



ATAS Charter Review

2022



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Respondent #66: Meryl Edwards - Travel Design

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Respondent #68: Sue Holmes - Carine Travel Bug

Respondent #69: Yvonne Lazarow - Yvonne Lazarow Travel

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Respondent #72: Doug Norton - TJTNTL Pty Ltd

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**Respondent #75: Anne Peirce -
Helloworld Travel Bucchus Marsh**

**Respondent #76: Lisa Miles -
Travel Crew (Rockhampton)**

**Respondent #77: Kerri Karayan -
Snowscene**

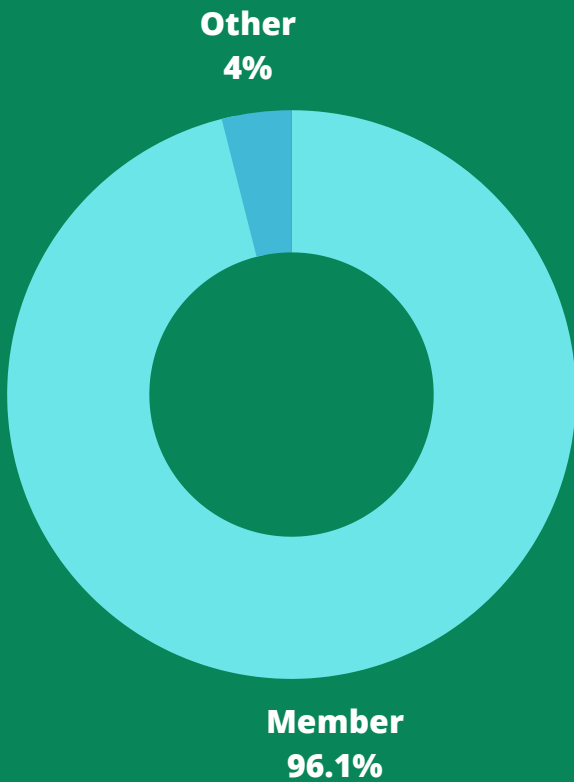
**Respondent #78: Dennis Bunnik -
Bunnik Tours**

**Respondent #79: David Smyth -
Forward Travel**

**Respondent #80: Grant -
TravelManagers Australia Pty
Limited**

**Respondent #81: Brett Jardine -
Council of Australian Tour
Operators**

Make-up of respondents



Party	Response %	Response #
Consumer/ Consumer body	0%	0
AFTA/ ATAS Member	96.05%	73
Other	3.95%	3

Q1. The objective of ATAS are to:

(a) Establish a nationally recognised accreditation scheme for travel agents that demonstrates to consumer their professional standing within the travel industry;

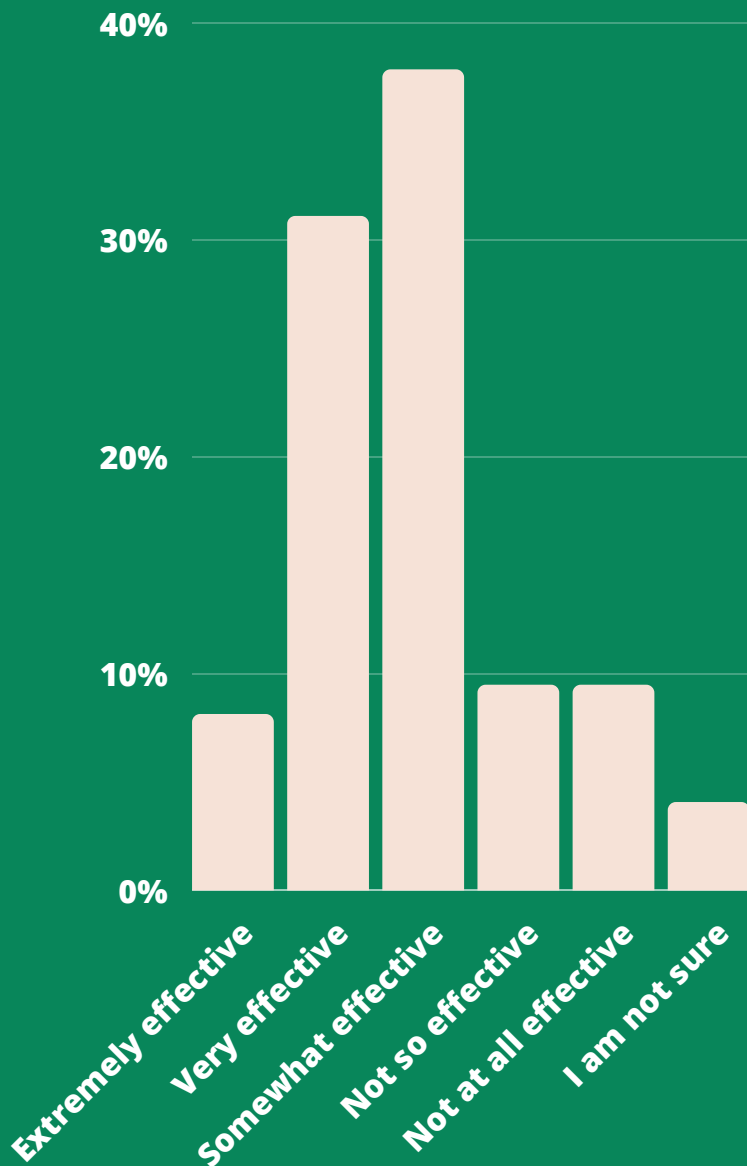
(b) Maintaining high standards of service delivery by requiring ATAS Participants to meet the requirements set out this Charter as well as the Code, and providing for suitable consequences when these requirements are not met

