

Consultation Paper – 2022 ATAS Charter Review

Review of framework documentation for the AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS)

You are invited to provide feedback

This consultation paper seeks feedback on the AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) framework documentation namely the ATAS Code of Conduct and Charter. These framework documents establish the rules outlining the responsibilities of or proper practices for participation in ATAS and the administration of the scheme.

Please see the Submissions section in this document on how to make a submission.

Contents

1. Background
2. Review
3. Consultation Period
4. Submission Details

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 On 7 December 2012, a majority of state and territory Ministers for Consumer Affairs approved a Travel Industry Transition Plan (Transition Plan) which will result in the phased ending of the national cooperative scheme regulating travel agents. This will include the winding up of the Travel Compensation Fund (TCF) and the abolition of the requirement for travel agents to be licensed by their respective states.

On 1 July 2014, the Australian Federation of Travel Agents Limited (ACN 001 444 275) (**AFTA**) established the AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (**ATAS**).

ATAS is a voluntary scheme and its **Charter** and **Code** of Conduct were drafted using the **ACCC** guidelines for developing effective voluntary industry codes of conduct as a reference.

1.2 The objectives of **ATAS** are to:

- a) Establish a nationally recognised accreditation scheme for travel agents that demonstrates to consumers the professional standing of those agents within the travel industry;
- b) Maintain high standards of service delivery by requiring **ATAS** Participants to meet the requirements set out in the **Charter** as well as the **Code**, and provide for suitable consequences when these requirements are not met;
- c) Inform consumers about the benefits of using an **ATAS**-accredited travel agent when booking travel;
- d) Facilitate the resolution of disputes arising between Participants and consumers; and
- e) Ensure the professionalism of the travel agent industry into the future.

1.3 Participants in the scheme are travel intermediaries who are accredited under **ATAS** being domiciled, registered or incorporated in Australia, and providing a travel product or service on behalf of a travel supplier. This includes, but is not limited to, a travel agent, travel management company, aggregator, distributor, online travel agent, inbound tour operator, wholesaler and a consolidator.

2. REVIEW

The ATAS Charter provides a commitment from the **AFTA Board** to review the **ATAS Charter** and **Code** in 2021 and every 3 years pursuant to clause 3.3(a) of the **ATAS Charter**.

- 2.1 Pursuant to clause 3.3(b) a review of the Charter and Code will be conducted according to the Terms of Reference for the Review as approved by the Board as required.
- 2.2 The aim of the review is to receive feedback and suggested improvements from interested parties in regard to:
 - (a) the effectiveness of the **ATAS** scheme in achieving the objectives mentioned in paragraph 1.2 above; and
 - (b) the operation of the ATAS scheme.

The review will be limited to the ATAS Charter and Code, including all appendix (ACAC Terms of Reference and Solvency Definitions).

- 2.3 An appointment will be made for an Independent Reviewer to review submissions from interested parties and then provide a report to the **AFTA Board** for its consideration.
- 2.4 The outcomes of the Review will be published on the **AFTA website** including all submissions made during the consultation period, the Reviewer's recommendations and the **AFTA Board's** response to those recommendations.
- 2.5 The **AFTA Board** will make any amendments to the **Charter, Code, or the ACAC Terms of Reference** which are warranted by its response to the review.

3. CONSULTATION PERIOD

- 3.1 All interested parties are invited to make a submission to this review.
- 3.1.1 All submissions must be in written form and either mailed or emailed to AFTA prior to the deadline. All submissions will be made public in keeping with the transparent approach to the review that AFTA has adopted.
- 3.2 Timeframe – the consultation period will open 11 April 2022 and close on 8 May 2022 at 5pm AEST with the following milestones proposed to be observed:

Terms of reference released	24 March 2022
Submission period open	11 April 2022
Submissions close	8 May 2022
Report provided to AFTA Board	3 June 2022

4. SUBMISSION DETAILS

Copies of the **Charter** and **Code** are available on the **AFTA website** at:

<https://www.afta.com.au/atas/scheme-governance/atascharterreview>

Submissions are due by 8 May 2022 5pm AEST and no submission received after that date will be considered in this review.

Submissions can be made via the following methods:

Via email: afta@afta.com.au

Please indicate Subject as: **2022 ATAS Charter Review Submission**

Via Post to:

AFTA – Review Submission

Level 31

31 Market Street

Sydney NSW 2000

All queries should be directed to Naomi Menon, Head of Compliance and Operations at naomi@afta.com.au or on (02) 9287 9900.