

Special 2025/26 Federal Budget Edition

- Key features of the budget
- Budget night advocacy
- AHA/AA Federal Budget summary in full

Other news

- Tourism Ministers meet in Adelaide
- Accommodation tourism awards winners
- Brisbane Olympics venues announced
- Latest International and domestic visitor nights

Key features of the 2025/26 Federal Budget

Given that it was the Budget that the government really did not intend to have, the only major surprise on the night were the relatively modest additional tax cuts starting in 2026. The key features of the Budget were:

- Additional personal tax cuts with a cost to budget from 2026-27 totalling \$17.1 billion over 3 years.
- As previously announced, excise on draught beer frozen for two years.
- \$150 energy rebate for individuals and small businesses – cost \$1.8 billion
- Increasing the medicare levy low-income threshold estimated to decrease receipts by \$648 million over five years from 2024-25.
- Tourism Australia's funding maintained at current levels for next year.
- \$1.5 billion over four years in unallocated monies for decisions taken but not yet announced – this is basically the election war chest which is relatively modest by past budget standards.
- Over \$10 billion in additional health spending over four years – including on medicare, the PBS aged care and cheaper medicines.

Budget night advocacy

With the election potentially called as early as this weekend for early May, Budget night provided a great opportunity for the AHA and AA to engage with as many key parliamentarians as possible to advocate for key issues relevant to our members including apprentice chefs, migration, airline capacity and pricing, and Tourism Australia funding. As can be seen from the photo, when he met with AA CEO James Goodwin post-speech, the Treasurer Dr Jim Chalmers (pic left) was in fine form. Given that the polls in the last week have swung more firmly behind the government, this is no great surprise and with the tax cuts as an extra sweetener it would seem they are reasonably confident.



Ahead of the Budget announcement James was briefed by the Office of the Minister for Trade and Tourism, Don Farrell at Parliament House and at the budget dinner, he was sitting next to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations of Australia, Murray Watt. The Minister was keen to understand current workforce challenges and how members were coping with implementing the recent industrial relations reforms including the Right to Disconnect. The Assistant Treasurer, Stephen Jones was also at James' table and discussions included addressing skills shortages and training needs for the sector.

AHA/AA Federal Budget summary

For the full Federal budget summary prepared by AHA/AA see [here](#).

Tourism Ministers meet in Adelaide

Chaired by Minister for Trade and Tourism, Senator the Hon Don Farrell, Australia's tourism Ministers met in Adelaide on 21 March 2025 to discuss key issues impacting tourism. The Ministers welcomed recent developments in Australia's aviation industry, including the announcement of the Australian Government's support for Rex

Airlines, noting aviation is a critical enabler of tourism in Australia. They also acknowledged ongoing challenges with insurance affordability. Tourism Australia and Tourism Research Australia both made presentations, with TRA updating the Ministers on changing to data collection particularly for the National Visitor Survey. Ministers also welcomed the establishment of the First Nations Visitor Economy Partnership, which met for the first time on 18 March, to support greater First Nations participation and economic opportunities in the visitor economy. It was noted that a record 3 million trips had included a First Nations experience in 2023-24. For the full communique of the meeting see [here](#).

Accommodation national tourism award winners

On 21 March 2025 the National tourism awards were announced in Adelaide. The gold medal winners in the accommodation categories included:

- Unique Accommodation - Sierra Escape NSW
- Hosted Accommodation - The Dragonfly Inn Tasmania
- Caravan and Holiday Park - Big4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort Qld
- 3 - 3.5 Star Accommodation - Urban Camp Melbourne Vic
- 4 - 4.5 Star Deluxe Accommodation - Peppers Silo Hotel Tas
- 5 Star Luxury Accommodation - The Reef House Adults Retreat Qld

For a full list of medal winners in all tourist categories see [here](#).

Brisbane Olympic Venues announced

The Budget was not the only big announcement yesterday, with the Queensland Government announcing the final decision on Olympic venues. Key features of the announcement, which has generally been well received by stakeholders include:

- A new 60,000-seat Olympic stadium will be built at inner-city Victoria Park,
- a 25,000-seat aquatic centre built at nearby Centenary Pool.
- the Gabba to be used for cricket in 2032, before being transformed as a new entertainment and housing precinct
- The RNA Showgrounds, home of 'the Ekka', will get a 20,000-seat arena and house an athletes' village
- The main Athlete Village will also be built at the Bowen Hills precinct, within walking distance of the Brisbane Stadium
- Brisbane Tennis Centre will be upgraded with a new 3000-seat court next to Pat Rafter Arena and 12 extra courts.
- Soccer will be hosted in Cairns and Townsville.
- Sailing will also be co-hosted in Townsville,

- hockey will be played at an upgraded centre on the Gold Coast
- Equestrian will be at Toowoomba.

In announcing the new venues, the Queensland Premier said "*Delivering 2032 and Beyond* is a gamechanger for our State and with this plan we will deliver a Games all Queenslanders can be proud of."

Latest International and domestic visitor nights

Data just received from Tourism Research Australia this morning shows that the number of international visitor nights spent in a hotel or motel rose by a significant 35% to 44.4 million nights in the year to December 2024 compared to the previous year. This rise outstripped the 21.4% rise in total international visitor nights which increased to 295 million nights. The picture is more sobering at the domestic level, with total visitor nights actually falling from 402 million to 397 million further reinforcing the view that more Australians are choosing overseas holidays over domestic. The number of domestic visitor nights spent in hotels and motels remained virtually unchanged at 113.5 million. A more detailed analysis of this latest IVS and NVS data will be contained in the next Advocacy Update.

Kind Regards

Jenny Lambert OAM295

National Policy Director

Accommodation Australia