



Public hearing

Where are the workers?

The tourists are here, but where are the workers? Labour shortages in the tourism industry will be among the issues discussed at a public hearing of the House of Representatives Employment Committee's public hearing in Canberra this week.

The Committee will hear from the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) at the hearing on Thursday, 1 March as part of its inquiry into employment in the tourism sector. In its submission to the inquiry (No. 17), DEWR notes that labour shortages are the most serious issue the tourism sector is facing. For example, the accommodation, café and restaurant sector is likely to increase by 1.8 per cent per annum over the next five years, but it is already facing widespread labour shortages.

On the inquiry, Committee Chair, Hon Gary Hardgrave MP, commented, "The tourism sector is of vital importance to Australia's economy and to promoting Australia on the world stage."

"The incorrect perception that the tourism sector does not provide long-term, satisfying career prospects is a serious impediment to its future employment growth. This inquiry will examine how best to support continued employment growth in the industry and ensure Australia remains a top tourist destination."

The Committee is to inquire into and report on workforce challenges in the Australian tourism sector, with particular reference to the following:

- Current and future employment trends in the industry;
- Current and emerging skill shortages and appropriate recruitment, coordinated training and retention strategies;
- Labour shortages and strategies to meet seasonal fluctuations in workforce demands;
- Strategies to ensure employment in regional and remote areas; and
- Innovative workplace measures to support further employment opportunities and business growth in the tourism sector.

Public hearing program: Thursday, 1 March 2007

Time: 11.15am – 12pm
Venue: Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House Canberra
Witness: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Further details on the membership of the Committee, the inquiry and advice on making submissions can be obtained on the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ewrwp/> or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4162 or emailing ewrwp.reps@aph.gov.au.

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair, Hon Gary Hardgrave MP, on (02) 6277 4585 or (07) 3344 2622

For background information, contact the Committee Secretary, on (02) 6277 4162 or 0407 406 337