



# AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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# Regional Focus as AHA National Executive meets in Port Lincoln

Regional tourism and employment issues will be key items on the agenda at the Australian Hotels Association meeting in Port Lincoln SA today.

AHA National CEO Des Crowe said the Port Lincoln Hotel was an ideal setting for the Association's National Executive to meet and discuss regional issues.

"Hotels play a vital role at the heart of the community in regional areas", Mr Crowe said.

"The investment in completely rebuilding the Port Lincoln Hotel has provided this small town with a state of the art hospitality and function venue and provided a massive boost to the local economy, both as a construction project and now as a major employer and supporter of local suppliers.

"Along with other excellent hotels like the Boston Hotel, Grand Tasman Hotel, Marina Hotel, Great Northern Hotel and Pier Hotel, Port Lincoln certainly has a thriving pub culture. The Federal Government continues to cry out for investment in the tourism industry and Port Lincoln shows what can happen in the right conditions.

"As last year's winner of the national AHA Award for Best Tourism Initiative for developing seamless linkages with local attractions and tour operators, the Port Lincoln Hotel is an example of how local pubs are closely involved in supporting the broader community. The hotel was also a national finalist in the Outstanding Community Service Award."

The AHA's meeting will have a regional focus including briefings from publicans in Karratha (WA), Humpty Doo (NT), Geelong (Vic), Shoalhaven Heads (NSW), Emundi (Queensland) and Mount Gambier, Murray Bridge and Port Lincoln (SA).

"The AHA has been involved in creating hotel jobs for trainees and the unemployed in regional Australia with the result being the demand from employers for staff and apprentices far exceeding the supply of workers.

"Part of our discussions today will focus on labour shortages, career pathways for Australians, and attracting disabled workers and mature workers.

"Of interest to the publicans will be briefings of increased access to overseas seasonal workers and working holiday makers and the potential for template labour agreements to assist hospitality businesses attracting overseas workers in the future.

"Once we can't find Australians to fill our employment vacancies then our only option is to source short term overseas workers."

*Media enquiries*

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