premier Daniel Andrews announcing today that the state's accommodation and attractions can welcome back visitors from 1 June.

**Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) Chief Executive Felicia Mariani** said, "Tourism operators across the state can breathe a sigh of relief today, knowing that at last, they have a reopen date to work towards and can commence preparations for how they will operate under any COVID-safe guidelines, with respect to clarity of density, distancing and hygiene protocols.

"This also means that our industry can look to be up and running in time for the Queen's Birthday long weekend and the upcoming school holidays, with a Victorian ski season being confirmed from 22 June. Also, with Victoria never having had any border closure issues, we are able to welcome interstate travellers back as well."

The tourism, events and hospitality industry has been hit hard by the implications of COVID-19 restrictions, and bushfires from early January. Projections indicate that these rolling crises will wipe off 72 per cent of the \$32.5 billion of tourism expenditure that had been achieved up to the end of 2019, with estimates of \$23.3 billion in lost expenditure resulting by the end of December 2020.

"Our sector has been slammed since New Year's Eve with the bushfire crisis destroying what should have been our peak summer season, when industry can generate as much as 50 to 60 per cent of their annual turnover; so, this easing of restrictions is vital to our recovery," Ms Mariani said.

The Premier stressed that easing these restrictions can occur as a result of the extensive testing the state has undertaken and the low rate of transmissions since 11 May. He also pointed out that definitive guidelines have been developed and government will be liaising with industry groups to ensure these protocols are understood and implemented properly.

"Our industry takes the obligation to ensure that we are doing everything possible to protect the health and safety of our customers, our staff and the communities in which we operate, very seriously; and the industry wants be very clear on what those guidelines will be."

According to research recently conducted by Tourism Australia, 51 per cent of Australians do not think it's safe to travel right now. As well, only 38 per cent of Victorians are prepared to take an intrastate or interstate trip in the next six months.

"Our industry is well aware that we have much work to do to gain the confidence of our customers that we are presenting a safe environment as we look to welcome them back.

"Having this date now, and knowing where we stand, is vital to our sector's preparations and ensuring that we re-open in the best possible position to set us up for success," Ms Mariani continued.

To make sure the industry understands its obligations, VTIC has developed guidelines that it can follow to ensure it is undertaking the best measures to safely prepare businesses.

“VTIC has compiled some basic protocols that can be adopted when getting businesses ready to operate in this ‘new normal’ that is being dictated by a COVID-safe world.

“We will be working closely with government officials this week to understand their proposed strategies and include any new procedures into the guidelines we’ll be sharing with industry.

“VTIC will be supporting our sector across the state in adjusting to these new operating procedures and ensure they can adapt successfully on the road to recovery,” Ms Mariani concluded.

**Media contact: Ellana Katos | 03 8662 5205 | 0400 976 889 [ekatos@victorianschamber.com.au](mailto:ekatos@victorianschamber.com.au)**