(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

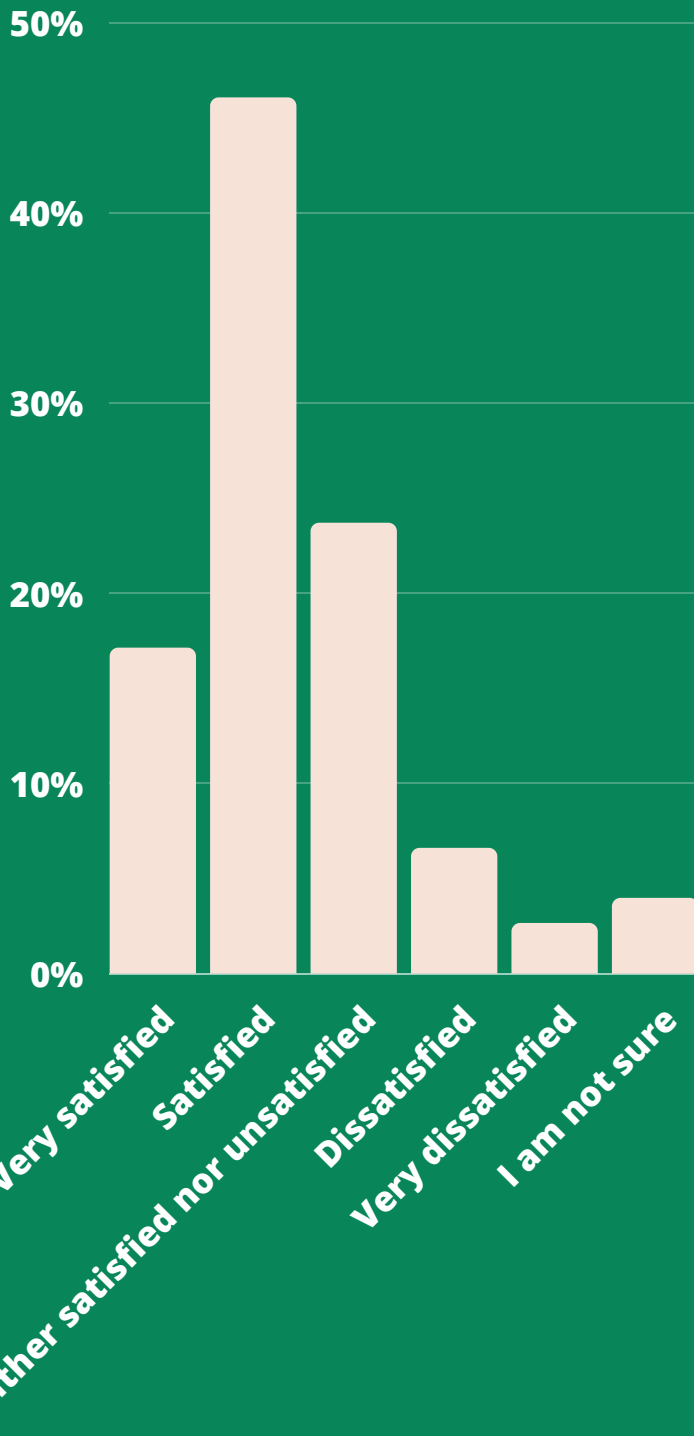
(e) Ensure the professionalism of the travel intermediary industry in the future

Does the Code currently meet its objectives?



