

MEDIA RELEASE

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Accommodation sector ignored on updated Skilled Occupation List

Australia's leading accommodation industry body says the Government's refusal to reinstate chefs to the Skilled Occupation List is stubborn and misguided.

The annual update of the Skilled Occupation List, which offers more streamlined migration processes to holders of identified qualifications to address areas of skills shortages in Australia, has again left out qualified chefs. Chefs were originally excluded from the list in 2010 and the hotel and tourism industries have been lobbying for the position to be reinstated this year.

Rodger Powell, the Managing Director of Tourism Accommodation Australia, the peak organisation representing more than 500 accommodation properties across Australia, said the industry was disappointed by the announcement.

"Hotels are struggling to cope with the critical shortage of chefs and cooks in Australia, and their continued exclusion from the Skilled Occupation List has made it even tougher to fill these positions.

"The industry is struggling to fill its workforce needs from the Australian pool of workers during this period of low unemployment in most parts of the country. We had worked closely with the Government in the hope of getting chefs back on the list and were hopeful this would occur.

"Through our involvement in the Labour and Skills Working Group under the Government's Long Term Tourism Strategy, we put forward a business case for the reinstatement of chefs onto the Skilled Occupation List.

"This position was supported by the Federal Tourism Minister and by state and territory Tourism Ministers. Addressing this area of skills shortage is acknowledged by governments around the country as critical to the ability of the tourism industry to deliver on its growth potential."

Mr Powell also called for a greater focus on the importance of tourism and hospitality in government policy.

"This is an ill-considered, misguided and deeply disappointing decision from the Government's advisory panel, which appears to be overly focused on the mining and construction sectors rather than on tourism and hospitality, which have far greater labour demands and which operate in all parts of Australia."

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