



POLICY & ADVOCACY UPDATE

Issue #14, 8 February 2024

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Senate Committee Report on Closing Loopholes IR Bill

The much-anticipated report from the Senate Inquiry into the Closing Loopholes Bill was released on the 1st of February. As you will recall from previous updates, this controversial Bill was spilt into two with the first part of the Bill passed by both houses in December, leaving many aspects including the casual definition and conversion still to be finalised. The Senate report has indicated that the Government still has much to do to secure passage of the Bill, with even the Labor Senators making 10 recommendations for change.

The views of Senators Lambie and Pocock are particularly important, given the power balance in the Senate. Senator Lambie in the report expressed "significant concern for small businesses as Part 1 [relating to casuals] of the Bill adds greater red tape to an already heavy administrative load. ...[and] "The proposed changes to the casual workforce, workplace delegates' rights and right of entry for union representatives are particularly concerning." She called for more scrutiny of the implications of the Bill.

Senator Pocock was very focused in his comments on casuals in the public service, which is understandable given he is the ACT Senator, but he also recommended five other amendments to the casual's section of the Bill including the right to refuse conversion on reasonable grounds and a "range of small amendments" to Clause 15A definition of casuals to negate unintended consequences. In the last 24 hours of intense negotiations by Minister Burke a deal has been done and the Senate is being asked to consider further proposed amendments which the government is confident will pass. More on the full implications of the revised Bill will be covered in the next update.

AA Back in Canberra this week

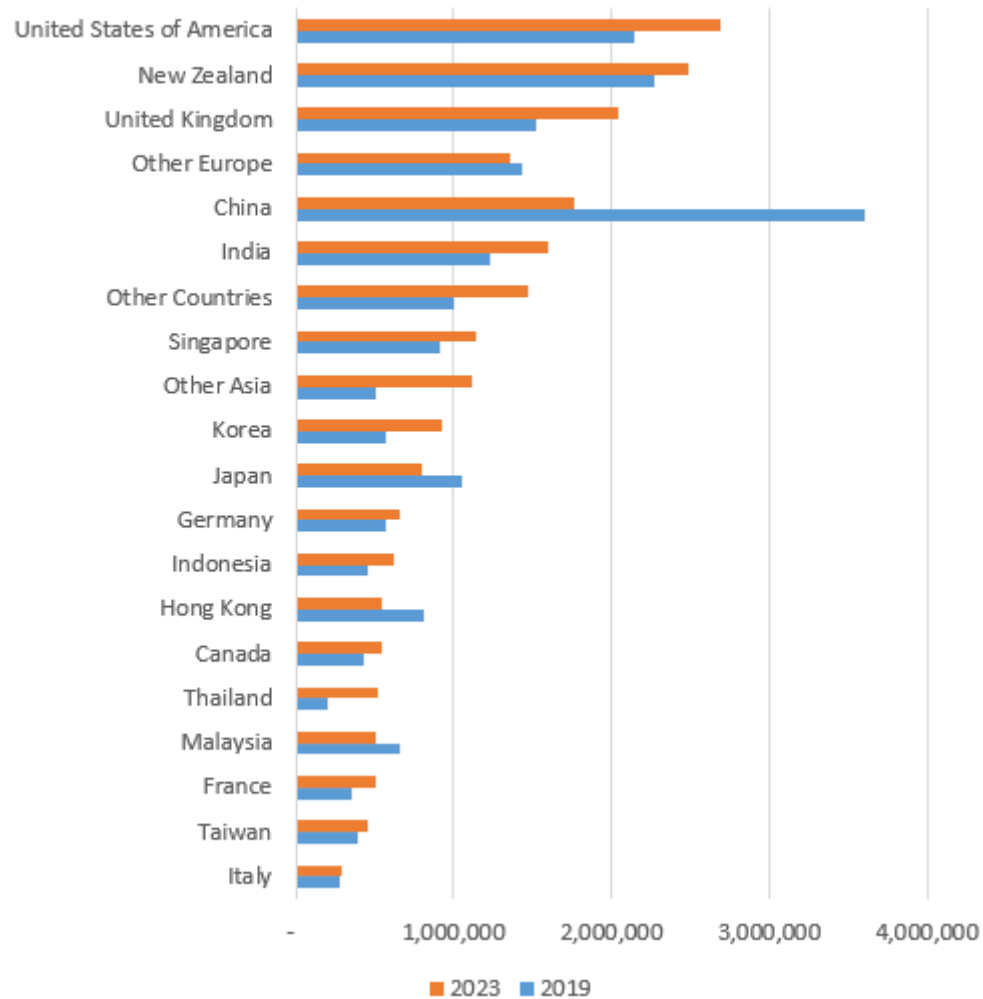
AA CEO, Michael Johnson, and I are in Canberra again this week, attending the AHA National meetings, including their event which will be very well attended by politicians from across the aisle. We are then meeting face to face with the Minister for Immigration, Andrew Giles, and his advisor, as well as advisors in the offices of the Ministers for Training & Skills and Trade & Tourism. Not wanting to leave the other side of politics out of the loop on accommodation issues, we are also meeting with the Shadow Ministers for both Trade and Tourism and well as Immigration. The key platform for discussions will be our recent [Pre-Budget submission](#), which contains most of the national issues that are important to the accommodation industry.