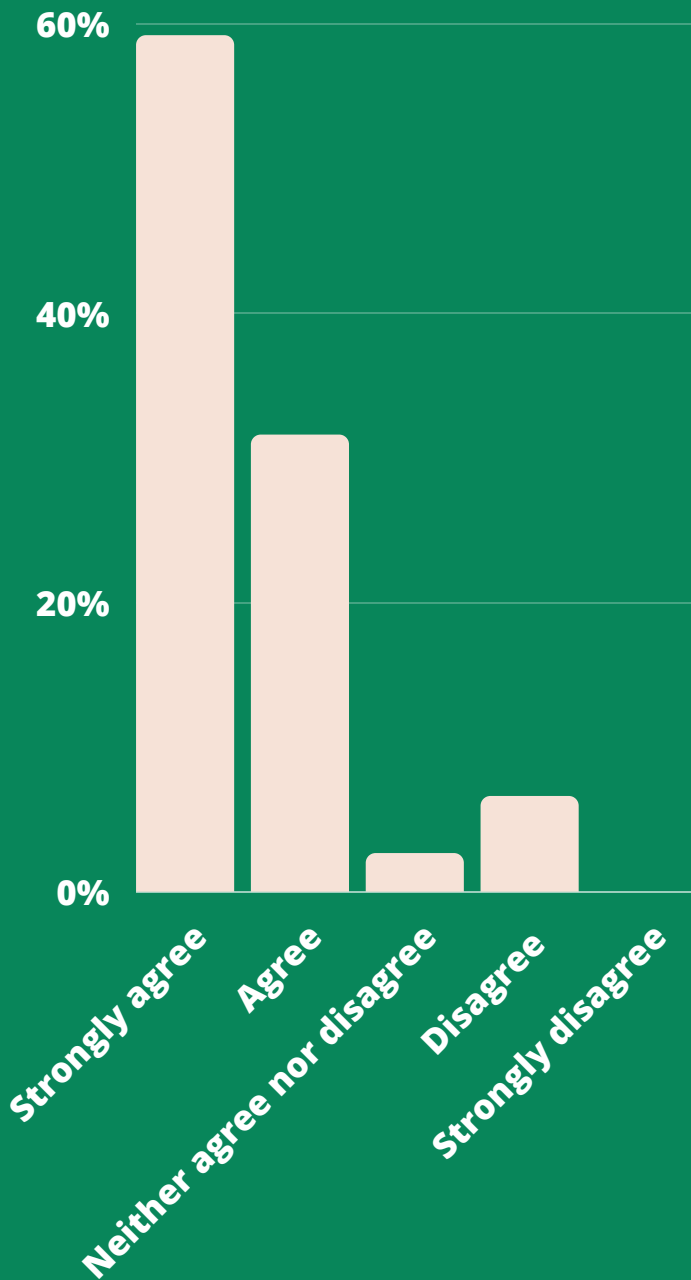
Answers	Response %	Response #
Extremely effective	9.21%	7
Very effective	31.58%	24
Somewhat effective	31.58%	24
Not so effective	14.47%	11
Not at all effective	10.53%	8
I am not sure	2.63%	2

Q2. Are you satisfied with the ATAS Eligibility Criteria



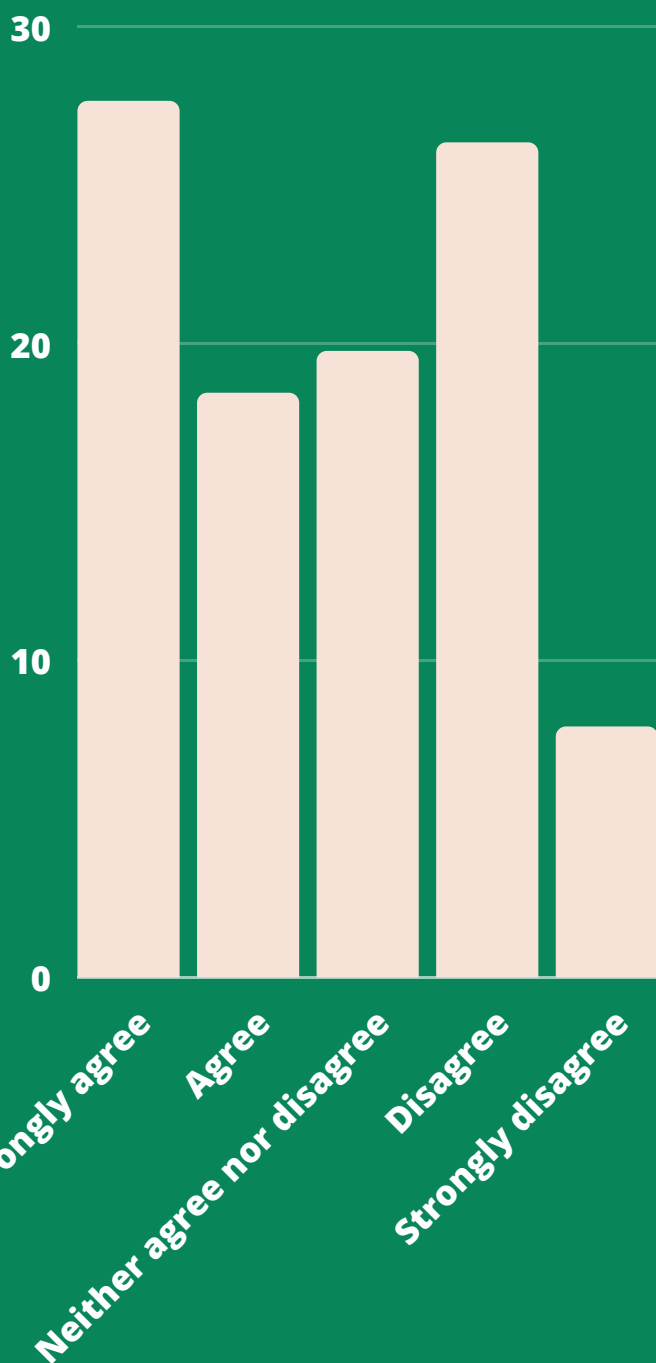
Answers	Response %	Response #
Very satisfied	17.11%	13
Satisfied	46.05%	35
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	23.68%	18
Dissatisfied	6.58%	5
Very dissatisfied	2.63%	2
I am not sure	3.95%	3

Q3. Currently, the ATAS Charter requires the setting up of a client account for start businesses. Should all ATAS Participants require a client trust account?



Answers	Response %	Response #
Strongly Agree	59.21%	45
Agree	31.58%	24
Neither agree nor agree	2.63%	2
Disagree	6.58%	5
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0

Q4. Should ATAS Participants be required to have annual audited accounts?

