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## **MIGRATION CHANGES WILL IMPACT HOSPITALITY SERVICES NATIONWIDE**

Accommodation Australia and the Australian Hotels Association have warned the decrease in permanent migration planning levels in the Federal Budget will have a direct impact on hospitality services, especially in the regions.

Last night's Budget announced a decrease in the permanent migration planning levels from 190,000 per year down to 185,000.

"This is disappointing, even though it was expected – given public sentiment, the housing crisis and the strong position taken by the Opposition," AHA national CEO Stephen Ferguson said.

"This is a clear but distressing signal for many industries, not just hospitality and accommodation businesses, which rely on migration to top up essential skills that we need in Australia, especially in the bush.

"Australia simply does not have the population to meet our labour needs, and this move will see a reduction of services at venues in regional areas in particular – more days where a kitchen is closed on a Monday or Tuesday for example."

Accommodation Australia CEO Michael Johnson said uncertainty remained over the Government's overall migration strategy, with certain elements still under review.

"In the first draft of the Core Skills List, the primary list does not contain cooks and chefs which is worrying to say the least," Mr Johnson said.

"It is hard to understand that with more than 12,000 vacancies nationwide, just why cooks and chefs cannot be given certainty as a core skill Australia requires?"

"We are also still fighting to retain the rule that makes backpackers spend time in the regions and remote Australia if they want to stay in Australia for a second or third year.

"Even though students are here to study first and foremost they do make up an important part of our workforce in pubs and hotels – especially in regional areas."

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