



YHA AUSTRALIA

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YHA holding youth tourism conference in Hobart, 3 May 2017

Over 100 leaders in youth tourism will converge in Hobart on 3 May 2017 for the annual YHA Australia Hostel Managers' Conference, as the number of backpackers visiting Australia – including Tasmania – continues to rise.

Overall, 645,000 backpackers visited Australia in 2016, staying for an average of 69 nights, and spending approximately \$6,778 each. The number of backpackers visiting Tasmania increased 20% last year to 48,181 (from 40,314 in 2015) - with backpackers making up one in every five international visitors to the State (*source: Tourism Australia, International Visitor Survey statistics, December 2016*).

Around a third of backpackers are working holiday makers, and this sector - which makes up part of the harvest workforce - has been under pressure due to uncertainty around changes to their visa terms.

Julian Ledger, CEO of YHA Australia, said: *"Backpackers are important for both the tourism and agricultural industries, and Tasmanian farmers, tourism industry representatives and politicians played a crucial role in resolving the 'backpacker tax' at the end of 2016, to achieve a fair rate for working holiday makers of 15 percent."*

Tasmania also rates highly with international visitors after featuring as one of Lonely Planet's 'must-see regions' across the globe in 2015. Additionally, the UN has declared 2017 to be the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, which Tasmania is well-placed to capitalise on with its unique tourism offerings.

The two-day conference (taking place at Best Western, 156 Bathurst St) is YHA's premier meeting of managers from its network of 80 youth hostels across Australia. Leaders addressing the Conference include the CEO of Tourism Tasmania (John Fitzgerald) and Lisa Ronson, Chief Marketing Officer of Tourism Australia (which has been allocated \$10M additional funding to promote working holidays). Mountaineer, Paul Pritchard, will recount his experience of sustaining life-threatening injuries attempting to climb Tasmania's "Totem Pole" in 1998 (finally conquering it last year).

The Conference runs from 8.45am on 3 May to 5.00pm on 4 May 2017, with delegates staying at Hobart Central YHA (9 Argyle St, www.yha.com.au), providing an opportunity to showcase Tasmania's tourism services to influential hostel managers from across Australia.

YHA is part of the world's largest budget accommodation network, Hostelling International, with 4,000 youth hostels in 90 countries.

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Media note: Interviews scheduled for 10.30am on Wednesday 3 May 2017. For more info, or to request interviews or images, please contact Silke Kerwick, Public Affairs Manager, YHA (ph: 02 9261 1111; mobile 0414 844 147; email: silke.kerwick@yha.com.au) or Janet McGarry, Head of Marketing, YHA (mobile: 0408 071 707)