Shifts in the country of origin of hotel guests

In a continuation from last advocacy update's review of the unpublished data compiled by Tourism Research Australia for AA, the graph below shows how the market share has changed since pre-COVID in the origin of guests to hotels. Visitors from the USA, United Kingdom, India, Other Asia (beyond other named Asian countries), Germany and other countries not specifically named (including South America) have all increased over the last four years. This contrasts to the dramatic drop in visitor nights in hotels by Chinese visitors, as well as falls in nights spent by visitors from New Zealand, Japan, Malaysia, Hong Kong and other European countries not separately named. The significant resurgence in visitor nights by Americans is particularly good news for hotels due to their higher yield and propensity to stay in commercial accommodation. 34% of all visitor nights spent by visitors from USA are in hotels - higher than any other separately identified country of origin. Singapore with 29% of nights is also well above average, as is New Zealand 24%, Korea 19%, Scandinavia 16%, Germany 16%, Switzerland 15%, Canada 15%, Malaysia 15%, UK 15% and Hong Kong 14%. Visitors from India only spend 10% of their nights in hotels and China 8% (reflecting in large part the high student and VFR component from these two countries).



International Visitor nights In a Hotel/Resort/Motel 9 months to September, Source TRA IVS



Accommodation Australia Finalist in 2024 ASURIA Awards

Accommodation Australia NSW is honoured to have been named as a finalist in this year's Asuria Employer Awards. Recognised in the category of Innovative Recruitment Solutions, the nomination focuses on the development of an end-to-end, pre-employment and recruitment model intended to deliver consistent local, regional and national employment solutions for Accommodation Australia Members. First trialled at AA member hotel Marriott Sydney in September, participants were able to immerse themselves into a hotel employment setting, giving them a flavour – and the appropriate skills – to land a job in the industry. See full media release [here](#).

Bizarre FWC application to increase housekeeping wages in the HIGR

On 13 February 2024, the Fair Work Commission will hear an application filed in December by Contreras Martinez to vary the Hospitality Industry General Award to raise the award wage for housekeepers on the basis that the wage is currently inadequate, does not reflect the value of housekeeping services, the skills needed to clean the room, and the wage is "only



a fraction" of the revenue earned for the room. Of course, as we may need to point out should the FWC take the application seriously, the rate hotels charge for rooms relates to the capital costs of building and all the furnishing as well as the level of amenities across the whole hotel, not just how clean the room is. The AHA will appear for members in this matter.

Byron Shire STRA owner fined

This month a Suffolk Park (Byron Shire, NSW) STRA property owner was fined by the Council \$12,000 for exceeding the currently existing State Government 180-day limit for holiday letting. In a [statement](#) released by the Council, they emphasised that they are monitoring the market very actively and are "taking the regulation of rules surrounding short-term rental accommodation extremely seriously, particularly ahead of the introduction of the new 60-day cap that will apply from September".

Drop me an email at policy@accommodationaustralia.org or give me a call on 0418 277 919 if you have any national policy issue that you think AA should be following up. If you know an AA member who is not receiving this advocacy report but wants to, then encourage them to email me and we can add them to the distribution list.

Kind Regards

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