



MEDIA RELEASE

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OCCUPANCY RATES HIT RECORD LOWS, AS ACCOMMODATION IS OFFERED TO HEALTH WORKERS

Many hotels in NSW located near hospitals will join counterparts in other states in being able to offer accommodation to front-line health workers, a move welcomed by the nation's top accommodation body today.

"Our health care workers are true heroes and it is an honour to be able to give them any help we can," Tourism Accommodation Australia CEO Michael Johnson said today.

"Accommodation hotels have already stepped up and acted as quarantine centres for travellers returning from overseas, this is another way we can help the community in these difficult times."

Mr Johnson said today's announcement by the NSW Government could not have come at a better time for the struggling sector, as it again experiences historic falls in occupancy rates due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our figures show national occupancy rates dropped by 51 per cent over the past three weeks alone, with some capital cities experiencing declines of up to 90 per cent," he said.

"These are devastating figures and reflect a fall in occupancy rates we have not seen in our peacetime history. Cities such as Sydney and Melbourne have certainly felt the impacts of COVID-19 with occupancy rates falling to below 10 per cent, while holiday destinations like Cairns are already seeing occupancy rates hit single digits.

Mr Johnson said the announcement by the NSW Government that hotels will be able to offer assistance to our vital front line health care workers could not have come at a better time – it follows on from similar announcements in other states including Queensland and Victoria.

"It won't see us return to full occupancy or anywhere near that, but it is a way for us to keep some staff on and for some hotels to remain open – and as I said, anything which helps our health system is worthwhile," he said.

"It will help bring staff back, particularly in suburban or regional areas which have hotels located near hospitals.

"Looking longer term - future bookings as far ahead as June are at an all-time low with no indication of an upturn any time soon."

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