

# Food for Thought



Training and Workforce Development  
for the Hospitality and Tourism Industry



# CONTENTS

<b>1. Foreward</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Background</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. Environment</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5. Findings</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6. Recommendations</b>	<b>31</b>
6.1 Recommendation 1	32
6.2 Recommendation 2	33
6.3 Recommendation 3	35
6.4 Recommendation 4	37
6.5 Recommendation 5	38
6.6 Recommendation 6	40
6.7 Recommendation 7	41
6.8 Recommendation 8	42
6.9 Recommendation 9	43
<b>7. Conclusion</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>8. Attachment - Hospitality &amp; Tourism Industry Interviewees</b>	<b>45</b>

# Food for Thought



## FOREWORD

I was honoured when the Premier of Western Australia, Hon Colin Barnett MLA, invited me to investigate the Western Australian hospitality and tourism industry with a view to achieving a better placed industry, particularly through training and workforce development. This was not a review of the industry, but an opportunity to look at what could be done or should be done, to ensure that this industry is part of the dynamic future of Western Australia.

I am most grateful to the many industry people who gave so generously of their time and ideas throughout this project. I would particularly like to thank Hon Peter Collier MLC, Minister for Training and Workforce Development, for his generous support and encouragement on this project.

My role has been as a conduit, to provide an opportunity for the industry to present suggestions to the State Government. I have then given consideration and interpretation of these concepts as the basis of this report.

The hospitality and tourism industry in Western Australia faces significant and unique cost pressures which affect prices and often limit profitability. More recently, the high value of the Australian dollar makes Western Australia an expensive destination for leisure tourists, although the business tourist market is buoyant. The industry also finds itself competing for scarce labour and skills, a problem that increases costs without increasing service standards.

Western Australia provides an exceptional lifestyle for its residents and a wonderful tourism experience for visitors. Consumers' and tourists' experiences often relate to their interactions with people, and not solely based on the sights they see or the locations they visit. How often does one hear a comment regarding a staff member in conversation about a tourism or hospitality experience? Therefore service standards must feature as part of this experience.

Tourism and hospitality is a people business and this is the basis of this report. It is also significant that the majority of these businesses are small businesses (3-8 people).

While employers strive to maintain the highest standards possible, doing this against the obstacle of labour and skills shortages presents them with a major challenge.

The industry has not been inactive and should be congratulated for the many ideas that pre-date my involvement. Many of these are already being progressed to some degree. The challenge is to consolidate these and other new ideas so that a coordinated government/industry approach can provide an integrated program of solutions.

It is with anticipation that I present my consolidated findings for further analysis and action.

*Andrea Mitchell*

**Ms Andrea Mitchell MLA**  
Member for Kingsley



# Food for Thought

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report represents a reflection on the frequently identified issues by the tourism and hospitality sector, with a view to identifying strategies for future investment to support the industry.

The tourism and hospitality industry is most diverse and contains many sectors, all of which are different. It is often described as a fragmented and disconnected industry.

It was never envisaged that this report would comprehensively encompass all sectors, nor would it undertake quantitative research. This report is a qualitative account for an industry that is seeking status and recognition of the role it plays in Western Australia.

Over 50 metropolitan and regional operators and major industry stakeholders volunteered their time to private interviews at which they discussed issues and suggested solutions.

I also visited Westminster Kings College in London, Tourism Management Institute of Singapore, Singapore International Hotel and Tourism College and the Singapore Tourism Board. Online research of well known international colleges and universities was also undertaken.

Two industry workshops were conducted in Bunbury and Busselton/Margaret River. The Bunbury workshop gave a perspective of issues in a larger, more urban regional centre and the Busselton/Margaret River workshop was representative of smaller, more seasonal tourist centres.

Those owners and employers consulted have a strong commitment to the industry and to the hospitality ethos, but for many the pursuit of excellence is made far more difficult by the struggle to maintain standards, often due to a lack of skilled staff or unskilled staff.

However I was enthused throughout the project with the commitment to the industry, the realisation that many situations could be improved, the innovation that was operating in some businesses, and the strategic approach being independently undertaken.

The overwhelming call was for the tourism and hospitality industry to be seen as a career industry in Western Australia, as it is in many other countries and cultures. It should not be seen as an industry of part-time occupations that you hold while you are studying or waiting for another position.

This industry provides people with the key life skills of communication, time management, teamwork and conflict resolution, while at the same time offering a variety of roles within the industry and a world of travel and education.

