

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **BUS AND COACH OPERATORS FACE LONG ROAD TO RECOVERY**

*The below statement can be attributed to Bus Industry Confederation (BIC) Executive Director, Michael Apps.*

“With Australian tourism at a standstill, tens of thousands of jobs in the bus and coach sector are at severe risk with operators being forced to park a national tour and charter fleet of more than 8,000 large coaches and thousands of mini buses, covering non-public transport services for more than 500,000 coach tour passengers every day.

“The reality is that no passengers mean no tours, no charters and no travel.

“Since Covid-19 started and travel restrictions and border closures were announced, we’ve seen most coach operators have no choice but to be either deregister or permanently parked and most staff laid off or on JobKeeper.

“While our operators have an essential role to play in Australia’s economic recovery by connecting travellers to our capital cities and regional areas, their recovery will be slow. We anticipate it will take another 12 to 18 months before the industry is able to transition out of this crisis and into its recovery.

“Our businesses are directly connected to our communities with a local bus operator in every city and Australian town connecting local, regional and interstate travel using our services each year.

“The downturn in tourism is already seeing national and local regional coach businesses on the brink.

“An extended downturn will severely impact services in our national capital cities and at our tourism icons from the harbour bridge and opera house through the Uluru and the 12 Apostles, as well as regional businesses that rely on us to service their local community tourism destinations, to charter transport trips for the local footy and cricket clubs, and for school swimming and athletic carnivals.

“We need Government to step up and do more to protect our industry and the people we support.

“We require a national rescue package to support us through the downturn and on the road out.

“In particular, we have developed a rescue package that includes immediate financial assistance to provide a full diesel rebate, like the mining sector receives, the extension of JobKeeper for our industry beyond September and consideration of a travel rebate of fares to encourage the Australian public to travel across the nation not over it. This will support our local tourism industry and in particular local regional tourism.

“We also fully endorse the recommendations by the Tourism Restart Taskforce to bring tourism back to life through targeted policy reforms and greater investments in infrastructure and training.

“With the right support, our industry can continue to play a critical role in accelerating Australia’s road to recovery across the \$125 billion international and domestic tourism sector.”

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### **CONTACTS**

For media enquiries and to schedule an interview:

Brendan Altadonna, GRACosway – 0409 919 891 / [baltadonna@gracosway.com.au](mailto:baltadonna@gracosway.com.au)

