

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 18 June 2019

STATE BUDGET A “MIXED BAG” FOR TOURISM: TAA NSW

The State Budget’s \$71 million dollar package aimed at providing more fee-free TAFE and VET courses was welcomed by Tourism Accommodation Australia NSW CEO Michael Johnson, as a step toward alleviating the chronic skills and labour shortage in the accommodation sector.

However, the CEO of the state’s leading tourism accommodation body said he was disappointed at the cut in funding of about \$35 million to the Destination NSW Budget.

“This move is short-sighted considering the competition for the tourism dollar from other states – in particular Queensland and Victoria,” he said.

“Sydney in particular has 10,000 hotel rooms currently in the pipeline – now is the time we should be ramping up and promoting what our state has to offer.”

But, Mr Johnson said the sector welcomed the Government’s announcement of \$71 million over four years for an additional 100,000 free TAFE and VET courses.

“These include 70,000 fee-free courses for young job seekers combining work and study through a traineeship – something we have pushed for as a way to address the skills shortages the accommodation sector faces,” he said.

“TAA NSW is currently working closely with TAFE NSW on developing specific recruitment strategies for young job-seekers including VET programs so any boost in this area is welcomed.”

Mr Johnson said other Budget positives for the sector included:

- \$76.6 million for the Sydney Opera House renewal program and security upgrades.
- \$167.2 million to relocate the Powerhouse Museum to Parramatta and expand storage at the Museum Discovery Centre.
- \$113.5 million to rejuvenate the Walsh Bay Arts Precinct.
- \$103.4 million for the *Sydney Modern* project to transform the Art Gallery of NSW.
- As part of the Restart NSW Commitment, Regional Tourism Infrastructure receives \$103.7 million to fund critical regional tourism infrastructure.
- \$25 million will go towards establishing the Byron Bay Sustainable Tourism Fund.
- \$25.2 million to improve access to NSW national parks through upgrading and extending walking trails, improving visitor infrastructure and facilities, and introducing online and digital tools for virtual tours.

Media Contact: Craig Vaughan, 0423 796 382