



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Saturday, 8 May 2021**

## **VISA CHANGES TO EASE DIRE WORKFORCE SHORTAGES**

The Australian Hotels Association (AHA) and Tourism Accommodation Australia (TAA) have applauded the Federal Government's announced changes to visa holder conditions, which will alleviate workforce shortages in Australia's accommodation hotels and hospitality businesses.

AHA CEO Stephen Ferguson said the Federal Government had heeded calls from industry about the growing problems associated with worker shortages and have responded with common-sense measures.

"Employing Australians is always our first preference, but permitting student visa holders to work more hours and allowing temporary visa holders to work in the tourism and hospitality sector under the COVID-19 Pandemic Event Visa will help ensure businesses across Australia have access to the workforce they need," Mr Ferguson said.

"With reports that some hotels, bars, pubs and taverns have been reducing hours or even closing due to a lack of available staff, today's announcement will be welcome relief for many."

"The surge we have seen in domestic tourism is fantastic, however for it to continue we need to have enough people to pour beers, serve meals and service hotel rooms – providing flexibility to allow visa holders to do this work is essential."

TAA CEO Michael Johnson said the Federal Government has worked closely with both peak bodies, resulting in sensible and practical amendments to visa conditions that will deliver immediate benefits for Australian hotels.

"Today's announcement follows long term advocacy by TAA and the AHA, with the two visa amendments reflecting what our associations had requested on behalf of our members," Mr Johnson said.

"The changes announced today will hopefully take some of the current pressure off the hotels and their hard-working employees and secure the necessary workforce support they require to trade at full capacity."

**-Ends-**

*Further information: David De Garis 0412 577 567*