



Tourism Jobs Summit Outcomes

On 30 August 2022, Minister for Tourism and Trade, Senator the Honourable Don Farrell led the Tourism Jobs Summit. The Summit brought together 70 representatives from tourism industry associations, unions, business, academia, Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

The objective was to bring together sectors and industries to collaborate on innovative ways to address workforce challenges. The day generated actions, which will inform the Jobs and Skills Summit and the development of the Government's Employment White Paper and visitor economy workforce and skills strategy. Significant detail was contributed during the day for these processes noting the below is necessarily summarised and simplified.

Understanding the challenges

Prior to COVID-19, the visitor economy (comprising tourism and international education) was Australia's largest services export and fourth largest export overall after coal, iron ore and gas. The visitor economy has long standing workforce capability challenges, due to the seasonal and/or casual nature of many roles, as well as perceptions about difficult employment conditions and concerns about the lack of long-term career opportunities.

Participants heard from Heather Cotching, Austrade Chief Economist about workforce shortages, employment conditions, structural barriers and migration patterns. She highlighted the opportunity to fill existing workforce shortages through increased workforce participation from under-represented cohorts.

Former Tourism Minister, the Hon Martin Ferguson AM, Chair of the Reimagining the Visitor Economy process, highlighted the importance of migration to address short term workforce shortages, but also the need for industry to take steps to boost its reputation so it is able to attract necessary staff. He emphasised the need to position the visitor economy as a "career" for young Australians and women, as well as the opportunity to employ more people with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A panel comprising Sharon Ninyette, Crowne Perth, Andrew Comastri, Etico Hotels and Maureen Pillon, Young Tourism Network spoke about the importance of addressing barriers to participation from underrepresented cohorts. They discussed the need to empower employees and provide them with purpose and the necessary training to supporting their visitor economy career and demonstrated proven results and insights.

John Hart OAM, summarised priorities from Australian Chamber of Tourism and Industry (ACCI)'s recent workforce roundtable, which focused on building skills, migration and industrial relations.

From a regional tourism SME perspective, Evan Hall, Chair, Australian Tourism Industry Council shared the findings of a recent survey of small businesses on their workforce needs. He identified the importance of utilising a mix of solutions to address workforce issues to address based on the different business types and sizes.

In terms of visitor economy jobs of the future, Margy Osmond, CEO, Tourism and Transport Forum said changing consumer preferences, including for sustainable tourism, and new innovation and technology would drive the need for new roles in the visitor economy. She emphasised the importance of moving to sustainable aviation fuel. We need to build the capability for this workforce now and use it to our trade advantage.

Collaborating to address workforce challenges

The Tourism Jobs Summit participants suggested actions to address workforce challenges under the following themes:

- Addressing workforce supply: structural challenges
- Addressing workforce supply: building a domestic workforce
- Addressing workforce supply: the role of the international workforce
- Skills: improving workforce capability
- Elevating the visitor economy into a career of choice.

Participants examined whether ideas had a high, medium or low impact on building workforce capability and were low, medium or high cost. Participants voted on a prioritised and summarised list of actions for industry and governments.

Tourism Jobs Summit agreed key actions

Addressing supply: structural challenges

Participants agreed on the following summarised priority actions:

1. Better use migration, and reforming the migration program, including in relation to Working Holiday Makers
2. Promote the visitor economy as a career of choice
3. Better activate temporary and seasonal workers in Australia

Addressing supply: domestic workforce

Participants agreed on the following summarised priority actions:

1. Remove disincentives from welfare and tax systems to encourage cohorts, such as people with a disability and people on an Age Pension, to the workforce, and provide support for businesses to employ
2. Enhance funding for pathways to visitor economy careers and develop a platform to connect job seekers, employers and data
3. Address housing shortages in regional areas, with incentives for land owners to provide housing solutions.

Addressing supply: international workforce

Participants agreed on the following summarised priority actions:

1. Remove industry sector limitations whilst retaining regional dispersion requirements for Working Holiday Makers (WHM)
2. Allow international students to increase the amount of hours they can work (up to 30) and allow them arrive early on a student visa
3. Expand age limit for WHM, and the importance of a second and third WHM stay

Skills: improving workforce capability

Participants agreed on the following summarised priority actions:

1. Incentivise employers to improve on the job training, including through micro credential training
2. Achieve national consistency of training programs and qualifications; including urgent actions by State and Territories to align regulations and acknowledge each others' qualifications
3. Achieve better integration between training providers and industry to ensure training meets business needs

Career of choice: Elevating the visitor economy

Participants agreed on the following summarised priority action:

1. Provide clear messaging on pathways for tourism as a career of choice, and take action to change perceptions on tourism as a career of choice including ensuring employers better engage and empower staff

Next steps

The action plan from the Tourism Jobs Summit will inform the *Jobs and Skills Summit*, the *Employment White Paper* process and the development of the visitor economy workforce and skills strategy, an action of *THRIVE 2030*.