

# MEDIA RELEASE

## \$5.7 million boost for local tourism operators

**3 APRIL 2020**

The State Government has today announced a significant financial support package to help local tourism operators get through – and continue well past – the current COVID-19 crisis.

The \$5.7 million package is designed to help the tourism sector get through the crisis, as well as rebound strongly at the other end.

Funding to help small tourism businesses and to assist organisers of regional and community events form the bulk of the assistance, as well as dedicated digital training for tourism operators and a project designed to boost business resilience.

Today's announcement is part of the State Government's plan for supporting South Australian businesses and jobs through this period of uncertainty and to ensure they can be kickstarted on the other side.

The two major funding packages are the Small Tourism Business Grant Fund and the Regional Events Grant Fund. The Federal Government has also confirmed it would further support initiatives to boost the South Australian tourism sector.

South Australian Tourism Commission chief executive Rodney Harrex said supporting the state's tourism and events sector and the tens of thousands of people it employs was absolutely critical.

"We're all working to do everything we can to support the state's 18,000 tourism businesses to get through this pandemic and to be in the strongest possible position to be able to rebound as soon as it is safe to travel again," Mr Harrex said.

"By providing practical on-the-ground support for tourism businesses – on top of the financial support, we're not only mitigating the impacts of COVID-19, we're also building resiliency and upskilling operators to strengthen South Australian businesses and support them for the future.

"The sector employed more than 38,900 across the state, with the majority employed by small businesses. We know that tourism depends on its people and their knowledge and passion for what they do.

"This support package will help South Australian tourism operators directly, keep more of their people in jobs, grow our events and build capability in the sector to see that it is given the best chance at getting back to its former glory."

Mr Harrex said the SATC had continued to work with operators during the crisis, with a focus on promoting the sector on its digital platforms. The [#SeeSouthAustraliaFromHome](#) Facebook group has attracted nearly 3,000 followers in its first week, and the new SATV digital activity is set to showcase businesses that are adapting how they operate, through the [southaustralia.com](http://southaustralia.com) website.

"We've got a captive audience as people are at home and spend a lot more time on their devices. What better time to showcase all the great things that South Australia has to see, do and experience – both the businesses offering takeaway and online orders for the first time or virtual tours, and those that can be bookmarked as incredible experiences when we come out the other side of this," he said.

SATV will support local tourism operators and businesses who have restructured how they operate in light of social distancing measures, and who are now offering new innovative ways to still purchase or experience their product or service, from the confines of their home. A trial live chat last weekend highlighted the value of organic, engaging content – a real-time chat with the iconic Rodney Fox reached more than 73,000 people, and was viewed 28,000 times - see [Rodney Fox Shark Expeditions](#)

#### **Tourism funding and support programs – details:**

There are two funds available to small businesses and regional event organisers:

##### **Small Tourism Business Grant Fund**

- Provide financial support for sole traders and small tourism businesses with an annual turnover greater than \$100,000 and less than \$1 million who have experienced financial loss as a result of COVID-19. The program aims to provide an immediate injection of funds to boost the cash flow for small tourism businesses that will relieve the burden of reduced business during this period of uncertainty.
- Applicants may receive a one-off cash payment, to offset relevant business expenses.
- For businesses with turnover between \$100,000 and \$500,000, a payment up to a maximum of \$5,000 will be available, while businesses with a turnover between \$500,000 and \$1m, a payment up to a maximum of \$10,000 will be available.
- Grants will be awarded on a merit basis, with the applications evaluated by an Assessment Team from the South Australian Tourism Commission. Regional quotas will be applied to ensure that the benefits of the program are felt across the state.

##### **Regional Events Grant Fund**

- Provide financial support for small to medium regional event (including festival) organisers who have experienced financial loss due to the forced cancellation or postponement of an event staged between 16 March 2020 and 31 August 2020, as a result of COVID-19. These events are broken into two groups – Regional Events and Community Events, as outlined below.
- The funding will match dollar for dollar any unrecoverable expenses incurred by the event organiser up to the values detailed below until the funding is exhausted.
- Applicants under the **Regional Events** category may receive a grant of **up to a maximum \$5,000**, subject to the losses incurred.
- Applicants under the **Community Events** category may receive a grant **up to a maximum \$2,000**, subject to the losses incurred.

In addition, the SATC has developed other programs which will assist the industry more widely. These are:

##### **Digital Training Program**

Online training programs focused on supporting and upskilling tourism businesses to market themselves online. The training programs – to be delivered by local experienced practitioners – will cover fundamental digital skills such as optimising search outcomes, managing social media, online booking systems and online marketing. The training programs will comprise a series of online modules, including webinars, workshops, toolkits and templates, with each module targeting a specific area of online operations.

Tourism businesses and events, currently listed on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) and with operations turning over to \$2 million annually, are invited to register to participate in the online courses. Access will be provided to the full suite of training modules. Each module will incorporate a training session and will provide online support to participants for questions.

Places in the program will be awarded in date order of receipt of registration, with up to 600 places for businesses available. Pre-registrations can be lodged through [tourism.sa.gov.au](http://tourism.sa.gov.au)

##### **Regional Funding Support Program**

Additional grant funding of \$10,000 to regional tourism organisations (RTOs) to be provided immediately. The additional grant funding is designed to assist RTOs maintain their brand and viability as well as assist tourism businesses in their regions.

The SATC has an existing program that provides RTOs with \$20,000 annually towards marketing campaigns on a matching dollar for dollar basis. The \$10,000 provided by the SATC is in addition to the existing funding, but funding does not need to be matched by the RTOs.

## **Resilience and Rebound Project**

Measures introduced to reduce the severity of the pandemic have stemmed the flow of tourists to South Australia from overseas, and now interstate and intrastate. This translates to an extended period of zero customers for many tourism operators, in addition to forward uncertainty as to when these measures will be lifted.

The Resilience and Rebound project will provide business support for the South Australian tourism sector to help work through the COVID-19 crisis and ensure they have the necessary tools to assist with recovery post event crisis.

The program will contain various elements including fact sheets and video tutorials to be accessible via the SATC Corporate website over the coming weeks. These tools will provide a diverse range of highly relevant tourism related information to assist the visitor economy with the immediate challenges it is facing, as well as a focus on post crisis.

For more details, eligibility, dates, terms and conditions, and to apply, visit [tourism.sa.gov.au](https://tourism.sa.gov.au)

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