

August 5, 2020

## **Greater Victoria Tourism Rescue and Recovery Task Force Releases Second Phase Priorities**

**VICTORIA, B.C.** – The Greater Victoria Tourism Rescue and Recovery Task Force (Task Force) has released its Second Phase Priorities for tourism business and industry survival. The Second Phase Priorities builds on the Task Force’s First Phase Priorities released on May 13, 2020, which proposed policies such as interest-free loans or grants, as well as support for COVID-19 safety oriented and physical distancing measures.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Greater Victoria visitor economy has experienced significant negative impacts from previous discouragement of travel by government and health officials, as well as the closure of the US-Canada border to non-essential travel. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Greater Victoria visitor economy employed over 22,000 people and generated \$1.4 billion in revenue annually. However, Greater Victoria visitor economy employment and revenues have both declined up to 90 per cent due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The release of the Task Force’s Second Phase Priorities aligns with Tourism Industry Association of BC’s (TIABC) submission to the Province as part of the consultation for stimulus and COVID-19 economic recovery, as well as recovery efforts of the Hotel Association of British Columbia.

The Task Force’s Second Phase Priorities are as follows:

- Extension of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) beyond December 2020 and into 2021.
- Measures to support liquidity and avoid insolvency.
- Deferred or instalment payments for 2020 property taxes.
- Clear, consistent messaging from government welcoming visitors from other provinces to BC.
- Financial support for health and safety requirements.
- Addressing shortfalls of the Regional Relief & Recovery Fund (RRRF) program.

“The Task Force fully endorses TIABC’s industry recovery submission to the provincial government. Despite moving to Phase 3 of the BC Restart Plan, the Greater Victoria visitor economy still needs help if many of its cornerstone businesses are to survive” said Paul Nursey, CEO of Destination Greater Victoria. “Many businesses have reopened but are not generating enough revenue to continue operations in the coming months. We are pleased with the response from governments so far, but the Task Force’s Second Phase Priorities are vital measures for our industry to remain solvent as we move into the shoulder and off seasons.”

“Tourism in Greater Victoria is not only a key economic generator, but a part of our community and identity” said John Wilson, President and CEO of The Wilson’s Group of Companies. “Our hotels, restaurants, transportation suppliers and attractions are proud of their contributions to Greater Victoria, the jobs they provide and positive experience they create for visitors. These Second Phase Priorities are concrete, robust proposals for governments and have broad support from the Task Force membership.

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We are confident if decision-makers act on these proposals the Greater Victoria visitor economy will be on a solid foundation in the months ahead.”

The Task Force is a group of twelve tourism business leaders working together to propose solutions to rescue Greater Victoria’s tourism industry from the impacts of COVID-19 and develop ways forward for business recovery. Collectively these business leaders have 400 years of experience in the tourism and hospitality sector as well as more than 200 years contributing to Greater Victoria’s communities.

The Greater Victoria Tourism Rescue and Recovery Task Force Second Phase Priorities document can be found here:

[https://www.tourismvictoria.com/sites/default/files/gv\\_tourism\\_rescuerecovery\\_taskforce\\_phase\\_2.pdf](https://www.tourismvictoria.com/sites/default/files/gv_tourism_rescuerecovery_taskforce_phase_2.pdf)

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TIABC’s submission to the provincial government can be found here: <https://www.tiabc.ca/advocacy-policy-development/covid-19-updates/>

**Destination Greater Victoria** (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) is our region’s official, not-for-profit destination marketing organization working in partnership with nearly 1,000 businesses and municipalities in Greater Victoria.

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## BACKGROUNDER

Greater Victoria Tourism Rescue and Recovery Task Force members:

### **FRANK BOURREE**

*CEO, Bourree & Associates*

Frank Bourree has been actively involved in Greater Victoria’s community and tourism, hospitality, human resources, and consulting sectors for more than 40 years. Frank is Vice Chair of the South Island Prosperity Partnership, Chair of the Our Place Community Advisory Board, and a Past Chair of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce.

### **DAVE COWEN**

*CEO, The Butchart Gardens*

Dave Cowen has more than 30 years experience in the tourism industry, including 13 as General Manager and CEO of The Butchart Gardens. Dave is Chair of the Board of the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, Co-Chair of the Tourism Committee for the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER), and a Past Chair of Destination Greater Victoria’s Board of Directors.

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## **ANTHONY EVERETT**

*President and CEO, Tourism Vancouver Island*

Anthony Everett joined Tourism Vancouver Island in January 2018 and has over 30 years of experience in destination marketing, sport tourism, media relations, visitor services and Board governance.

## **SUZANNE GATRELL**

*Owner, Kingsbridge Hotel Consulting*

Suzanne Gatrell has more than 30 years experience in tourism and hospitality, including 12 years in Greater Victoria. Suzanne is Chair of Destination Greater Victoria's Transportation and Destination Management Committee.

## **KIMBERLEY HUGHES**

*General Manager, Delta Hotels by Marriott Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort*

Kimberley Hughes has more than 30 years of tourism and hospitality experience, including 12 years in Greater Victoria. Kimberley is Chair of Destination Greater Victoria's Board of Directors.

## **DAN KUKAT**

*Owner and President, Springtide Whale Watching & Eco Tours*

Dan Kukat started Springtide Whale Watching & Eco Tours 27 years ago, combining his passion for being on the ocean, his desire to live in Victoria and his interest in running his own business. Dan is a Past Chair of the Pacific Whale Watch Association.

## **BILL LEWIS**

*General Manager, The Magnolia Hotel & Spa*

Bill Lewis has a diverse background in the hotel sector, with more than 25 years of experience and 15 years in management roles in Victoria. Bill is Chair of the Hotel Association of Greater Victoria and a Past Chair of Destination Greater Victoria's Board of Directors.

## **PAUL NURSEY**

*CEO, Destination Greater Victoria*

Paul Nursey has more than 25 years of tourism and hospitality experience, including 20 years in leadership roles in destination management and six years in Greater Victoria.

## **BRENDA OLLIS**

*General Manager, Chateau Victoria Hotel*

Brenda Ollis has 32 years of experience in tourism and hospitality, all in Greater Victoria. Brenda is Treasurer of the Victoria Hotel Destination Marketing Association.

## **THE REV'D CANON IAN POWELL**

*General Manager, Inn at Laurel Point and Managing Director, Paul's Restaurants Ltd*

The Rev'd Canon Ian Powell has more than 45 years of tourism and hospitality experience, with more than 30 years in senior leadership roles. Ian has contributed to Greater Victoria's tourism industry for more than 20 years. Ian is Chair of go2HR's Board of Directors and a past Chair of Destination Greater Victoria.

## **JOHN WILSON**

*President and CEO, The Wilson's Group of Companies*

Led by John Wilson, The Wilson's Group has been an active member of Greater Victoria's business and tourism community for 40 years. John is Chair of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce.

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**RANDY WRIGHT**

*President, Harbour Air Group*

Randy Wright has 43 years of tourism and hospitality experience, all in Greater Victoria. Randy is a Past Chair of Destination Greater Victoria.

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