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GOLD COAST INDUSTRY LEADERS BAND TOGETHER TO ENCOURAGE LOCALS TO GET VACCINATED

Gold Coast tourism operators are hoping for a bookings bonanza after new figures from Wotif.com.au show accommodation search results for the city are up 60 per cent for the Ekka long weekend.

But with the clock ticking on the reopening of Queensland, Destination Gold Coast is supporting calls for locals to get the jab in order to be fully protected in time for when Queensland's borders open.

"We are Australia's number one holiday destination, and we need to be at the top of the list when it comes to vaccination rates as well. It's also important that visitors feel secure when they arrive and enjoy everything the Gold Coast has to offer," said Destination Gold Coast Chairman, Paul Donovan.

Queenslanders are just days away from having the opportunity to be fully vaccinated by the time the State reopens to the rest of the country.

A recent Destination Gold Coast survey shows tourism operators are committed to doing everything they can including incentivising or encouraging their workforce to be vaccinated.

"The Gold Coast is a \$5.9 billion tourism industry where one in six jobs rely on and every single Queenslanders needs to play their part in getting vaccinated," said Destination Gold Coast CEO Patricia O'Callaghan.

"It's concerning that the Gold Coast vaccination rates are lagging behind.

"Get out there this weekend and get vaccinated. Do it for tourism. Do it for local business. Do it to freely travel again."

Tourism operators are backing up this call by teaming up with Queensland Health to help increase the region's vaccine rates. Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, Dreamworld, Sea World and Movie World have organised pop-up vaccination hubs available to their visitors.

Gold Coast City Council Acting Mayor, Donna Gates, said the next few days are critical as we race towards those critical reopening dates.

"The message is very clear: we need every Gold Coaster who has chosen to get vaccinated to do it now.

"I urge everyone to get the jab as this disease will impact the lives of the unvaccinated."

Since the launch of the Queensland Government's roadmap, Wotif.com.au figures show interest in accommodation on the Gold Coast has risen 235 per cent compared to the week prior to the announcement.

"Fully vaccinated Australians are counting the days until they can enjoy a Gold Coast summer holiday and we need to make sure we are ready for them," said Ms O'Callaghan.

Queensland Airports Limited CEO Chris Mills said Gold Coasters could play a critical part in the reopening of borders by getting vaccinated as soon as possible.

“Most Gold Coasters are connected to tourism in one way or another or have family interstate or overseas. To be able to travel freely once again, we need to get vaccinated,” he said.

Village Roadshow Theme Parks COO, Bikash Randhawa said similar to the entire tourism industry, the parks have been significantly impacted by COVID-19.

“We echo the comments from the government and are joining our industry leaders to encourage all Queenslanders to get vaccinated so we can get back to normal,” he said.

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