

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR REVIEW OF ATAS CHARTER 2022

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 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**. The 2021 Review was postponed until 2022 due to COVID-19.

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 a 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

3.1 All interested parties are invited to make a submission to this review.

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. Submission details will be released once a Reviewer has been appointed.

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
Reviewer Report provided to AFTA Board	3 June 2022

4. In reviewing the ATAS Charter and Code the reviewer should consider:

4.1 The **ATAS Eligibility Criteria** – Are the criteria sufficient to ensure the objectives of **ATAS** are achieved? Should changes be made to the criteria? If so what changes are recommended?

4.2 The **ATAS Charter** – Does the **ATAS Charter** set out the objectives, rules and participation arrangements appropriately? Should consideration be given to amending the **Charter**? If so, what amendments are recommended?

4.3 **Code of Conduct** – Does the **ATAS Code** of Conduct set out appropriately the standards of good practice that participants must follow in their day to day practices? Should consideration be given to amending the **Code**? If so, what amendments are recommended?

4.4 **The ACAC**– The effectiveness of the **ACAC** in:
a) the resolution of Complaints referred to it; and
b) structured to be able to operate efficiently and effectively.

Should consideration be made to amending the **ACAC**'s Terms of Reference or role within **ATAS**? If so what is recommended?

The ATAS Charter and Code of Conduct can be viewed on the AFTA website at the below links:

[ATAS Charter](#)

[ATAS Code of Conduct](#)

Questions

Any questions in relation to these Terms of Reference can be directed to Naomi Menon, AFTA Head of Compliance and Operations at naomi@afta.com.au or please phone at (02) 9287 9900.