The report discusses possible strategies for implementation but does not direct any sector to do so. These and other strategies should be developed as a result of consideration of this report recognising the key issues that have been raised.

This is a timely report as the training and workforce sector has undergone considerable changes in recent years. These have obviously been well received, but it is now time to progress with the next strategic direction.

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## BACKGROUND

### Value of Tourism to Western Australia

The 'Training and Workforce Needs of the Tourism and Hospitality Industry' policy paper recently released by the Tourism Council of Western Australia identified features of the State's tourism industry. An extract of these is provided below:

The most recent Tourism Satellite Account (2008/09), produced by the Centre for Economics and Policy for Tourism Research Australia (TRA), made the following key findings when looking at tourism's contribution to the Western Australian economy:

- the value of the Western Australian tourism industry is \$5.92 billion by Gross State Product;
- the Western Australian tourism industry directly accounts for 1.5 percent of the State's economy by Gross Value Added (GVA), and indirectly contributes an additional 1.8 percent.

Tourism is a major employer, including within rural and regional areas, and spans a broad range of businesses including hotels, restaurants, tour operators, attractions, travel agencies, airlines, transport operators, retail, National Parks, Visitor Centres etc.

Employment in the tourism industry can be characterised by:

- A dual labour force consisting of lower skill employees – (both permanent and casual) and higher skilled career oriented employees;
- Major employer of young, migrant and lower skilled people;
- More than 45 percent of employees in the accommodation, cafes and restaurants, and retail trade sectors are aged 15 to 24

Many people in the industry do not identify with the tourism industry and as such do not associate with the need to improve service standards or develop a culture of service.

The State Government has recently made significant budget commitments to tourism in the areas of China market development and events. To ensure the Government achieves maximum return on investment, it is essential that a similar commitment is made to the training and workforce development needs of the industry, to enable it to capitalise on these and other opportunities as they emerge.

# THE ENVIRONMENT

## Workforce

### Training

During 2004-2007 this sector experienced growing competition for labour from the resources sector and other growth industries in Western Australia. The sector responded by significantly increasing training efforts during 2006 and 2007. Then, in 2008/09, the industry was adversely affected by the global financial crisis (GFC), the extent of which was clearly illustrated by a severe drop in training and completion rate of apprentice chefs, in particular.

### Type of Employment

The number of full-time employees in the industry has diminished since 2000, while part-time employees increased at a rate well below most other industries. Those employed full-time are also more likely to be employed on a relatively short term, seasonal basis than in other industries. Overall, the industry does not appear to compete effectively for the labour and skills that are available. While the largest issue is the inability to compete on the basis of wages with resource development projects, many of those consulted identified that this was compounded by the image of the industry.

### International Impacts

Significant changes in Commonwealth student visa eligibility and higher language requirements for permanent residency have significantly reduced the workforce that was previously available from overseas.

### Who is Employed

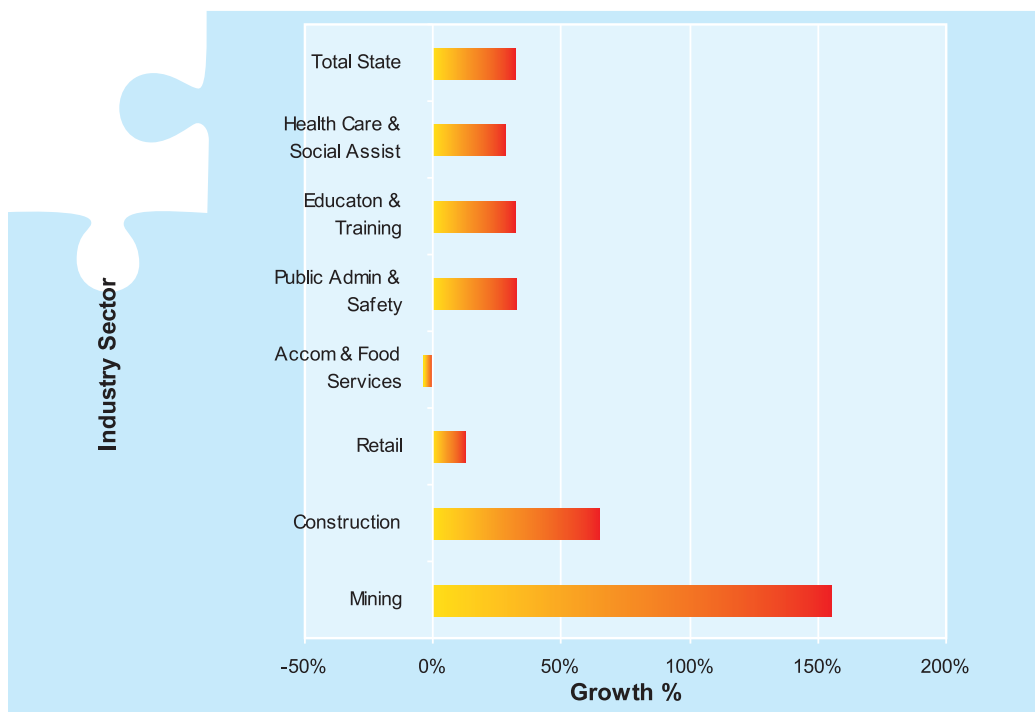
This industry involves a significantly younger workforce who generally work part-time. This generation operates under a different work ethic, which creates difficulties for some employers who do not take the time to work with these staff to create outcomes that satisfy the employer and challenges the staff. Many of the training solutions available to it in the past have not been customised to address this new workforce.

