

## MEDIA RELEASE

# Martin Ferguson AM appointed Chair of Tourism Accommodation Australia

15 June 2015: The appointment of highly-respected former Federal Tourism Minister, The Hon. Martin Ferguson AM, as the new Chair of Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA), gives the sector its strongest voice in Canberra for many years.

TAA is the peak voice of the accommodation industry and represents major hotel groups and over 1,000 hotels, motels, resorts and serviced apartments and is a division of the Australian Hotels Association, a federally registered organisation of employers representing hotels since 1836.

Mr Ferguson's appointment comes at a significant time for the industry as it concentrates resources to provide greater advocacy for an industry that is about to undergo its most significant expansionary phase in almost two decades

Mr. Ferguson was President of the ACTU for six years before entering Parliament in 1996, where he held the Shadow Ministry responsibility for tourism from 2004-2007, and was then Minister for Tourism in the Rudd and Gillard Governments from 2007-13.

"TAA has strong representation and advocacy nationwide through its branches in each state and territory and I am looking forward to ensuring the industry has a strong voice in Canberra."

As Federal Tourism Minister, Mr. Ferguson was responsible for announcing the Tourism 2020 plan and it played a major role in elevating the tourism and hospitality to the forefront of priority industries for Australia's future growth.

Over 75 hotels are currently in the development pipeline, with the figure likely to grow to over 100 hotels scheduled for building by the end of 2020, and the boom in hotel development is providing momentum for Australia's tourism and events sector.

Mr. Ferguson said, "Australia now has a very competitive currency, major new tourism infrastructure underway, and is one of the fastest growing industries for employment, especially in regional areas that are currently being affected by the mining slowdown.

"The industry needs to advocate long-term and sustainable policies that encourage both development of the industry and creation of new employment opportunities."

"The tourism and hospitality industry is now generating \$94 billion in spending and contributing over \$34 billion to Australia's GDP, directly employing over 500,000 people and earning nearly 10% of our total export earnings, making it Australia's largest service export industry", said Mr. Ferguson

"The accommodation industry needs to progress its strategic initiatives, such as the concentration on growing Asian business, investment in tourism infrastructure and the move to build industry resilience, productivity and quality."

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