



# AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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## **AHA to fight for access to Budget training initiatives**

The Australian hotel industry is facing a period of uncertainty regarding access to the major training initiatives announced yesterday in the Federal Budget.

The Government's *Building Australia's Future Workforce* program includes \$3 billion in funding over six years to maximise the productivity of the Australian workforce, yet the Australian Hotels Association fears the hospitality sector could miss out on the benefits.

AHA National CEO Des Crowe welcomed the big-spending commitment to training outlined in the Budget, but expressed concern about whether hotels would be able to access the new initiatives.

"The Government's focus on developing the workforce is to be welcomed", Mr Crowe said, "but the Building Australia's Future Workforce program has come at the expense of existing training measures which have been used by hotels.

"Hotels are facing crippling skills and labour shortages and it is unclear whether the industry will attain a fair share of access to these training initiatives, given the size of its workforce in comparison to other industries.

"The *Building Australia's Future Workforce* program is one of the major initiatives in the Budget, one which will help hotels to address the workforce shortages which are holding back the industry. Tourism Australia has said up to 150,000 additional tourism jobs will be required to meet its growth targets so it is imperative that our industry has access to this program."

The AHA notes recent policy decisions which have adversely affected the hospitality workforce such as the removal of Chefs from the Skilled Occupation List despite ongoing critical shortages and the downgrading of the industry by the Government's Expert Panel on Apprenticeships.

"In light of these recent policy decisions the AHA will be seeking assurances that a fair share of Building Australia's Future Workforce will be Building Australia's *Hospitality Workforce*", said Mr Crowe.

"The reality for our members is that service standards are critical and access to supported training at a lower level is essential for the development of the industry. Clearly there will be a role for the states and territories to play and the AHA is already working with governments across the country to ensure a fair go for the hospitality sector alongside what is being provided for the mining, construction and aged care sectors.

"The commitment to support for regional Australia provides some optimism for our members in these areas that their training needs will be favourably considered despite the announcements in the Budget."

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