Communication skills vary greatly in this age group, often due to the use of technology to communicate, but if these employees are encouraged and harnessed well, these younger staff create an energy that is good for the industry.

# Food for Thought

While it could be seen that this younger workforce could present challenges for employers, they also provide opportunities to make marked improvements in the way the industry is trained and supplied with labour.

**Growth Rate in full-time Employment, Western Australia.  
Comparison 2000 to 2010 (average quarterly employment level)**

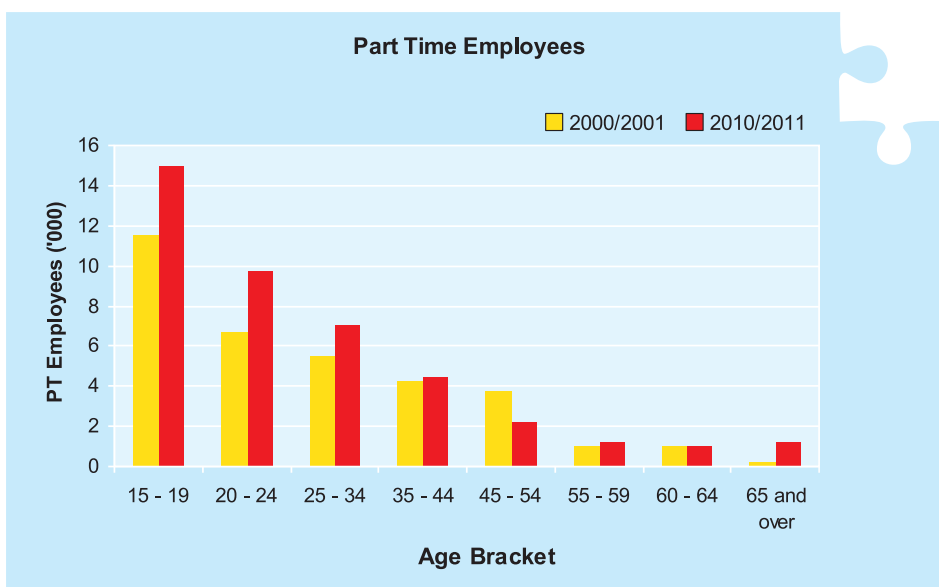
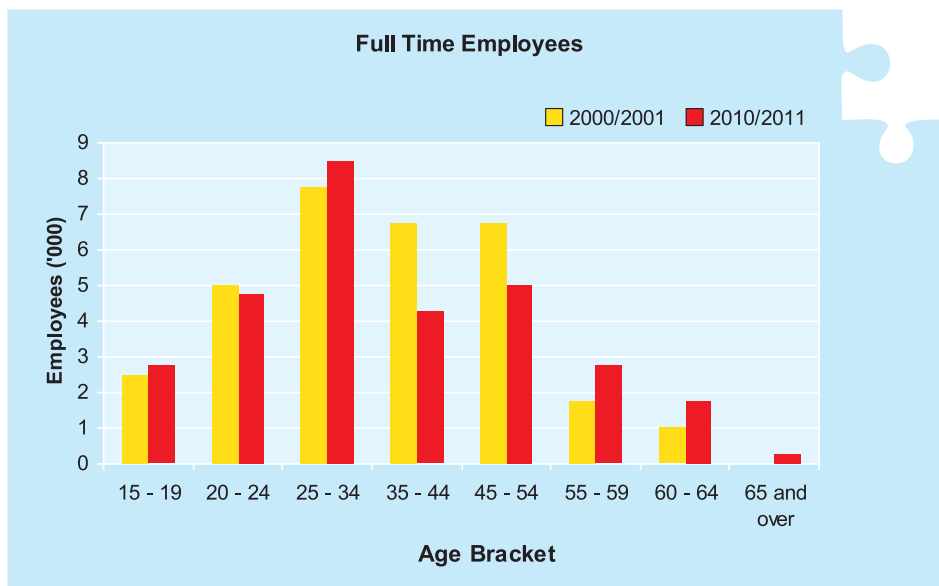


