

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Tuesday, 17 November 2020**

## **ACCOMMODATION HOTELS LEFT OUT IN THE COLD**

The state's leading tourism accommodation body said it was disappointed with aspects of today's State Budget, with accommodation mostly left out of the "Out and About Voucher" initiative.

Tourism Accommodation Australia NSW CEO Michael Johnson said members welcomed aspects of the Budget (including a \$200m funding boost for Destination NSW), but were disappointed the voucher scheme – which will see adults eligible for four \$25 vouchers to spend in the hospitality, arts and cultural sectors – didn't include accommodation.

"Many Sydney CBD accommodation hotels are still operating at below 20 per cent occupancy and really need the support," said Mr Johnson.

"Other states and territories included accommodation in their voucher schemes and the impact on the sector was almost immediate.

"While we welcome the fact two of the NSW vouchers can be used for dining out in accommodation hotels we really need the scheme to include actual overnight stays to make a big difference and bring people back into the greater Sydney area.

"We hope after the pilot period in December, the full roll-out may be expanded to include accommodation and encourage people to stay at one of our great venues."

Mr Johnson said he was pleased to see \$782M in funding set aside over the next four years for tourism marketing.

"The \$200M funding boost for Destination NSW in the next financial year will help put both Sydney and NSW front of mind for intrastate and interstate travellers as we continue to wait for the return of our international markets - we applaud Minister Stuart Ayres for that initiative," he said.

Mr Johnson said the continued focus on the Western Parklands City, on-going investment into the Parramatta Light Rail and the Powerhouse Museum project will also bring much-needed visitors into Western Sydney.

TAA NSW also welcomed other measures in today's Budget including Payroll Tax changes which will see a temporary reduction in the PT rate, from 5.45% to 4.85% for two years and a permanent increase in the PT threshold, from \$900,000 to \$1.2 million from 1 July 2020.

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