

MEDIA RELEASE

Reprieve for ABS Survey of Tourist Accommodation welcomed – TAA calls for long-term funding

25 June 2014: The Federal Government’s decision, announced last night by Friends of Tourism MP Dan Tehan, to continue funding the Survey of Tourist Accommodation for another year has been welcomed by Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA), but the organisation is calling for the Survey to be allocated long-term funding.

It was announced earlier this month that the Australian Bureau of Statistics would scrap the Survey due to funding constraints. The move was criticised by TAA and other sectors of the industry, because funding for hotel and other tourism infrastructure development relied heavily on these independent, reliable statistics to justify the investments.

Minister for Trade and Tourism, Andrew Robb, has committed that for 2014-15, Austrade would fund the Survey, which would continue to be carried out by the ABS.

TAA Managing Director, Rodger Powell, said that the move highlighted Minister Robb’s understanding and appreciation of the value of the accommodation sector and its contribution to economic growth and the creation of new jobs. “Minister Robb is overseas selling investment in Australia and knows just how important this information can be,” said Mr Powell.

“TAA lobbied extensively for the retention of these statistics because Australia is about to undergo its most significant hotel development programme in two decades, and it is essential that investors and other analysts have the most precise, comprehensive and reliable figures possible.

“The Minister and his team are to be congratulated for their rapid intervention, but we are concerned that the extension is currently just for one year, with Austrade charged to work with industry to find a sustainable funding model.

“We understand that the Government needs to reduce spending, but making cuts that negatively impact investment makes no economic sense. The primary users of the data are not the 8,000 properties who supply it, but the investors, analysts, developers, and other players in the broader tourism segment. The production of such comprehensive data is not something that the accommodation industry could take on for itself due to the unique structure of the hospitality and tourism sector.

“We would call on the Treasury and the rest of the Government to support long-term funding of the statistics, because the industry has been identified as one of the five national growth industries and provides outstanding opportunities to grow employment across the country, in both cities and regional areas.”

other industry stakeholders, TAA is a division of the Australian Hotels Association, a federally registered organisation of employers representing hotels since 1836.

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