

Agents should brace for more travel impacts

Adelaide travel agency owner Max Najar says agents should expect the unexpected in a rapidly evolving tourism landscape.

Agents should expect more external impacts, not less, as the new era of instant communication brings with it misinformation, misuse of AI and other circumstances that no traveller can control or predict.

The ecosystem of travel is reliant on many external factors like weather conditions, political eruptions, wars, travel mishaps, transportation and accommodation changes and cancellations, companies going broke – all required to link specific travel components into a seamless and coordinated chronological pattern to allow travellers to reach their destinations and have their desired experience.

When such an external factor eventuates, there needs to be a quick reaction to rectify issues in a timely manner, requiring fast communications layered with efficient rebooking and/or arranging alternative travel plans.

To do this component by component, via different sources, can be a nightmare – especially if that source is dependent upon staff who have left employment, or staff who cannot be contacted, or if technology has failed, or even if monetary transactions cannot be fulfilled in a timely manner.

I suggest relying upon one solo (human) travel advisor that has initially advised, researched, booked and issued all travel components to be able to facilitate and coordinate all that is needed in an efficient and effective manner.

I have been involved in hundreds of instances to assist clients or assist other agency clients in managing both domestic and international unforeseen circumstances. The revelation of required personal details, lost time, stress, and huge financial and interpersonal costs in many cases would shock most of the travelling public.

If an external factor affects travel components, the benefit of having a trusted '**one source**' contractible human contact cannot be underestimated.

Those travellers that do complex travel bookings all by themselves or need to rely upon third parties, especially if based overseas, may need to decipher international laws or engage overseas legal advice.

The final aspect is that some travel insurers may not allow claims to be paid if circumstances do not comply with their PDS conditions or if a policy is issued after an external event becomes common knowledge.

Here are some other things that agents should be aware of...

Other things to expect

There is likely to be a continued crackdown on overtourism, with destinations allowing less humans to visit, smaller cruise ships given license to venture specific regions, higher prices to enter tourist places, the staggering of certain iconic visitation times, disallowing large groups to visit places, restricted ability to use photography, the disallowing of perfumes when trekking, restricting rental vehicle sizes,

barring any walking or touching structures, disallowing flash photography, utilising smaller buses, and the list goes on.

These are just some of the future standards and rulings that will apply in many destinations as tourism booms and local places and governments do what they can to reduce or annul the huge impact that we humans make on the environment.

Not only will there be a reduction in numbers, sizes and time periods but also a deliberate (huge) increase in costs as the world continues to open via new transport avenues and extra millions of humans and monetary investments are added to the travel and tourism industries. Travel now, not later, if you can!

Can Australia handle more visitors?

Now, let's turn our focus to inbound tourism...

It is important to consider whether Australia and New Zealand can cater to a huge visitor influx as both the Indian and Chinese governments place us onto their 'the countries that we recommend you consider travelling into' listings?

Expect more incoming flights from all regions of India and China provinces that will feed into and challenge not only our inbound language skills but also affect the food we offer, the transportation efficiencies and signage words we use plus the opening hours of our service industry.

Exporting our wines and foods will also be critical to allow these visitors to positively promote our countries as they invest more '**new** money' into our economy.

I say **new money** as I have always firmly believed that governments have been amiss and must focus and understand that inbound tourism, for pleasure or for business, are the future money investors that will keep us as a prominent rich country.

Simply put, **new money** wasn't here yesterday but is here today. Maybe we need politicians who represent tourism and treasury to be well-versed in these portfolios and not just given these roles as a gesture.

The critical elements of attracting and keeping new money investors may be by financing more free language courses via Workers' Educational Association (WEA) or other locations, placing more multilingual signages and training schemes to enhance what we offer the inbound traveller.

It is also many of these new investors who establish business connections and investments via major cargo exports that increase our local workforce employment opportunities by adding **new money** into our country. **The takeaway here – travel and tourism remain huge avenues to bring money into our country and create extra jobs.**



Max Najar is the Managing Director of Adelaide-based Axis Travel, an agency which has now been around for nearly 50 years.