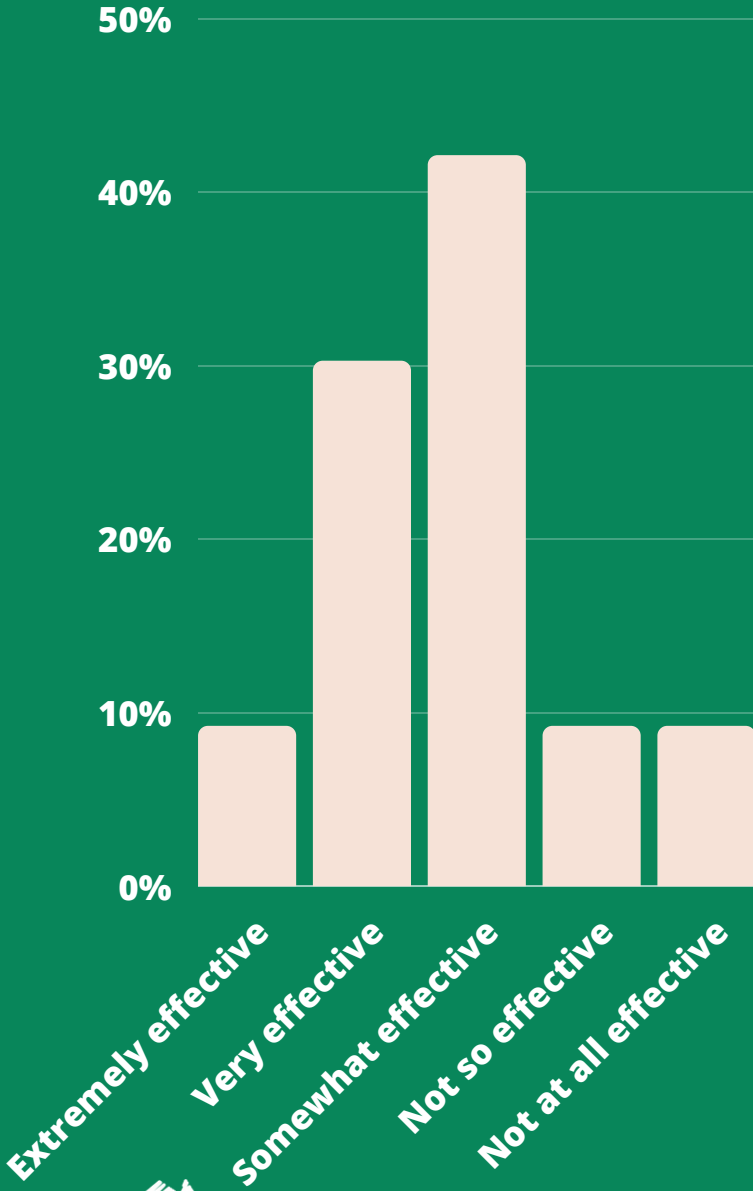


Answers	Response %	Response #
Extremely effective	27.63%	21
Very effective	18.42%	14
Somewhat effective	19.74%	15
Not so effective	26.32%	20
Not at all effective	7.89%	6

Q5. ATAS is open to all 'Travel Intermediaries. This is defined to include travel agents, travel management companies, aggregator, distributor, online travel agent, inbound tour operator, wholesaler and consolidator. ATAS is overseen by a governance team incorporating:

- AFTA CEO**
- ATAS Compliance Manager**
- ATAS Compliant Appeal Committee (ACAC)**
- AFTA Board**

Do you believe this existing governance structure is effective?



Answers	Response %	Response #
Extremely effective	9.21%	7
Very effective	30.26%	23
Somewhat effective	42.11%	32
Not so effective	9.21%	7
Not at all effective	9.21%	7

Q6. Other feedback regarding the ATAS Charter



The objectives of the current ATAS charter is clearly focused on travel agents. If the scheme is to remain as a travel agent scheme, no changes required, AFTA is doing a great job. There is an opportunity to engage with the wider industry and create a formal industry accreditation scheme that is inclusive of ALL suppliers, tour operators, wholesalers and travel agents. This MUST include cruise lines and airlines that also act as tour operators and wholesalers when packaging 3rd party product with their own assets. Expansion of ATAS to become the AUSTRALIAN (or Australasian) Travel Accreditation Scheme with shared input/ownership across all sectors (under AFTA administration) would be welcome. Compulsory membership of the travel agent association (AFTA) by tour operators, wholesalers, inbound operators, airlines, cruise lines and other suppliers to have access to ATAS will continue to restrict growth of the scheme which is counter-productive. - **Brett Jardine (CATO)**

Our position on ATAS, the accreditation process and consumer protection have been well communicated to AFTA. We would be happy to meet to share our concerns once again. - **Grant Campbell (Travel Managers Australia)**

The governance of ATAS is very narrow (AFTA board which represent the travel agency sector only) yet the scope of membership (travel intermediaries) is broad. Non-travel agency members are not represented on the board and in many cases are members of a scheme which is governed and controlled by their customers. This creates significant risks around conflict of interest. Also whilst the list of travel intermediaries is long it does not include tour operators nor cruise lines who operate shore excursions and sell wholesale packages. - **Dennis Bunnik (Bunnik Tours)**

