



Restaurant  
& Catering

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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**IMMEDIATE**

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## **VISITOR ECONOMY TASKFORCE REPORT BRINGS KEY RECOMMENDATIONS OF MUCH NEEDED CHANGE TO SUPPORT GROWTH**

Restaurant & Catering supports the Final Report of the Visitor Economy Taskforce released to the NSW Government today containing key recommendations for a plan to reach the objective to double overnight visitor expenditure to NSW by 2020.

The report recognises that the food and wine sector is a key attribute of the NSW economy and provides high appeal to the visitor markets. It also acknowledges that achieving increased spending by visitors on food and wine is likely to be achieved more easily than would increases in many other expenditure areas. This includes the fact that the high degree of Australian ownership of food businesses and the sector's high labour intensity ensure that any increased visitor expenditure on food and wine delivers maximum economic return to NSW.

The Visitor Economy Taskforce report recognises the constraints placed on businesses in the food and wine sector due to the inflexibility and labour laws under the *Fair Work Act 2009* and calls for the government to review the current wage conditions. The report suggests that current conditions substantially reduce economic viability, competitiveness and the quality of the visitor experience. Including that, in order to maximise visitor economy returns and to enhance the visitor experience there needs to be changes to enable trading on weekends and public holidays.

The report also supports that there is a strong need to increase the skills of employees in the food and wine sector to fill the gap in demand for labour in the visitor economy. It acknowledges that achieving this in a climate where NSW is currently facing a shortfall in the labour force and where traditional sources of labour supply are diminishing, will be challenging.

Restaurant & Catering is supportive of the thrust of the report. John Hart, CEO of Restaurant & Catering said 'it is a well-grounded report laying out a plan to reach these ambitious objectives'. The Association calls on the government to maintain a strong level of industry engagement as it prepares to deliver its response to the report.

The Association also urges the Government to produce a response to the report (in the form of a Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan) within the three month timeframe set. As detailed in the report, this plan will outline the actions for achievement by industry and Government in partnership.

For further information on this media release please contact:

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