



Member Newsletter

June 2006

LABOUR MARKET SHORTAGES, TRAINING and SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

One of the issues identified by NTA members as a key priority for the NTA were the issues impacting on their workforce needs — industrial relations, education & training, skills development and labour shortages. These issues were explored in detail in our last newsletter.

The NTA has approached the various Commonwealth Government departments involved in these issues — the Dept of Industry, Tourism & Resources (DITR), Dept of Employment & Workplace Relations (DEWR), Dept of Employment, Science and Training (DEST) and the Dept of Immigration (DIMA). By getting all the Commonwealth Departments together, we were able to find out what information they collect and what research work they have done on our industry.

Under the auspices of DITR, we have now formed a working group to allow the industry to share that information and to influence the policies they adopt to ensure greater benefit to the industry. This group met for the first time on 15 June, and comprises representatives of DITR and, representing the industry, Peter Olah (HMAA), John Hart (R&CA), Nick Hunt (TAV), Bill Healey (AHA) and Robyn Keenan (QTIC).

At the meeting on 15 June, a substantial amount of research, statistics and data on tourism industry skill shortages was provided to this working group. In addition, DITR has collected a significant amount of information on labour market-related programs being run by the Government across many portfolios.

This information will be analysed by the NTA members, with a view to developing policy proposals for discussion and endorsement by the NTA membership at our next Members' Meeting on 10 August, to ensure members can have a say in how these issues are pursued.

GST ON SECURITY DEPOSITS

In April 2006, a ruling on GST on Security Deposits (GSTR 2006/02) was issued by the Australian Tax Office (ATO). The ruling was designed to distinguish between a security deposit (on which no GST is payable) and a part payment (on which GST is payable on the whole supply).

The intent of the ATO appears to be to narrow the definition of a "security deposit" and expand "part payments" and will adversely affect the cash-flow and viability of many businesses in the tourism and hospitality industry. The National Tourism Alliance believes that the ruling does not adequately define a security deposit as it applies to services in our industry.

The NTA Taxes & Charges Policy Working Group is now investigating options such as asking the ATO to withdraw the ruling and reissue a more comprehensive ruling that defines security deposits as they apply in a whole range of circumstances, removing the 10% guideline or adding other guideline percentages in different circumstances.

The NTA may also ask for further examples of the ruling that makes it clear that in tourism and hospitality, a deposit is still a security deposit when it is significantly greater than 50%, or formally recognise as security deposits, the types of deposits paid in the industry.

IMPORTANT DATES

Members' Meeting—10 August

NTA INDUSTRY FORUM & DINNER

Thank you to all the NTA members and their guests who made the NTA Dinner on 14 June in the Great Hall of Parliament House such a success. With over 60 politicians in attendance, it was the largest such gathering we have organized. We hope to build on this success next year.

The Industry Forum received excellent feedback, particularly on the issue of domestic tourism. Tourism Research Australia is currently investigating the low growth of domestic tourism, with a view to recommending to government strategies to fix the problem.

The industry members who attended the Forum were given an opportunity to make a significant input into this process and will continue to be consulted.

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