Current ATAS is a waste of time, has no positive effect on my business and fees are waste of my hard earned. - **Trevor Fernandes (Wildlife Safari)**

Q6. Other feedback regarding the ATAS Charter

Still not happy about Webjet having a seat on the board. That decision was wrong. - **Lisa Miles (Travel Crew Rockhampton)**

To be reflected at a licensing and marketed strongly as security to our clients. - **Annie Peirce (Helloworld Travel Bacchus Marsh)**

Why are fees going to triple this year and there is still no insurance coverage. - **Greg Cooke (Helloworld Travel Waurin Ponds)**

What exactly is it? It operates as a small boys' club, provides nothing to the customer, and just makes it's members feel good about themselves. - **Doug Norton (TJTNTL Pty Ltd)**

Thank you for your support! - **Yvonne Lazarow (Yvonne Lazarow Travel)**

Figures required are often 12months out of date, which does not give true indication of solvency. Perhaps renewal should be December to give everyone time to finalise the last financial year. - **Sue Holmes (Carine Travel Bug)**

Happy with the current charter. - **Dianne Garbin (Floreat World of Travel)**

Q6. Other feedback regarding the ATAS Charter

Needs promotion - **Robyn Flanagan (Wauchope Travel & Helloworld Taree)**

ATAS needs to be workable and reliable. Cost is a factor, but should not be reduced if the strength of ATAS is reduced. Do not reduce the benchmark by with membership is granted. - **Meryl Edwards (Travel Design)**

ATAS is useless when an Agent, Wholesaler or Airline goes broke. The TCF should never have been shutdown. - **Harry Kopelis (Jetway Travel)**

Please refer to my submission sent to: afta@afta.com.au Subject: 2022 ATAS Charter Review Submission. - **David Walker (ITC Pacific Pty Ltd)**

It is very difficult for any travel agent other than a representative of one of the big brands to stand for election. Independent Travel Agents can only put themselves forward if they are members of Express, so the Board is not representative of a huge number of agents. - **Steven Cairns (Liberty Tours)**

Make us look more professional, having to do updates and be more accountable.. eg Trust account. - **Sandra Paddick (Helloworld Travel Kadina)**

Q6. Other feedback regarding the ATAS Charter



Thank you for all your support especially over the past two years. - **Julie Barns (Travelworks Cruise and Travel)**

A CLIENT ACCOUNT SHOULD BE ABSOLUTELY MANDATORY AND INCOME ONLY TAKEN FROM THE ACCOUNT WHEN THE CLIENT TRAVELS - **Stephen Cameron (AFRICAN WILDLIFE SAFARIS)**

I'm for less bureaucracy, not more and while I don't condone cowboys in the industry nor do I think that ATAS should become an ex-officio police office. The framework needs to focus on the minimum needed to give confidence to consumers without getting increasingly overbearing. - **Adrienne Witteman (Trendsetter Travel & Cruise Centre Pty Ltd)**

One of the best customer services in AUS - **Fred Elias (Ten Group)**

More protection from supplier insolvency. - **Fabio (Helloworld Travel)**

We have to keep the appearance of a strong body & self regulating to be respected & be able to accordingly deflect outside criticism & attack (govt) that would cost us dearly. - **Tom McGann (McGann Travel)**

Q6. Other feedback regarding the ATAS Charter

We have to keep the appearance of a strong body & self regulating to be respected & be able to accordingly deflect outside criticism & attack (govt) that would cost us dearly. - **Tom McGann (McGann Travel)**

I do not think ATAS has achieved significant recognition with the public. e.g. none of our customers has ever shown any interest in whether we are ATAS accredited or not. - **Geoffrey Batten (Adventures Unlimited)**

I think the public need to be made aware that not all travel agents are equal. There are larger OTAs that are not members and with held refunds for unacceptable periods of time over the last two years. I need to see a point of difference in being a member versus not being a member and those benefits need to translate to sales. I am not convinced of the benefits to my business. We have always conducted ourselves ethically. - **Paul Graham (Just Cruises Pty Ltd)**

Provide closer scrutiny to home based agents especially with skills currency and Insurances for consumer protection, also inspections of premises for consumer protection eg if a dog is on-site. Safety issues are huge if the consumer damages property or is injured. What protection standards are in place for the home based operations. Agents should be required to work in offices to be seen as more professional. The home based agents should undergo more mandatory requirements. - **Lindy Herron (SOUTH COAST CRUISE AND TRAVEL)**

Perhaps go back to have a compulsory membership of AFTA and ATAS to be able to sell Travel...at the moment what do we have?? - **NICHOLAS MISSIKOS (OUR WORLD TRAVEL)**

Q6. Other feedback regarding the ATAS Charter

I have a trust account and a CPA accountant. I don't need the burden of an auditor. If you requested a copy of client trust bank statements for each quarter to be included in the annual lodgement, combined with their sales reporting, you would be able to get a pretty good idea if someone was not using the trust account correctly. Just balance page. Your charter mentions training but that is the biggest problem with the industry at the moment. There are way to many "agents" who use FB group platforms to ask questions and seek advice. This shows an unwillingness to do the work and research and therefore learn. Surely a passenger books with someone because they think they know what they are doing and are professional. Imagine if they knew hundreds are outsourcing the work straight away. Of course if there is a genuine hard question and you are seeking a trade expert or lived experience that is different but "what's the best resort in Fiji for a family" is not that. We need some paid training and some recognised label that follows, something like IATA/UFTA. Destination , thinking about marrying needs to product, transport, seasons and more. It is big but the point would be to understand the process of looking for the right thing, research, what to think about first. How to point people in the right direction. We need to set the habits and the logic and hope the rest follows. Must be paid, must be difficult and tested well. - **Julie Cleary (Travel Masterpiece)**

