



Hon. Mark McGowan MLA
Premier



Hon. Paul Papalia CSC MLA
Minister for Tourism

MEDIA STATEMENT

Wednesday, 13 May 2020

\$14.4 million package to support tourism industry and jobs

- New funding package to support and boost small tourism businesses
- Follows release of the WA Roadmap to get Western Australians back to work safely
- \$10.4 million Tourism Recovery Fund will provide one-off cash grants to assist thousands of businesses to adapt to new tourism landscape
- Further \$4 million Tourism Business Survival Grants to support businesses dealing with exceptionally difficult circumstances
- Initiative will assist tourism sector to refocus on the WA market
- Tourism WA developing new marketing campaign to promote WA destinations

The McGowan Government has launched a multimillion dollar recovery package to support small tourism operators around the State to adapt and refocus their businesses in the COVID-19 landscape.

COVID-19 has had profound and unprecedented impacts on Western Australian tourism, with thousands of small businesses around the State struggling with the impacts of travel restrictions.

With some regional travel and other restrictions being cautiously eased from Monday May 18, as part of the WA Roadmap, the State Government's Tourism Recovery Program will enable tourism operators to prepare for a staged return to business in a new environment.

The \$14.4 million initiative includes two funding programs - with an initial \$10.4 million in one-off cash grants for up to 1,600 individual small businesses around the State.

The \$6,500 grants will provide immediate support to eligible tourism operators including micro tourism businesses, such as sole traders and businesses with four or less employees, with annual taxable wages of less than \$1 million, including accommodation, attraction, tour and transport businesses.

The second, \$4 million Tourism Business Survival Grants package will be available for tourism operators dealing with exceptionally difficult circumstances - with grants of \$25,000-\$100,000 available.

The Survival Grants will target businesses located in parts of the State with more restrictive travel bans in place, or whose circumstances otherwise mean they will face a more difficult road to recovery. Businesses which deliver iconic experiences are also eligible to apply. A probity auditor would review the robust and transparent criteria-led application and panel assessment.

As part of the application process, businesses are required to submit a recovery and marketing plan to outline how the funding will be used and indicate how their product, service or experience could be adapted.

Businesses must have a valid Australian Business Number and be an active part of the WA tourism industry through membership of one of the State's eligible tourism organisations, or tourism accreditation programs.

The funding announcement follows the establishment of Tourism WA's dedicated COVID-19 Industry Support Team last month. The team has contacted hundreds of Western Australian tourism operators to offer help and support, while gathering information to help guide recovery initiatives.

More information on the Tourism Recovery Fund and the online application form can be found on Tourism WA's corporate website at:

<http://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/WATourismRecoveryProgram>

More information on the Tourism Business Survival Grants package, including how businesses can apply, will be released shortly.

The new Tourism Recovery Fund and Business Survival Grant package is on top of the McGowan Government's \$1.8 billion stimulus and relief package invested so far in response to COVID-19.

These measures have included payroll tax waivers to eligible small-to-medium sized business, one-off electricity credit and waiver of business licenses fees.

Comments attributed to Premier Mark McGowan:

"COVID-19 has been devastating for WA tourism - with thousands of small businesses impacted all around the State.

"Our hearts go out to everyone that has been impacted by this pandemic.

"This new funding package will help small tourism operators adjust and adapt their businesses away from targeting the international and interstate market and towards Western Australians.

"With the easing of regional travel restrictions it is anticipated thousands of Western Australians will be looking to travel around WA this year - and we want as many local businesses as possible benefiting from these opportunities.

"I want to acknowledge every Western Australian for their patience during this COVID-19 pandemic. It's been trying and nothing like any of us have ever experienced before.

"The broadened boundaries still impact areas including the regions north of our State and the Goldfields-Esperance region along with biosecurity regions and remote communities. The restrictions are in place to protect more vulnerable communities north of our State. Where we can alter these, we will.

"While it's starting to look more encouraging we're not out of the woods yet and every move and adjustment is made based on the best of health advice."

Comments attributed to Tourism Minister Paul Papalia:

"In only a few short months, WA tourism has gone from enjoying record international and interstate visitor numbers to a complete industry shutdown.

"The impact on the thousands of Western Australians who make their living in the sector has been severe.

"With international and interstate border restrictions expected to remain for some time, we are now focused on helping tourism operators to adjust their businesses to appeal to the intrastate market.

“The Tourism Recovery Fund will provide cash grants direct to these small businesses to help them reorganise and refocus to the new environment.

“For those dealing with the most exceptional and difficult circumstances - including those based in the north of the State - the Survival Grants package will deliver important relief.

“This much needed relief package will help the sector get back on its feet and reorganise for the intrastate market, as the State Government and Tourism WA continue planning for the next stage of recovery.”

Media contact: Ross Verne 6552 5600 or 0437 429 485