

APTRA asks governments across the Asia Pacific region for relief

By **Hibah Noor** on March, 26 2020 | Industry News



APTRA President Grant Fleming is asking members to reach out to government officials in the region to get across the important contribution the industry makes, and the need for help at this difficult time

While the airline industry has been more visible as collateral damage in the global fight against COVID-19, the travel retail industry is even more vulnerable; it is suffering even deeper cuts, as travel retail relies entirely on human traffic as opposed to being able to make up some shortfall in cargo, as airlines can.

In Asia Pacific, APTRA is approaching the policy makers of 45 governments and hundreds of government administrators in the region to recognize the important economic contribution of the travel retail industry and its uniquely fragile position vis-à-vis the current global restrictions.

The association is seeking COVID-19 fiscal relief and funding across ministerial offices including aviation, maritime, retail, F&B and tourism industries. APTRA is calling on each of its members to contact the appropriate local and regional government agents to reinforce the message of the industry's economic importance to the greater network of stakeholders and decision-makers.

APTRA is working closely with DFWC and, with the assistance of Hume Brophy, the associations are creating a plan to monitor government packages and share knowledge as best practice in appeal to other governments.

The importance of Asia Pacific travel retail

The Asia Pacific region has the greatest share of sales in this industry, and travel retail's vital role in economies and employment in the region is clearly shown within a report recently commissioned by APTRA and DFWC, "The Economic Impact of Duty Free & Travel Retail in Asia Pacific." Research showed that in 2017, the industry provided over 300,000 jobs and contributed almost US\$15 billion to GDP. Members are encouraged to use this report in their communication with governments on this matter.

Grant Fleming, President of APTRA, says the association is sending a clear and simple message that financial support for the entire Duty Free and Travel Retail industry is required. "All governments and agencies in charge need to understand the importance of our industry for their economies and should correctly apportion and prioritize financial efforts quickly. APTRA's mission is to strengthen, nurture and protect our industry. There has been no greater need for a call to action than now. As an association we believe we can voice the needs of industry via a unique stage for the entire industry and not merely seen as a group of businesses. This approach can charge the appeal."

The help of members

Since APTRA's inception 15 years ago, the association's membership has continued to grow, and it is currently at the largest and strongest yet. As APTRA's voice becomes louder in support of its members, it now requests that these members also raise their collective voice to governments at this critical time.

"Our objective is simple: we are seeking commitment from governments to apply financial support to the duty free and travel retail industry by including us within the designated community of essential services deemed vital in supporting the aviation, maritime and tourism industries that are so critical to the region," says Fleming. "Let's be in no doubt of the imperatives in this drive for action. Our industry dynamics are vastly different to domestic market retail because we are dependent on the return in passenger traffic. This campaign is fundamentally about securing financial support for industry survival and we are encouraging our association members in different countries to get behind it and use their existing connections to deliver the message to their governments."