

## Tourism Jobs & Our Inside-Out Route to Recovery

Dear Stakeholder:

The sudden joblessness created by this pandemic has reminded me of a statistic often forgotten in normal times: in Bermuda's hotel sector, about 70 percent of workers are Bermudian.

It's a lot like Bermuda's international business sector, where the re/insurance workforce is almost three-quarters Bermudian. Similarly, hoteliers rely partly on hospitality talent recruited from around the world, but depend mostly on the local community to proficiently staff their properties. When COVID-19 hit our shores and hotels shuttered their doors, about 2,000 people were out of work, suddenly and devastatingly. Some were guest workers. Most were Bermudian. The impact on our community is immense.

When I join Minister Zane DeSilva's tourism-recovery talks each week, it's the out-of-work I'm thinking about. We're all thinking about them. The recovery blueprint we strategise and the marketing approach we implement will be imagined as a recovery plan, but, really, it's a jobs plan. In addition to the 2,000 adversely impacted in the hotel sector, thousands more in retail, restaurants, transport, tours and attractions are forced into idleness when the island is closed to travellers.

The Bermuda Tourism Authority today [released industry performance statistics for the first quarter of 2020](#). Although perhaps not surprising, the data is shocking. COVID-19 has forced the global tourism industry to a grinding halt. Bermuda has not been immune.

When you review the down-arrows this week, keep in mind what they represent: the livelihoods of thousands of people in our community. The responsibility of tourism industry leaders—my responsibility, our responsibility—is to help those people back on their feet.

When the time is right, travel will return and the road to normalcy will commence on a slow march. We can't say yet with certainty when that re-opening date will be; we're all searching for how we get there safely and responsibly.

In the meantime, you'll see our BTA team pivot to an inside-out approach. In the offing is a rolling calendar of initiatives designed to support the gradual reopening of Bermuda's economy.

In tandem with the government's projected four phases of recovery, the BTA will engage local residents first to urge those still earning an income to spend some of it in the local economy—takeout food, Bermuda-inspired retail and golf might be the first you'll hear about. A campaign for staycations, yachting or spas could follow, some of it held back to roll out around the time our airport lifts restrictions for non-residents and regularly scheduled commercial flights re-start.

All of this activity is designed to inspire our community to support the tourism industry with local spending at a time when visitors can't.

The BTA has successfully ignited a tourism recovery before. It was brutally difficult work back then—and that doesn't even come close to the challenge before us now.

But failure is not an option; the livelihoods of too many depend on it.

Sincerely,

Glenn Jones  
Interim CEO & Chief Experience Development Officer

