



## ***A new approach needed to increase the tourism workforce***

Seasonal workforce management, the use of migrant labour and the provision of career paths in the tourism sector are three of the big workforce challenges tackled in a new report released today by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Workforce Participation.

The report, *Current vacancies: workforce challenges facing the Australian tourism sector*, makes a total of 25 recommendations. It focuses on employment and training initiatives, labour shortages and skills demands, including the use of migrant labour, how to improve recruitment and retention and taxation incentives.

Tourism employers are facing workforce challenges created by the lack of labour caused by low unemployment rate and the regional nature of many tourism businesses. In a labour intense industry, this places employers under critical pressure.

Chair of the Committee, Hon Gary Hardgrave MP, commented "the inquiry examined how best to support continued employment growth in the industry and ensure Australia remains a top tourist destination, supported by people who are well trained and offered satisfying, long-term careers. A major concern is that a lack of suitable staff will undermine the industry's ability to meet the expectations of service quality that tourism promotions have created in the minds of international visitors."

The deputy chair, Mr Chris Hayes MP, noted that "the tourism sector is of critical economic importance in Australia, especially for employment in regional areas. It is important that steps are taken to ensure its strong growth."

The report unanimously recommends:

- more comprehensive data compilation and analysis to support workforce planning;
- seasonal workforce and destination management planning;
- amendment of the Migration Occupations on Demand list to include skilled tourism occupations;
- extension of working holiday maker visas for those who undertake work in regional or remote areas;
- establishment of an industry leaders' forum to take responsibility for promotion of careers in the industry and establishing a professional tourism body;
- research into the barriers to workforce participation of older workers;
- an inquiry into opportunities for growth in Indigenous tourism;
- amendment of the training funding model to one that is competency based and the provision of competency based apprenticeships; and
- the introduction of tax averaging arrangements for rural and remote tourism operators.

Copies of the report can be obtained by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4162 or on the Committee's website at [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ewrwp](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ewrwp) or emailing [ewrwp.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:ewrwp.reps@aph.gov.au). The Chair and Deputy Chair are available for media comment follow tabling and are contactable at their offices in Parliament House, Canberra (details below).

**For media comment**, please contact the Committee Chair, Hon Gary Hardgrave MP, on (02) 6277 4585 or the Deputy Chair, Mr Chris Hayes MP, on (02) 6277 4682.  
**For background information**, contact the Committee Secretary, on (02) 6277 4162.