



25 September 2006

**The Secretary**

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment,  
Workplace Relations and Workforce Participation  
Parliament House  
PO Box 6021  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

**RE: Inquiry into Workforce Challenges in the Australian Tourism Sector**

Young Australians Tourism Association (YATA) is the peak industry body representing tourism students and tourism industry youth in Perth Western Australia. YATA has the key role of assisting students with the move into the tourism industry and acts a support base and networking forum for young tourism professionals as they develop into their career.

YATA has developed partnerships with key industry organisations to help provide a link between the industry and industry youth including Tourism Western Australia, Perth Convention Bureau, EventsCorp and Tourism Council WA, as well as key tourism educators including Curtin University of Technology, Edith Cowan University, Central TAFE and Murdoch University.

## **Innovative workplace measures to support further employment opportunities and business growth in the tourism industry**

We believe that employment in the tourism industry would greatly benefit by changing the image of a career in the industry to be a profession and not just a short term industry.

The tourism and hospitality industry need to be promoted to school aged students as a viable, interesting and worthwhile career choice.

The number of students graduating from University and TAFE's with tourism specific qualifications is increasing and as an industry we need to recognise these qualifications and acknowledge tourism and hospitality as a profession in the same way that Public Relations and Accounting are seen as professions. This will help to encourage more people into the industry.

Embracing industry youth and identifying opportunities for young people to develop worthwhile and rewarding careers in the tourism industry will help to retain employees instead of losing them to other industries.

For this to be successful, the rewards of the tourism industry need to be better promoted including the "lifestyle" that working in the tourism industry offers. The industry would also benefit from improved wages and more flexibility in working hours and conditions.

Increased work experience opportunities for school vocational programs like INSTEP and for TAFE students will help promote the diverse and exciting career opportunities available in the tourism industry.

YATA also believes that the tourism industry youth also want more on the job training and professional development opportunities available through both their

jobs and the industry to assist them to develop successful and rewarding tourism careers.

While it is vital for a career in tourism to be seen as a profession and more emphasis should be placed on university and TAFE qualifications, it is also important to embrace part-time employees and backpackers to fill some positions in the industry especially in regional Australia.

Ongoing commitment to employee training, especially in customer service, and business accreditation will assist businesses and the industry to provide visitors with quality tourism experiences.

Organisations such as YATA whose charter is to assist tourism students gain work experience and provide access to employment opportunities are pivotal to assisting young people develop their careers. It is important these organisations are given support from the industry government. This may be financial assistance but also support by using YATA as a recruitment portal for employment and work experience opportunities and to promote the benefits of the working in the diverse and exciting tourism industry.

Organisations such as YATA are pivotal in acting as the point of contact for developing links between tourism employers and students and the young workforce. Furthermore, the industry needs to be proactive in embracing youth and identifying opportunities for them to develop worthwhile and rewarding careers in hospitality and tourism.

In summary, YATA believes the employment shortfall in the tourism industry would benefit from innovative measures like changing the image of the tourism industry including employees to be seen as professionals, promoting the benefits and lifestyle of the industry and providing better training and career opportunities.

On behalf of the Young Australians Tourism Association,

Simone Woodward

Chairperson

Young Australians Tourism Association