

MEDIA RELEASE

FRIDAY, 17 APRIL 2020

HOTEL CLOSURES TOP AGENDA AS PEAK ACCOMMODATION BOARD MEETS

The devastating impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the hotel sector dominated discussions at this week's emergency Tourism Accommodation Australia NSW board meeting – called as hotel closures nationwide continue to mount.

Chaired by Antony Page of the Sydney Harbour Marriott, the state's peak accommodation board brought together decades of experience via conference call.

TAA NSW CEO Michael Johnson said keeping as many hotels operating as possible during the crisis topped the agenda.

"Sadly, more than 40 hotels have closed in Sydney alone in the last three weeks and potentially 300 nationally," Mr Johnson said.

"That's despite the best efforts of the industry to stay afloat with the assistance of TAA and the state and federal governments. The JobKeeper program and ways of keeping staff connected to their employers was a major part of discussions – never has this been more important.

"Staff health and wellbeing are our key priority and we need to keep our links to valued employees wherever possible so we are all there as part of the recovery."

Mr Johnson said the use of hotels to quarantine travellers or to provide accommodation for health care personnel was also a major discussion point.

"Last weekend saw the first mass departure of quarantined guests from Sydney hotels and our continued support of Government initiatives was discussed," he said.

"The chance for hotels to host our valued front-line health care workers in suburban and regional hotels in particular could be the lifeline needed for some of those hotels. The sad fact is hotels around Australia are continuing to close whilst travel restrictions continue and we will be doing all we can to support them in this difficult time."

The issue of short-term rental accommodation and its impact on the industry was also discussed by the board, with legislation expected in NSW later this year.

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