



MEDIA RELEASE

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PROPOSED WORKING HOLIDAY MAKER REFORMS WELCOME

The Australian Hotels Association (AHA) and Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA) welcome the [Final Report of the Inquiry into the Working Holiday Maker Program](#) that was tabled in Parliament this week.

AHA CEO Stephen Ferguson and TAA CEO Michael Johnson said the report includes several recommendations advocated for by both peak associations.

Mr Ferguson said COVID-19 had underscored the importance of Working Holiday Maker (WHM) visa holders to supplementing the hotel and hospitality workforce.

“With approximately 50,000 WHM visa holders departing Australia this year, it has been made abundantly clear they are vital to satisfying a gap in the workforce,” Mr Ferguson said.

“The Parliamentary Inquiry provided several key recommendations that, if adopted, will ensure the program delivers better support for our industry and better flexibility to visa holders.”

Mr Johnson said the COVID-19 crisis has presented a unique opportunity for the Government to investigate ways in which the WHM can be improved.

“We look forward to the Government’s timely implementation of the report’s recommendations to strengthen our industry in the important recovery period ahead, particularly as we face an environment where there will be fierce competition to attract such travellers,” Mr Johnson said.

“We thank Committee Chair Julian Leeser MP and all Committee members for their considered recommendations and the support they will deliver to tourism, accommodation and hospitality providers.”

The AHA and TAA advocated for the following recommendations that were endorsed:

Recommendation 3

That Working Holiday (subclass 417) and Work and Holiday (subclass 462) visa holders should be able to work in tourism and hospitality in all hard-to-staff rural and remote areas of Australia as part of their 88 days or 6 months to qualify for their second or third year WHM visa.

Recommendation 5

That the Government continue to seek opportunities to increase the WHM upper age limit to 35.

Recommendation 6

That the Government seek opportunities to expand the WHM program with new countries.

Recommendation 8

That Working Holiday and Work and Holiday visa holders working in tourism should be able to work for the same employer for more than 6 months in hard-to-staff rural and remote areas of Australia.

-Ends-

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