The only reason I don't want to be audited annually is the cost. I believe if you run a tight accounting system that is overlooked by a CPA who produces financials each financial year that can be verified this should be sufficient. - **Jill Carmody (Leongatha Travel and Cruise)**

It needs to create a unique offering in the publics eye and in the background know that AFTA has travel agents or members backs and are set up strongly enough to take the fight up to airlines and any other supplier degrading us and our knowledge. As has to give members a strong vote and more input on tactics to be actions by AFTA on members behalf. It needs to name and shame airlines when they cut commission and congratulate and acknowledge the suppliers who pay good and fair commissions. - **Mario Paez (Planetdwellers)**

Q6. Other feedback regarding the ATAS Charter



I think we need something that keeps the fly by nighters and the unskilled business out of the arena. - **Ulrike Inge Lenitschek (Travelexperience.com.au)**

The election of officers is stymied by not allowing all prospective contestants to run. The domination by the big chains and lumping smaller ones into one "independent" bag is counterproductive. - **Steven Cairns (Liberty Tours)**

After the last 2 years it would be a farce to say that "all" previously accredited agents would still "make the grade" based on their financials - audited OR unaudited. There def needs to be a charter but it does now need a re-write! - **Martin Keating (Cairns Business and Leisure Travel)**

As with any other purchase when there is no mandatory Govt licensing it's buyer beware - and those of us who do the right thing should not be forced to prop up those in the industry who do not - and ATAS or not , this will never stop failure by some. - **Robyn Sinfield (Home Travel Company)**

If you are going to require us to have client accounts (which I always have had) then they need to be monitored. I don't want to go back to the days of the TCF where I had to pay an arm and a leg to be audited, but seriously, there needs to be more accountability for agents who do the wrong thing and those of us who do the right thing should not have to pay or be penalised like we did in the old days. - **Rosemary Thomas (Helloworld Travel Niddrie)**

Q6. Other feedback regarding the ATAS Charter

Annual Audited Accounts should be required for any business that is demonstrating their inability to meet the ATAS Charter - **Rosemary Davie (Aussienet Travel)**

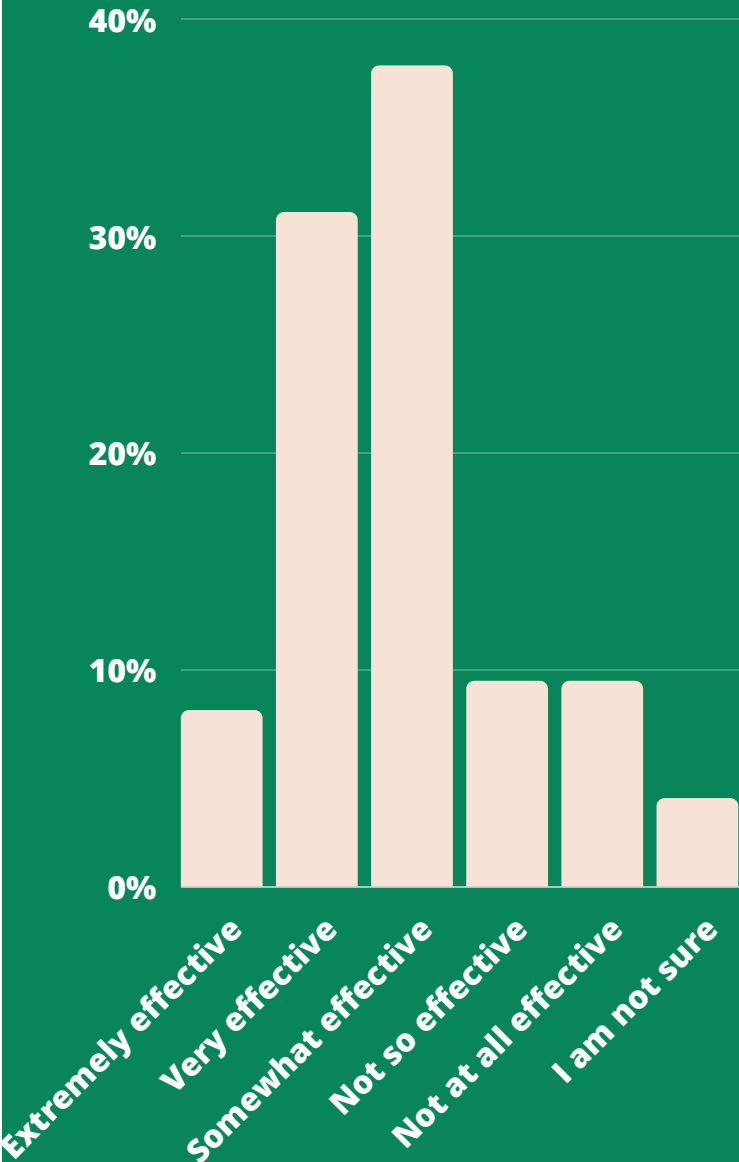
Don't agree with an annual audit due to the prohibitive cost for small agencies and sole traders. If there is another way to check viability that does not cost too much, yes for sure. Perhaps the annual audit could be for businesses with a large turnover like major wholesalers etc. - **John Fitzpatrick (italktravel & cruise Bendigo Central)**

