

STATE BUDGET ADDRESSES SKILLS SHORTAGE, TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

Tourism Accommodation Australia NSW has welcomed measures to address the significant skills shortage in the key tourism sector, in a State Budget TAA CEO Carol Giuseppi described as “great for labour and skills, and for transport infrastructure.”

The head of the peak accommodation body said the \$285.2million targeted at vocational education and training (VET) in the Budget would be a boost for the state’s tourism sector, which employs more than 56,000 people. She also welcomed an additional \$764.8 million set aside for skills development and training programs through TAFE NSW and other registered training providers.

“There are very real shortages right across the accommodation industry right now when it comes to skilled workers in the managerial, culinary, food and beverage areas in particular,” Ms Giuseppi said.

“Making TAFE courses free for some 100,000 people will help boost the numbers of students going into these key areas of our industry in coming years. There’s no doubt building workforce capability remains a key priority for our industry and it is great to see that addressed in today’s Budget, as well as the increase in the payroll tax-free threshold.”

Ms Giuseppi also welcomed the new transport and infrastructure initiatives included in the Budget, particularly in Western Sydney.

“Spending on the feasibility study into a high-speed underground train connecting the Sydney CBD to Parramatta and Sydney Olympic Park is important, as fast connectivity is crucial in boosting the visitor economy benefits of Western Sydney,” she said.

“Projects like this one will mean more business events and tourism dollars.”

Ms Giuseppi also acknowledged the continued support for regional tourism infrastructure with \$118 million in 2018-19, along with other initiatives.

“It’s good to see \$54 million included in the Budget to market regional NSW as a tourism and event destination, along with the \$7.5 million for regional programs to attract more visitors, events and conferences,” she said.

Ms Giuseppi said it is important the Government continue to do all it can to support the value of the visitor economy in NSW – in both Sydney and the regions.

The industry’s total contribution to the economy is an estimated \$32.5 billion, or 6.0 per cent of NSW’s GSP.

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