

TFWA and APTRA make statement about coronavirus

TFWA and APTRA are working closely with their members across retailers, brands, airports, F&B and inflight operators to monitor and evaluate the fast-moving situation caused by the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

Both associations are working together to assess the situation as it develops to provide the most valuable support they can offer the industry, especially to businesses in Asia Pacific.

Alain Maingreud, President of TFWA, said: "Our first thoughts must be with the victims of this outbreak, and with the individuals and companies most affected. All of us at TFWA stand with our colleagues and partners in China and in Asia Pacific, where the impact of the current situation has been felt most keenly. Our friends at APTRA and ourselves are in constant contact to share information on fresh developments and to assess how our industry is being affected."

Grant Fleming, President APTRA, comments: "The current measures on travel restrictions and recent store closures in some locations are sensible precautions to help limit the spread of the virus and, although they are painful commercially in the short-term, we wholeheartedly support these mitigation strategies for the long-term benefit of the industry. The health and safety of employees and customers is an absolute priority.

"Asia Pacific is unquestionably resilient and resourceful and there is proven analysis of the bounce-back from previous crises, such as SARS or the 2008-9 global financial crash. There are underlying long-term positives, with IATA reporting an influx of 450 million additional Chinese air passengers over the last 10 years and analysis that China will become the largest aviation market within the next five years, within long-term growth projected to deliver 1 billion new passengers by 2037, to 1.6 billion. When Chinese tourists start travelling again at full pace, which they will do, we should expect a return to commercial growth with the same vigour and energy we've seen when faced with other headwinds. We are, after all, a region that thrives on fast change."

Both associations will continue preparations for the TFWA Asia Pacific Exhibition & Conference in Singapore on May 10 - 14. Maingreud said: "We are of course fully aware of the negative impact of the current crisis on TFWA's members and those of APTRA. However, we are continuing to prepare for our event in Singapore, which is the major annual gathering of our industry in Asia Pacific. The TFWA Board and team are in constant contact with our partners in Singapore along with government authorities, and are monitoring the situation very closely. The TFWA Management Committee will meet as planned in early March and will take stock of the situation at that time, with a view to moving forward in the best interests of our industry."

Fleming added: "We support TFWA's plans for the Singapore event in May - a crucial rendezvous in the industry calendar. This will be an important opportunity to discuss how we will rebound from what has been, for all our members, an exceptionally challenging start to the year."