



AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION

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MEDIA RELEASE

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More needed to fix hotel labour shortages

The Government-endorsed template Labour Agreement for the tourism industry must be complemented with further policy changes or labour shortages will continue to cripple the industry.

Australian Hotels Association CEO Des Crowe said the development of a template Labour Agreement to allow tourism employers to source workers from overseas should be just the first of several initiatives in this area.

“Labour shortages will continue unless the Government also makes changes to its controversial Skilled Occupation List, loosens restrictions on international students and working holiday-makers, and adjusts its funding model for apprenticeships and traineeships”, Mr Crowe said.

“The AHA welcomes the Government’s announcement of a template Labour Agreement for the tourism industry. This is something we have been calling for through the Long Term Tourism Strategy and it is pleasing to see Minister Bowen has accepted our arguments.

“But this is just the tip of the iceberg and the template will still cover only workers with specialised skills. Overcoming the chronic shortages of labour will require the Government to overturn some of its recent policy decisions that have disadvantaged the industry.

“The removal of chefs from the Skilled Occupation List was a major blow to the industry that has yet to be rectified, and the downgrading in funding and support for apprentices and trainees in hospitality also needs to be reversed. The industry is also struggling to cope with the decline in international students, who have traditionally provided a reliable source of labour for lower skilled part time work.

“All stakeholders need to be promoting careers in tourism and hospitality.

“The Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot scheme will provide welcome temporary access to overseas workers from East Timor, with the potential for the program to be expanded at a later date, but more avenues to semi-skilled overseas workers are required to address industry labour shortages.

“Many of the industry’s labour needs are in lower level positions which do not fit the minimum skills and qualification requirements of existing working visa categories.

“While the industry will need to increase numbers of Australian trainees and apprentices, it also needs to source overseas workers in order to fill job gaps.”

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