



“Extend JobKeeper for travel agents “ – Bill Shorten

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The desperate plight of travel agents in Australia has been rammed home to the Federal thanks to an ongoing campaign by **leading South Australian travel agents. Max Najar of Axis Travel** believes the industry must now stand up for itself rather than leave the job to the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA). Najar recently suggested to **top SA Adelaide radio announcer Leon Byner** that he should follow up on a speech given by former Labor leader Bill Shorten in Federal Parliament where Shorten said JobKeeper should be extended for travel agents.

“I recently met with a group of travel agents from my own electorate and Mr Darren Rudd of AFTA, their peak body. They made the directness of their plight very plain emotionally, truthfully, factually, painfully,” Mr Shorten told Parliament.

During Byner’s subsequent radio interview with Shorten, the Shadow Minister for Government Services said **no other group is harder hit than agents**. “There are travel agencies in every high street in Australia and since the international borders have closed they have no income – but have been hard at work trying to get 10 billion dollars back that people have paid for trips or flights.

“**What we have in fact is a group of small businesses that have been working for nothing**. Byner: The government is responsible for the plight of travel agents – so should they be further compensated?” Shorten: I think Jobkeeper needs to be extended past December for agents, landlords need to be sympathetic and where state governments are promoting tourism they need to involve local agents rather than international platforms...perhaps the SA Government could consider this.

According to The Sunday Mail, JobKeeper will end on March 28 next year however many businesses will have no hope of returning to normal operations before March 2021. “Think aviation, travel agents, tourism operators and transport services who all rely on overseas travellers who are still banned from visiting Australia. It is likely these bans will won’t ease until later in 2021. **These owners and employees cannot be blamed for their predicament – it’s the Federal and State Governments that have set the rules.**”