

Local Travel Expert Max Najar Celebrates Global Travel Advisor Day
Global Travel Advisors Day: Australians rely on expert advice as travel gets tougher to navigate

7 May 2025: Local travel expert Max Najar, Director and Manager of Axis Travel in South Australia is one of many accredited travel professionals celebrating Global Travel Advisor Day today with some essential advice for travellers.

From rising scams to border complications and delayed refunds, today's travel landscape is filled with challenges many Australians don't see coming until it's too late. Travel advisors are trained to manage these risks, ensuring every trip is properly planned, protected, and supported when things go wrong.

Axis Travel has been a longstanding and respected part of the South Australian community since 1978 based in Glenunga, South Australia. As more Australians seek personalised, expert-led guidance, Axis Travel continues to deliver travel services and grow and serve new generations of clients with professionalism and care.

In 2024, more than 70% of international flights and over 90% of corporate travel were booked through accredited agents. Travel advisors helped millions of Australians avoid costly mistakes, navigate crises, and stay on track.

In 2024 alone, ATIA members booked \$13.5 Billion TTV of retail bookings, \$11.8 Billion of Corporate Bookings and \$5.6 Billion of Land Operations. Typically, at least 70% of all international air sales in Australia are through our members, and over 90% of corporate sales (medium and large businesses), rather than directly through airlines. Whereas with cruises, 73% of travellers use travel advisors to book.

Behind every booking is the work of small, expert-led teams, 92% of them small businesses, 72% of them female-led, offering trusted, personalised guidance that online tools can't match. And at the heart of each ATIA accredited business are the team members that make each travel experience special.

Australians recognise the value of booking with an accredited travel advisor - someone who understands the fine print, the logistics, and the risks that can turn a dream holiday into a disaster.

This Global Travel Advisors Day, ATIA proudly celebrates the contribution of our members.

QUOTES ATTRIBUTABLE TO ATIA CEO DEAN LONG:

"We are in the golden age of travel professionals, as more Australians, many of whom were burnt by COVID-travel experiences, turn to expert advisors for complex travel needs and crisis support."

"Global Travel Advisors Day is an opportunity to recognise the incredible work accredited travel professionals do every day, creating unforgettable travel experiences and providing trusted support when it matters most. In today's more complex and fast-moving travel environment, expert advice has never been more valuable. Our members are delivering tailored journeys, practical solutions and peace of mind to millions of Australians each year."

QUOTES FROM ATIA MEMBERS:

Max Najar, Director and Manager, Axis Travel (Glenunga, South Australia):

"In today's ever-changing and complex travel climate, the value of a trusted travel advisor has never been clearer. We're seeing clients turned away at borders for applying for incorrect visas, not having proper documentation or itineraries – things that we always provide. A visa doesn't guarantee entry, so the stakes are high. More travel insurers also do not compensate for losses incurred. A

professional travel advisor uses their toolkit of expertise and experience to ensure that you're properly prepared and protected, so your holiday or business travel is as stress-free as possible at the immigration counter."

Chris Watson, Managing Director, Chris Watson Travel Group, Weston Cruise and Travel, Chris Watson Travel (Tamworth and Canberra)

"In a world of online options and endless choices, booking with a travel agent offers something the internet simply can't - personalised service, expert advice, and genuine care. Our client numbers are increasing, new clients are coming into the agency for the reasons our existing clients have been, some telling us horror stories of not booking with an agent in the past. Our clients value knowing they have a dedicated professional advocating for them every step of the way, from planning to when things don't go as expected. It's not just about booking a trip; it's about peace of mind and having a real person at the end of the phone or the other side of a desk.

Adrienne Witteman, Managing Director, Trendsetter Travel & Cruise Centre (Northwood/Longueville NSW):

"When a car took out the front of my agency last week, I was still waiting on the builder to make things safe yet two clients literally walked over broken glass to see me. They looked in and asked, 'Are you open?' I said, 'Yes, but please be careful.' That's how much people value real, expert travel advice. In that moment, it couldn't have been clearer: Australians still want real, personal travel advice. On the ground, the demand for experienced travel advisors is unshakable."

Anna McMurtrie, Managing Director, Wentworth Travel (Double Bay, Sydney NSW):

"Today's travellers aren't just looking for a booking. They're looking for a partner they can trust. After 40 years in the business, we've seen that genuine expertise, personal service, and strong industry connections matter more than ever. When things go wrong, our clients know we'll be there with a solution. That's the real value of a travel expert. It's not just about getting there, it's about knowing someone's got your back every step of the way."

Andrew Gillard, Managing Director, Darebin Travel (Yarrambat, Victoria):

"The role of the travel advisor has never been more vital. At Darebin Travel, we've seen the industry evolve over four decades from print brochures to personalised, tech-enabled service and we're still here because we adapt, we deliver, and we care. In an era of information overload, digital scams, and travel uncertainty, Australians are turning to trusted experts to guide them. Travel advisors aren't a thing of the past - we are the future of smarter, safer travel."

For media enquiries and interviews please contact LJ Loch at lj.loch@atia.travel or 0488 038 555

About ATIA (www.atia.travel):

The Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) is the peak body representing Australia's \$69 billion travel industry. ATIA represents the majority of Australian travel agents, corporate agents, tour operators, wholesalers and ITOs.

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An impressive 92% of ATIA members are small businesses, with women making up 72% of the workforce.

ATIA administers the **ATIA Accredited program**, which is the largest and most representative accreditation scheme for travel businesses in Australia. ATIA represents over 1,120 ATIA Accredited members and over 28,000 employees nationwide, directly supporting 16.98 million Australian travellers every year.