**Your Contact Details**

**[Date]**

Ms Lisa Chesters MP  
Member for Bendigo  
PO Box 338

Bendigo, VIC 3550

Dear [Mr/Ms/Dr Last Name],

**Re: Support for Australia’s Travel Industry in the 2025 Federal Election**

As a proud ATIA Accredited travel business operating in Bendigo, I’m writing to urge your support for a set of practical reforms that will strengthen local businesses, lower costs for consumers, and create more jobs in our community.

**CHOOSE ONE OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING – FEEL FREE TO ADAPT AND USE AS MUCH INFO FROM YOUR OWN BUSINESS AS POSSIBLE**

**1A.**  
My business, [Business Name], has served the local community for [X] years. We employ [X] people in our team. We’ve helped thousands of clients travel safely, especially through the difficult years of COVID. We are proud to provide trusted, secure services backed by industry standards.

**1B.**  
As a small business owner in travel, I’m deeply concerned about the pressures facing our industry—rising costs, staffing challenges, and policy gaps that make it harder to compete. We are asking for support that recognises the value we bring to our economy and communities.

**1C.**  
As a local family-run/independent travel business, we are proud employers of [X], strong supporters of other businesses and local causes, and have a long and strong track record of supporting the travel needs of our community, including when travel plans are interrupted by flight delays and cancellations, natural disasters and other challenges.

**PRIORITY ISSUE OPTIONS – FEEL FREEE TO MIX UP THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS**

**AIRLINE COMPETITION**

**2A.**  
The current aviation market lacks effective competition. With two airlines dominating 98% of domestic passengers, Australians are paying more for fewer services. We support stronger ACCC powers and greater transparency in air route decisions to deliver better outcomes for travellers.

**2B.**  
Fares have risen by up to 95% on key routes. We urge your support for reforms to ensure fairer pricing and restore regional connectivity by backing an empowered ACCC and better bilateral agreements that prioritise affordability and access.

**2C.**  
Australia’s aviation system is broken. Consumers are suffering from reduced choice and poor service, particularly outside capital cities. Action is needed to improve competition and ensure more operators can access routes to support lower fares and stronger regional economies.

**BACKING ACCREDITED BUSINESSES**

**3A.**  
ATIA Accredited businesses meet Australia’s highest consumer protection standards. A co-funded national campaign to promote our services will help consumers make informed choices and protect them from offshore, unregulated alternatives.

**3B.**  
As an accredited business, we’re held to standards that protect consumers financially and legally. Booking with an ATIA accredited business also means you have access to our independent, robust mediation and complaints process. We support ATIA’s call for a campaign to raise public awareness and highlight the risks of booking through non-accredited providers.

**3C.**  
Australians deserve to know that when they book travel, their money and plans are secure. That’s why we’re asking for your support for a campaign that promotes the value of booking through an ATIA Accredited agencies.

**3D.**

Australians deserve to know that when they book travel, their money and plans are secure. That’s why we’re asking for your support for a campaign that promotes the value of booking through an ATIA Accredited tour operator.

**WORKFORCE & TRAINING SUPPORT**

**4A.**  
Workforce shortages are holding our sector back. Incentives for traineeships would allow businesses like mine to bring in and train new staff—particularly women, who make up 72% of the industry—securing the future of our workforce.

**4B.**  
The removal of government support for trainee programs has made it almost impossible to onboard new staff. We need long-term federal and state alignment to make training viable again and ensure job growth in our sector.

**4C.**  
Without subsidies for trainees, small businesses can’t afford to grow. We urge your support for funding that helps us train new staff and build a skilled, resilient workforce to meet growing demand.

**FAIR PAYMENT SYSTEMS**

**5A.**  
We need to retain the ability to surcharge to recover the true cost of accepting card payments. For a low-margin industry with unique chargeback risks, this is essential to remaining viable.

**5B.**  
Surcharging helps businesses offset high transaction costs and unfair bond demands. Losing this right would result in higher prices for customers or the closure of some businesses. We ask that you protect small operators like us.

**5C.**  
Unlike cafés or shops, travel businesses face forward delivery risks and high chargeback exposure. Removing surcharging rights would severely disadvantage us and limit access to merchant services. We ask you to back fair, tailored regulation.

**INDUSTRY-LED REGULATION**

**6A.**  
Travel agents should not be swept into the proposed Aviation Ombudsman Scheme. Our existing accreditation and robust, independent dispute resolution processes work. Adding more red tape to the way travel businesses rather than airlines won’t solve the problem.

**6B.**  
Airlines, not agents, control fare rules and hold customer funds. It’s essential that the Ombuds Scheme focuses where it’s needed: on airlines and airports, not trusted intermediaries like agents.

**6C.**  
Our industry already provides robust consumer protections. Including travel agents in a scheme meant for airlines is unnecessary, duplicative, and adds costs for no benefit. Please support smart, targeted regulation.

**6C.**

As a tour operator, I provide packages that include airline tickets, when I do this, I do it as an agent of the airline. I do not control fare rules or hold customer funds for the airline ticket. It’s essential that the Ombuds Scheme focuses where it’s needed: on airlines and airports, not trusted intermediaries like agents or tour operators.

**BETTER TRAVELLER EXPERIENCE**

**7A.**  
Australia’s travel systems are outdated and burdensome. We support measures to improve airport processing, streamline passports, and invest in smarter technology to attract and retain visitors.

**7B.**  
Better border infrastructure, faster passport services, and expanded SmartGates would enhance the traveller experience and boost jobs and revenue. We need government investment to modernise travel pathways.

**7C.**  
Our passport system is the most expensive in the world, yet processes are slow. We back ATIA’s call to modernise these systems and improve the traveller experience at every stage of the journey.

**SMALL BUSINESS & DIGITAL GROWTH**

**8A.**  
Small travel businesses need support to keep pace with digital change. Grants to boost AI adoption, cybersecurity, and digital capability will help us compete globally and innovate locally.

**8B.**  
Programs like the Reviving International Tourism Grant are essential to helping Australian businesses grow their international markets. We ask for your support to extend and expand these initiatives.

**8C.**  
Without investment in digital tools and marketing support, our industry risks falling behind. Backing small travel businesses through smart tech and export grants is a win for the economy and for Bendigo.

**OPTIONAL CLOSING PARAGRAPHS – CHOOSE ONE**

**9A.**  
These issues affect my livelihood and the experiences of travellers in your electorate. I hope you will support these reforms and champion policies that protect both small business and consumers.

**9B.**  
We are asking for practical, fair solutions that deliver real results for our clients, our community, and the economy. I’d welcome the chance to discuss these priorities with you directly.

**9C.**  
With the travel industry at a crossroads, your support can make a real difference. I urge you to back policies that restore confidence, increase competition, and future-proof our sector.

Warm regards,  
**[Your Full Name]**  
**[Your Business Name]**  
**[Contact Details]**