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POLICY & ADVOCACY UPDATE

Issue #27, 8 August 2024

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- Regional migration submission finalised
- Household expenditure falls
- Increase in students taking VET at schools



AA welcomes James Goodwin as CEO

Accommodation Australia (AA) has a new CEO, with respected former boss of the Australian Airports Association, James Goodwin, to commence with us on 2nd September. James' appointment follows an extensive recruitment process following the retirement of former CEO Michael Johnson. AA chair David Mansfield said the Board was thrilled a person of Mr. Goodwin's skills and experience had taken up the position. "In James Goodwin we have the perfect person to head the Association in the challenging period in the lead-up to the Federal election and beyond, as we deliver on our purpose to be an influential advocate for a better future". For the full media release of the appointment click [here](#).

AA engages with new Federal Ministers

This week AA attended the annual Labor Business Forum and met with seven Ministers relevant to policy issues impacting the accommodation industry. This was a very timely engagement given the recent Ministerial reshuffle which saw Tony Bourke takeover Home Affairs and Immigration, and Andrew Giles shift to Training and Skills. Also, Clare O'Neil remains in our orbit as she has been shifted to housing, which is

very important given our advocacy on short term rental accommodation. The forum also gave us the opportunity to raise with Education Minister Jason Clare our concerns that the combination of actions the government is taking to reduce international student numbers could see a bigger impact than what the government is seeking. This would really hurt industries such as ours given their importance to our workforce. Attendees at the forum heard from the Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese (pic below on left) at lunch time where he emphasised the stability of his government and that he was the first PM since John Howard to go a full term and re-stand for the next election. We were also able to catch up with the Minister for Small Business, Julie Collins (pic on right), in the evening where we had a great conversation about the innovation and admirable risk-taking of small business entrepreneurs.



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Regional migration submission finalised

At the end of last month AA made a submission in response to the Government's [discussion paper](#) on regional migration. The core message in our [submission](#) was that regional accommodation properties were finding it very difficult to find the skilled staff they need to run their businesses efficiently. To address this problem, regional migration settings needed to be as responsive as possible, with maximum access to skilled occupations eligible for both temporary and permanent migration sponsorship. A key issue also raised in the submission was the importance of working holiday makers, and the need to retain a requirement to work in the regions to be eligible for the second and third year visas. In relation to WHMs, we also sought an expansion of the regions that are currently eligible for this specified work, such as



regions should be all work outside capital cities with the exception that Darwin should also be considered regional.

Household expenditure falls

According to data released by the ABS last week, household expenditure in June fell by 0.5% month on month on seasonally adjusted terms but rose 3.1% over the year to June 2024. Spending in the monthly comparison actually rose for goods but fell 1.8% for services, with sectors such as our own feeling the impact of the drop in household spend on recreational and cultural services, accommodation services, and catering services. Over the year to June, spending on hotels, cafes and restaurants rose strongly in NSW, WA Victoria and ACT, but was weak or negative in SA, Tasmania and the NT.

Increase in students taking VET at schools

The latest report from NCVER reveals that in 2023, compared with 2022, the number of VET in Schools students in Australia increased by 3.8%. Across a five year period, 2019 to 2023, the number of VET in Schools students in Australia increased by 7.0%. The 2023 enrolments indicated that over 27% of school students undertook vocational training, including 19,310 (or 7.7% of VET enrolments) undertaking apprenticeships or school-based traineeships. VET in school numbers rose in Queensland, NSW, Victoria, South Australia and WA, but fell in the other states. Queensland has by far the most students undertaking VET in schools with 101,780 VET students enrolled. The next largest enrolments were in Victoria, with 53,820 students undertaking VET in 2023. Importantly, the largest numbers are enrolled in tourism, travel and hospitality courses with 52,915 enrolments compared to 51,570 in 2022. The big challenge for this industry is how we can better translate this activity into commitments to a career in hospitality post-school.

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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