

House Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Workforce participation

Inquiry into workplace challenges in the Australian tourism sector

Please find attached our response to the inquiry, we hope this adds value to the exercise and are happy to elaborate if deemed appropriate.

The particular terms of reference noted are:

- 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

Response

We are a registered training organisation and an executive recruitment company for tourism and hospitality operating throughout Australia, Asia and the Middle East. We are exposed to the development and sourcing of skills at a variety of levels in a wide range of organisations and countries.

Current and future employment trends in the industry;

More executives will 'swap' industries back and forth as tourism and hospitality becomes more brand focused.

Skill shortages will increase as overall skill shortages in customer service/sales increase but other higher paying industries eg. Finance/property will poach hospitality/tourism workers.

Long terms visitor arrival targets must be set and marketing plans adhered to. Australia is chopping and changing their target market to make short term gains. If a strategy is applied to target visitors we can also apply a strategy to target workers/skill areas to service these clients. We can only maintain target visitor arrival groups if we service them effectively and link our immigration policies/training funding to the appropriate groupings.

Current and emerging skill shortages and appropriate recruitment, coordinated training and retention strategies;

There are severe shortages in the cookery skill area, There are a variety of funding mechanisms to put people through these courses but the retention rate is extremely low and one of the major factors is the apprenticeship wage.

Training is offered to mature age workers but the hours required for cookery roles do not fit in well with mature age workers.

The current apprenticeship model needs to be re-worked to encourage more on the job apprenticeships in contrast to the traditional '1 day a week at TAFE' model

Employers are still on the whole unaware of the benefits of traineeships/apprenticeships and still perceive it to be a complex paperwork nightmare

The people gaining access to Australia by skills migration visas need to be retained in those industries for longer. We need a retention strategy that is longer term and easily tailored to individual circumstances

Labour shortages and strategies to meet seasonal fluctuations in workforce demands:

The extension of employment from 3 months to 6 months for overseas workers is helping this issue and is a great development

More assistance needs to be delivered to private companies to flexibly and safely organise seasonal workers to move from Summer resorts to winter ski fields

Contractors need to be deemed as such and not as employees to encourage businesses to utilise mobile workers for seasonal fluctuations, payroll tax and additional penalties are discouraging the use of seasonal contractors

Strategies to ensure employment in regional and remote areas:

Funding for training in regional areas needs to be increased to attract city based training organizations to operate in remote areas, currently funding models make it difficult for quality training to be delivered in remote areas when the funding amounts encourage city based training as it is more profitable.

Training programs for Pre-Vocational courses need to be tailored to individual areas to focus on the social problems surrounding the reasons that people in these areas do not find employment instead of the traditional- resume writing and interview techniques. Programs should include addressing self esteem, depression, homelessness etc.

Employers need training to be able to recognize potential talent instead of relying on resumes, bad habits and gut feelings. Employers need to be able to profile applicants based on more emotionally intelligent criteria. Job seekers need to be given a more realistic career development program for the regional area they live in to understand the long term benefit of securing employment instead of comparing their next job wage to that of their employment entitlements.

Innovative workplace measures to support further employment opportunities and business growth in the tourism sector

Advanced selling skills and personal communication training is essential for employees in this industry.

A large proportion of the businesses in this sector are small businesses that often go out of business due to poor management skills and a lack of finances.

Senior Management must be encouraged to continue their personal development/training. Not enough managers are participating in programs such as coaching, mentoring or structured industry peer development workshops.

A more flexible small business lending facility needs to be established with strict criteria for training business owners in basic sustainability.

Traineeship funding needs to be made available to employees who have qualifications but are not qualified in the tourism/hospitality industry.

Current information sharing networks across the sector are not designed to foster an industry led brains trust of solutions as a group. These networks need to be supported more heavily by government not just in terms of financing but access to the relevant government representatives and more air time in media/ upper and lower house discussions.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raman Nambiar', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Raman Nambiar
Director