

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**INDUSTRY ENDURING TOUGH TIMES “BUT WILL RECOVER”**

The tourism accommodation sector is set to endure its toughest period in decades over the next few months, but is “resilient” and “will recover” – that was the key message from the Tourism Accommodation Australia NSW Hotel Market and Economic Outlook forum held at the Primus Hotel Sydney yesterday.

More than 200 industry leaders packed the room for the two hour meeting, which had speakers from key sectors of the industry including Hostplus, data analysis firm STR and Dransfield Hotels and Resorts.

TAA NSW and National CEO Michael Johnson said the forum focused heavily on COVID-19 and the subsequent travel bans. Mr Johnson said he had visited regional members in centres including the North Coast, Blue Mountains and Batemans Bay over the last week and the message was the same.

“The industry and the wider community is doing it tough, first with bushfires and their aftermath, now with COVID-19 and the resulting travel bans,” he said.

“TAA is working closely with the Government to make sure the talk of assistance becomes action.”

Paul Hammond, STR Pacific Business Development Manager, told the crowd the accommodation sector had a long period of sustained growth before COVID-19 hit, with an unprecedented number of rooms (about 18,000) under construction. But this was a period of “unprecedented challenges.”

“These aren’t structural or permanent changes we are now facing – we will recover from this,” he said.

“COVID-19 has and will impact our industry significantly... History tells us the rebound is likely to be sharp ... We are a resilient country, a resilient city... We also need to remember this is about lives not numbers.”

Dean Dransfield, Owner and Managing Director of Dransfield Hotels and Resorts, said the sector was obviously going through a tough time, especially over the next three to six months.

“It’s not the end of the world and we will recover... Maybe not as quickly as during past events but we will recover... and we don’t have a (room) supply problem in Sydney.”

Greg Clerk from Hostplus provided a broad economic analysis, situating Australia within the global context and the different ways our interconnectivity will have an impact on finance and businesses here.

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