ATAS is a nice word but has no travel agency worth to be very specific. It implies unity, training, strength, compliance with CHOICE and some media outlets and consumers BUT in absolute reality it is merely a nice name. It can be solid, consistent and worthwhile but currently, it is not there. - **Max Najar (Axis Travel Centre)**

Q7. The ATAS Code of Conduct supports the overall objectives of ATAS by:

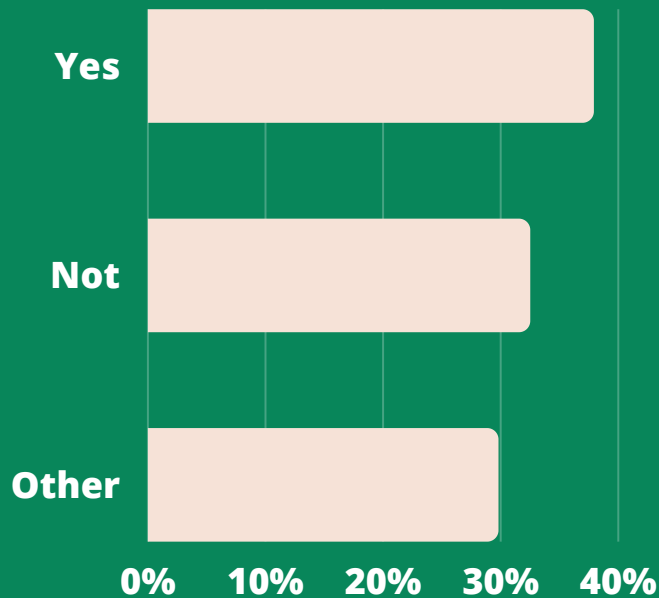
- (a) Setting minimum standards of behaviour and service delivery and providing for suitable consequences when these standards are not met;*
- (b) holding all ATAS Accredited travel agents to the same standard of behaviour no matter where they are based;*
- (c) establishing an independent process for assisting consumers and their ATAS accredited travel agents to resolve any complaints or disputes that might arise, and) building the professionalism of the travel agent industry into the future.*

Does the Code currently meet its objectives?



Answers	Response %	Response #
Extremely effective	8.11%	6
Very effective	31.08%	23
Somewhat effective	37.84%	28
Not so effective	9.46%	7
Not at all effective	9.46%	7
I am not sure	4.05%	3

Q8. Should it be mandatory to include a Schedule of Fees and Charges as part of an ATAS Members Terms and Conditions, which must be provided at or before a sale is entered into?



Answers	Response %	Response #
Yes	37.84%	28
No	32.43%	24
Other	29.73%	22

Q8. Other (Please specify)

Yes if membership was limited solely to travel agents.- **Dennis Bunnik (Bunnik Tours)**

Yes but changeable. - **Kerri Karayan (Snowscene)**

An individual decision as everyone has different Terms. I personally would be interested to see if this could be an Industry Standard particularly for ATAS Members.- **Anne Peirce (Helloworld Travel Bacchus Marsh)**

Q8. Other (Please specify)



Don't mind either way. - **Sue Holmes (Carine Travel Bug)**

We have been using fess since the late 1990's. Not everyone wants or needs this. The provision of same by paper copy or email link should suffice. More importantly, written acknowledgement from the client that these have been provided is more important. - **Meryl Edwards (Travel Design)**

This would just play into the hands of Airlines that want to get rid of travel agents. - **Harry Kopelis (Jetway Travel)**

Yes it should, however some times this is not possible. - **Sandra Paddick (Helloworld Travel Kadina)**

TERMS & CONDITIONS ALREADY SPECIFY CANCELLATION FEES. IT IS DIFFICULT TO KNOW HOW MUCH TO CHARGE FOR AMENDMENTS, BECAUSE THESE ARE TIME DEPENDENT AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TIME WILL BE INVOLVED UNTIL UNDERTAKEN. - **Stephen Cameron (AFRICAN WILDLIFE SAFARIS)**

A range of fees depending on circumstances. - **David John Withers (Travelplan)**

Q8. Other (Please specify)



Not sure. - **Lou (Affordable Travel)**

A fee summary but not a full breakdown of every service provider. - **Matt Masson (CT Partners)**

Could this be collusion? - **Tom McGann (McGann Travel)**

There is already 50000000 pages of T's & C's. - **Jason Sartori (All World Travel Service)**

I do not have a fee schedule as such but each airline booking is confirmed with airline rules and our booking fee. All land bookings are confirmed with detailed operator cancellation deadlines and a statement that we charge 10 -12% of any item cancelled unless there is no refund owing. Mine is simple works and I don't see the need of a schedule of fees. This is extremely old thinking. - **Julie Cleary (Travel Masterpiece)**

Yes I think so but with regular clients with regular bookings how is this best handled without reminding them about the fees everytime. It is like a stamp on their face we charge fees. - **Mario Paez (Planetdwellers)**