Data extracted from: 6291.0.55.003 - Labour Force, Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics, May 2011

## Businesses

Many of the businesses are considered small business ie they consist of 3-8 staff. This equates for 70% of the businesses and subsequently requires additional support for staff, managers and owners.

## Changes in the Age Distribution of Accommodation and Food Services Employees in Western Australia between 2000/2001 and 2010/2011



Graphs extracted from - Australian Bureau of Statistics 6291.0.55.003 - Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, - Employed Persons by Sex, Industry, Age, Status in Employment, August 1994 onwards (E05\_aug94), viewed November 2011 < <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6291.0.55.003May%202006> >

A photograph of a woman, likely a hotel housekeeper, standing in a laundry room. She is wearing a dark blue or black long-sleeved uniform shirt and a white lace-trimmed apron. She is smiling and looking towards the camera while holding a large stack of folded white linens, including towels and sheets, in front of her. The background shows a brightly lit laundry room with shelves and a doorway. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. In the top left corner, there are three white circular shapes resembling hole punches on a document.

## FINDINGS

## Finding 1

The Tourism and Hospitality Industry must promote itself as a career of choice.

This was the unanimous issue that was raised in every meeting. People seldom choose a career in the hospitality industry. It is often perceived as an industry for part-time jobs whilst further education is undertaken or time is needed until another position is available.

Many parents discourage a career in the industry, but support their sons and daughters *'having a part-time job at the local café'*.

Teachers do not encourage students into the tourism and hospitality sectors, but focus attention on other industries.

There is no doubt that a career in tourism provides people with many transferable skills and provides many opportunities for travel, and work within a range of roles.

A dedicated campaign to promote the industry is required.

*'You can have a great lifelong career in this industry.'*

*'Need to develop a positive image for the industry – not the one seen on television with chefs screaming at each other.'*

**Tourism**  
*is a major employer in*  
**Western Australia**

# Food for Thought

## Finding 2

### A Culture of Quality Service and Status is required for the industry.

Many comments were made reflecting the quality of service that we all expect, and appreciate, when we travel overseas. It is a sad indictment that these same values are seldom experienced in Western Australia.

Many comments were made about the culture of tourism in New Zealand, Europe and Hawaii, where the value and importance of tourism to the country is learned in schools, so locals are more often willing to assist tourists.

The recent CHOGM event produced many statements from delegates from other countries that praised the friendliness of the people of Perth. This culture projected by many of the volunteers and staff needs to become a permanent aspect of our lives.

*'Everyone is an ambassador.'*

*'Tourism is the main industry in New Zealand and everyone knows it.'*

*'Need to create a service attitude – not as something extra.'*

*'What is the benchmark for service in Western Australia?'*

## Finding 3

### Attraction and retention of people in the industry is critical.

This is a people business and attracting and retaining quality staff is critical to the success of any business. Although some say that during the staff shortages they had no choice in securing calibre staff, there is no doubt that where there is effective staff management and encouragement, there is less turnover of staff and others in the industry will seek to work in that business.

There were many examples given to achieve this factor, and they were not focused on salaries, but reflected the challenges and opportunities provided by management.

There are attributes that emerged regularly for people who are successful in the industry:

- Hospitable
- Energetic
- Outgoing
- Enthusiastic
- Competitive
- Fun seeking

Many believe that significant parts of the industry had simply forgotten that they need to provide an environment that attracts this type of person.

