



NEW INQUIRY

The tourists are here ... Where are the workers?

While Australia is running a campaign to lure more tourists to our shores, there are concerns that we may not have the workforce to meet increased tourist numbers. This is the subject of a new inquiry into workforce challenges in the tourism sector announced today by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Workforce Participation.

From 2005 to 2014, the average annual growth in international visitor arrivals is expected to be 5.8 per cent with nearly 6 million international tourists visiting Australia this year. Tourism contributes 3.9 per cent of total GDP and 5.6 per cent of total employment, and the indirect benefits of tourism are nearly as much again.

The Committee Chair, Phil Barresi, commented, "Given the economic importance of the sector (especially for employment in regional areas), and campaigns to attract more tourists to Australia, as well as Government strategies to boost the tourism industry, we must ensure that we have a workforce that is ready and able to grow with the sector."

"The tourism industry faces particular challenges with some skill shortages, at times more isolated work locations, and often a transient and seasonal workforce," Mr Barresi said. "This inquiry will examine how best to support continued employment growth in the industry and ensure Australia stays on the tourist map."

The inquiry was referred by the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Kevin Andrews. 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.

Interested persons and organisations are invited to make written submissions to the inquiry by **25 August 2006**, after which the Committee will hold public hearings.

Further details on the inquiry, including the terms of reference, background documents, membership of the Committee 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, Phil Barresi, on (02) 6277 4350 or (03) 9873 8351

For background information, contact the Committee Secretary, on (02) 6277 4162