

APTRA: “Standing strong with the industry at this pivotal time”



“In 2020 we are facing the biggest challenge imaginable, but our region is resilient and ready to restart and APTRA is standing strong with the industry at this pivotal time” - Sunil Tuli, President, APTRA

The Asia Pacific Travel Retail Association (APTRA) has voted to allow membership from food and beverage operators and distributors/agents with exclusive rights for a brand in Asia Pacific.

Members approved the two constitutional changes at APTRA’s 2020 annual meeting, which was held in a virtual format on June 17. The meeting was attended by members representing brands, retailers, landlords and industry associations from across the region.

The move reflects the broader approach to industry inclusivity at the association, which celebrates its 15th anniversary this year.

Both motions were approved by members, confirming that eligibility for membership is now open to food and beverage operators within the retailer section. In the brands section, membership is now open to distributors/agents with exclusive travel retail rights for the entire Asia Pacific region.

During the meeting, Christina Oliver, Executive Director of APTRA, updated members on key advocacy campaigns over the last year, including recent COVID-19 initiatives.

She highlighted major research projects commissioned, notably the publication in October 2019 of the Economic Impact Report of Duty Free & Travel Retail in Asia Pacific, produced in association with the Duty Free World Council.

Increased focus on advocacy

The report has proved valuable in current political campaigning as it demonstrates the vital role of the industry in delivering non-aeronautical revenue streams essential to airports and airlines, supporting over 320,000 jobs and a contribution of almost US\$15 billion to GDP in the region.

APTRA President Sunil Tuli told members how the association has increased its focus on advocacy given the increasing prevalence of regulatory issues impacting the industry, especially on alcohol allowances, tobacco plain packaging and the rise of the war on sugar.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, APTRA has been actively campaigning with governments across Asia Pacific to increase awareness of the vital role the duty free and travel retail sector plays in non-aeronautical revenue generation and to secure its inclusion in relief and stimulus measures for the aviation industry.

A robust and exciting road map

Recently, APTRA has worked in partnership with other organizations as a member of the Duty Free World Council, achieving the support of ICAO that duty and tax free stores can open as traffic returns. The ICAO CART report recognizes that shopping areas are part of the airport infrastructure and should be used fully to enable physical distancing, as their surface area is an integral part of the general passenger flow through an airport.

Commenting on the core message he shared at the annual meeting, Tuli said: “The journey of the last 15 years of extraordinary growth and development in Asia Pacific is one we simply couldn’t have envisaged back in 2005 when APTRA was created. Now in 2020 we are facing the biggest challenge imaginable, but our region is resilient and ready to restart and APTRA is standing strong with the industry at this pivotal time.

“The future is underpinned by many strong factors such as the unstoppable rise of Chinese travelers, the growth of the middle class in the region and the dominance of youthful populations in so many countries. As these populations mature, their wealth will increase as will their propensity to spend on their travels. Despite the immediate bumps in the road, travel retail in Asia Pacific is following a robust and exciting road map through the next 15 years.”