

## MEDIA RELEASE

8 September 2011

# Accommodation sector welcomes expansion of Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot

The accommodation sector is encouraged by today's announcement that tourism operators will be included in an expansion of the Pacific Seasonal Worker Pilot.

Tourism Accommodation Australia Managing Director Rodger Powell said inclusion in the overseas worker scheme will help hotels to address longstanding shortages of labour.

"This is a good decision by the Government which will help to address one of the most critical issues facing the tourism industry – a shortage of workers available to meet demand for services.

"Expanding the successful horticulture seasonal worker scheme to include tourism operators is a wise decision which will provide some relief in Broome, where employers have been struggling to fill positions from the local labour market.

"If this expanded pilot is successful it could provide a model for consideration in regional areas facing similar labour shortages.

"It was disappointing that Pacific Seasonal Workers who were put out of work by the floods and cyclones of last summer were not allowed to take up any of the work available in the hospitality sector, where there was more work available.

"The industry is also pleased to see East Timor invited to participate in the scheme. Our organisation has been urging the Government to include East Timor in overseas labour schemes and this is a fair outcome considering there are more than one thousand Australians currently working in East Timor on development and humanitarian projects.

"We would like to see East Timorese seasonal workers given the opportunity to work in other Australian regions where there is already an established East Timorese presence in the community, such as Darwin.

"Hopefully this pilot will be tested and proven quickly so that it can be extended to the many other areas of Australia facing hospitality labour shortages as soon as possible."

**Media Enquiries:**  
**Rodger Powell – 0417 488 881**  
**Steven Fanner – (02) 6273 4007 or 0402 913 603**