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## **INTERNATIONAL TRAVELLERS THE FIRST STEP ON ROAD TO RECOVERY**

Tourism Accommodation Australia CEO Michael Johnson has welcomed the return of international travellers today, saying it is the first step in a very long road to recovery.

Mr Johnson said opening the international border after almost two years is great news for decimated accommodation hotels.

“The border has been shut to foreign tourists for 704 days and it is great to have it finally open again,” said Mr Johnson.

“It is the first step in a long recovery process and an important milestone, but it will be several years before we return to anything like pre-COVID levels of trade.”

“Occupancy in our major gateways of Sydney and Melbourne is sitting around 30 per cent and we are in the midst of a staffing crisis which is having a huge impact on the ability of major hotels to function.”

Mr Johnson said the most important aspect of re-opening the border is building confidence.

“It finally sends a message to the world’s travelers we are open and ready to accept them back,” he said.

“And it hopefully sends a message to the thousands of international students and working holiday makers we desperately need that it is safe for them to return to their Australian adventure.”

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