Q8. Other (Please specify)



This is a sensible approach to business but unless Govt mandated there will be agencies still who do not charge fees. - **Robyn Sinfield (Home Travel Company)**

Unfortunately, this won't work where you have operators like FC who continually undercut and do not provide service. That's a BIG no from me. - **Rosemary Thomas (Helloworld Travel Niddrie)**

Way too complex unless the industry abandons the commission based business. - **Col Beardmore (Journey to the East)**

YES, provided the ATAS member has a set of Terms & Conditions relevant to the current Fair Trading & ACCC rules. - **Julie Godfrey (TRAVEL YOUR WORLD MITTAGONG)**

BUT AFTA cannot advise or set this up as it is disallowed by laws. YES it should be mandatory but arms-length procedures need to be followed to have ALL -not only some- follow this requirement. BUT maybe COVID has educated Agts to now do this - **Max Najjar (Axis Travel Centre)**

Australia is NOT a communist country !!! - **Trevor Fernandes (Wildlife Safari)**

SOMETIMES, BUT REGULAR CLIENTS KNOW THE FEES - **ROSLYN SAVIO (ATOUR TRAVEL SERVICE)**

Q9. How well does the ATAS Code of Conduct set out appropriate standards of good practice that participants must follow in their day to day practices?



Very poorly	Poorly	Not Sure	Well	Very Well
2.78%	2.78%	37.5%	51.39%	5.56%

Q9. Further feedback on ATAS

Per ATAS charter and overall scheme objectives, the charter needs to be reflective of total travel industry involvement. - **Brett Jardine (CATO)**

The current ATAS is designed for travel agents - they are specifically mentioned 3 times in the ATAS objectives and are the only business type mentioned. It is also governed by the association of travel agents (AFTA). In my opinion there are 2 choices: 1: limit membership of ATAS to just travel agents or, 2: broaden ATAS to establish a whole-of-industry accreditation system. To do this ATAS should be governed by an independent board made up of representatives of the categories of membership in the form of industry associations (AFTA, CATO, ATEC, CLIA). This second option would also require a name change from Afta Travel Accreditation Scheme to (for example) Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme.- **Dennis Bunnik (Bunnik Tours)**

Q9. Further feedback on ATAS



The Industry must become fully transparent with Fees and Terms however a standardisation I believe would be worth looking at. I have been in the Travel Industry for 40 years and now with airline commission being reduced find we are going to have to totally change the way we operate. - **Anne Peirce (Helloworld Travel Bacchus Marsh)**

Not really familiar with it. perhaps it could be included with the certificate, like a mission statement. - **Sue Holmes (Carine Travel Bug)**

Make ATAS membership count. It's currently seen as a 'toothless tiger' by the public. - **Meryl Edwards (Travel Design)**

Codes of conduct do not sway most consumers when what they want is "the cheapest". - **Harry Kopelis (Jetway Travel)**

The Code should be brought to the attention of Agencies every year during their re-accreditation and they should be tested on their knowledge of its content. - **Steven Cairns (Liberty Tours)**

Clear guidelines on ATAS Code of Conduct and appropriate fees for service.- **Julie Barns (Travelworks Cruise and Travel)**

Q9. Further feedback on ATAS



Again, ATAS should not be a police organisation. People who run their businesses properly will enjoy good client relationships and success - don't punish them by taking away freedoms to operate as they choose to try and wrangle every little cowboy. Who won't be caught because they won't become a member of ATAS and will still manage to fool clients. -

Adrienne Witteman (Trendsetter Travel & Cruise Centre Pty Ltd)

Survey home based agents more often. The dissemination away from offices has not helped the profession, nor are they being monitored enough. - **Lindy Herron (South Coast Cruise and Travel)**

Whether these companies abide by that is another question and what will it show to the consumer....has to be policed. - **NICHOLAS MISSIKOS (Our World Travel)**

I don't understand how an ATAS agent can go under, which has happened several times. How can this be? - **Jill Carmody (Leongatha Travel and Cruise)**

I assumed that every travel business had to use a client bank account to find out that wasn't the case was shock. - **Mario Paez (Planetdwellers)**

It sets them out lets face facts the standards as set are no longer readily achievable by most. - **Martin Keating (Cairns Business and Leisure Travel)**

Q9. Further feedback on ATAS



As a travel agent the ATAS Code of Conduct is not fool proof against us dealing with a supplier who is a member who does not have full financial disclosure - and it doesn't cover airlines who are their own rule makers. - **Robyn Sinfield (Home Travel Company)**

Overall ATAS appears to represent the Big End Town. Doubt whether one board member knows how to consult and sell travel to a customer. - **Julie Godfrey (TRAVEL YOUR WORLD MITTAGONG)**

The public need to be made aware of the Code of Conduct for ATAS members not just on the AFTA ATAS site. - **Aussinet Travel (Rosemary Davie)**

None really. waiting on AFTA to get the go ahead from the lazy public servants in each states Consumer Affairs departments. It is now 18 months since we wanted to update our T & C's and still nothing from the fully paid lazy public servants. - **John Fitzpatrick (italktravel & cruise Bendigo Central)**

Sets them up well-theoretically- but how many follow what is required??? - **Maz Najjar (Axis Travel Centre)**