

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 6 May 2016

SEASONAL WORKER PROGRAMME REPORT GLOSSES OVER TOURISM SECTOR

The Tourism & Transport Forum Australia (TTF) has expressed its disappointment that an inquiry into Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme has failed to include Australia's booming visitor economy in key recommendations to the Government.

Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Migration tabled the report for its inquiry into the Seasonal Worker Programme yesterday with key recommendations to streamline and expand the programme to a myriad of other industries but not the tourism industry.

TTF was a vocal advocate to the Committee about the need to include tourism and accommodation sectors in an expansion of the Seasonal Worker Programme.

"This is the perennial problem with Government. They talk about the importance of the visitor economy as a super-growth industry for Australia's future yet when it comes to taking action to shape Government policy, tourism keeps being left on the sidelines," said Margy Osmond, TTF CEO.

"The Committee has stated that providing job opportunities for Australians, particularly in areas of labour shortages, is fundamentally important, and yet has completely dismissed tourism which is a key employer in Australia confronted with serious labour and skills issues.

"The agriculture pilot programme for young workers should have been recommended for the tourism sector to support youth employment pathways. This is a critical missed opportunity.

"Creating employment pathways for Australia Pacific Technical College health and community services graduates could easily have been expanded to include hospitality graduates, particularly when we are facing a shortage of chefs and cooks. Again, yet another critical missed opportunity to support our industry.

"The tourism industry is currently facing a 38,000 worker shortage that is projected to more than triple by 2020 to 123,000 workers. The Seasonal Worker Programme is also perfectly suited to a large part of the tourism and hospitality industry which is seasonal in nature. As tourism is a key economic driver across Australia, especially in our regional communities, it is very disappointing to see that the Committee did not take the chance to help alleviate these shortages through its Inquiry."

Ms Osmond said recommendations to streamline visa requirements was a positive outcome for industry along with the recommendation to undertake improved qualitative and quantitative research on full-time, part-time and season labour workforce requirements to better inform Government policy.

The Committee's report is available to [view here](#).