*There is a need to overcome the short term thinking for the industry:*

*'I just need someone who can hold 3 plates and smile.'*

*'Using innovative rostering to support people's social and family lives.'*

*'Conducting product sessions for staff with suppliers.'*

*'Small trips provided to staff involving assessment of other businesses.'*

*'Facilitate exchanges with other enterprises.'*

# Food for Thought

## Finding 4

Tourism WA has distanced itself from training and workforce development for the industry.

There was general consensus that the decision of Tourism WA to outsource training and workforce development would diminish the effectiveness of the workforce in the tourism aspects of their businesses.

The example of the courses now being undertaken by the Small Business Development Corporation, *'Tourism Boost'*, for Tourism WA, demonstrated the general course content for an initial training program for the industry. There was great concern that specific training for the tourism sector was still required, particularly for businesses to access new and changing practices and technologies.

*'Booking online must be available through all websites and electronic media.'*

*'Any business must be reading Trip Advisor every day to ensure their business is being promoted positively.'*

*'How do you get into the overseas markets? You can no longer wait for people to arrive in Perth and go to a Visitors Centre.'*

## Finding 5

Anyone can commence work in the industry without any training. Likewise any person can own a business without any qualifications.

These issues were raised as both positive and negative, but identified weaknesses in the industry.

In many other sectors you cannot commence work unless basic training has been undertaken, eg. to work in a bar, you must complete the Responsible Service of Alcohol course, crowd controllers are required to have a Certificate 11 before being provided with a relevant police license, but you can commence a job waiting in a café without any Occupational Health and Safety training. The construction industry has a 'white card' which is subsidised by the Construction Training Fund, which provides initial basic training.

The Australian Hotels Association online program '*Service with a Smile*' was introduced to provide minimal customer service training for people which was instigated in preparation for CHOGM. This program may provide a sound basis for a continued and required qualification.

Many people purchase a business in the industry without any formal training for this industry. They are often unaware of the requirements of the industry, the value of training for staff, how training can be undertaken, and effective management practices. Many businesses suffer through poor management of staff and lack of staff development.

It was generally agreed that training needs for supervisors and middle management needed immediate attention.

Business owners need to have a hands-on approach with their business. It was recognised that where there is a dedicated and visual owner, there is success in the business.

*'Some business owners do not even like people – they just thought they could make good money.'*

*'Promoting people to supervisory roles before they are trained in management is a recipe for disaster.'*

*'With poor management you lose even more staff, and those you keep are unhappy which reflects in their work.'*

# Food for Thought

## Finding 6

There appears to be broad satisfaction with the delivery of apprenticeship training, most of which is provided by large public training providers.

Within the discussions comment was made about the need to increase the rate of completion of students in their courses and apprenticeships to provide a greater workforce for the industry.

Similarly concerns were raised that training providers only schedule their programs to commence early in the calendar year, whereas commencements of apprentices and staff occur over the full year. Strategies to address this should be developed.

There was concern over the idea that apprenticeships may return to a 4 year qualification. This concept was not supported by the industry, as it believed that this would decrease the number of apprenticeships completed.

It was mentioned on occasions that training often rewards the employer. It appears some employees are unaware of the incentives and allowances available to them and their employees for clothing, equipment and tools under Commonwealth arrangements such as the 'Tools For Your Trade' scheme and allowances under the Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2010.

*'Change the Apprenticeship system so that international students could 'purchase' a position in an apprenticeship.'*

*'Given Western Australia's resource sector, should there be an industrial pathway developed for hospitality?'*

## Finding 7

### Flexibility of training is critical for the future training of people in the industry.

This industry is not a one size fits all industry and it is pleasing that many providers have taken steps to address the need for flexibility in training and assessment. This is because of the times that staff are working, distances that exist between training providers and businesses, and the need for on the job experiences.

Some businesses are extremely busy through the tourist season, and it is difficult to train staff during this period. More concentrated training could occur during the quieter times.

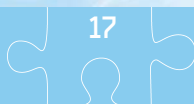
The exciting aspect of this relates to the development of new training methods and innovation in delivery.

*'Assessment may need to be undertaken onsite at 2am.'*

*'Train and assess on site under pressure conditions.'*

*'The industry has the best equipment and people for training.'*

*'My staff are flat out for 6 months, then I am struggling to keep them in work.'*



# Food for Thought

## Finding 8

Schools need to become actively involved in promotion of the industry as a career and providing pre-entry training for the industry.

This message was overwhelmingly strong from all sectors of the industry, as there is a distinct division between schools, training institutes and the industry.

Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) for this sector has decreased in volume, partly due to the unavailability of training facilities that meet the requirements of the national training package. This may be addressed in some part with school training centres coming on line, but alternative options will need to be investigated.

There is also some perception that the return on investment of current school based training is relatively poor – with fewer skills seeming to transfer to the workforce than reflect the hours of industry training conducted by schools might suggest.

The industry is adamant that schools are not promoting the industry as a career of choice. Therefore the students are not even considering a career in the industry, but it is perceived as something that you can fall back on, or fill in with.

*'Teachers do not promote hospitality as a career.'*

*'Work experience in hospitality undertaken in school hours does not truly reflect the industry.'*

## Finding 9

In such a diverse sector, many small business owners are at a loss to know where to access information and support for training and professional development.

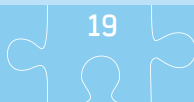
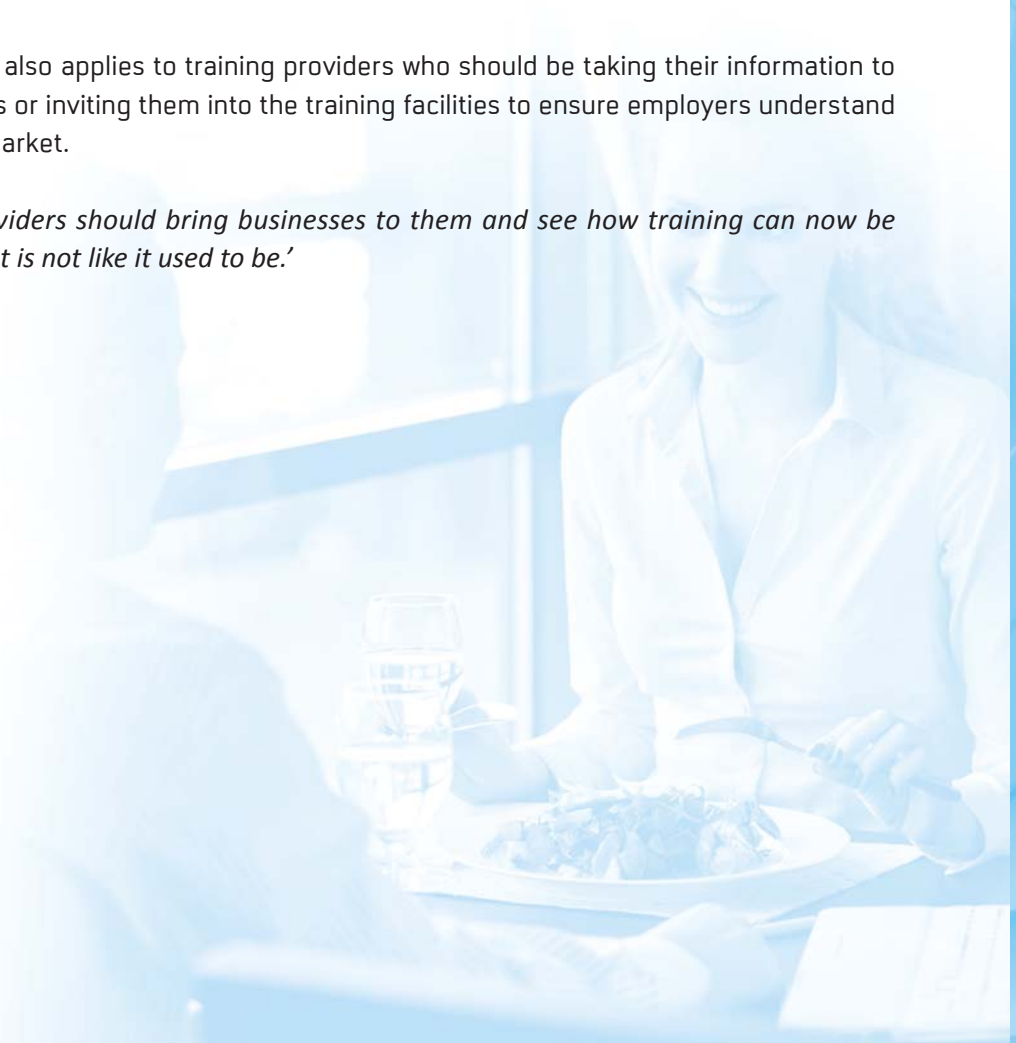
Managers and owners of small businesses are often under pressure to maintain standards in the presence of skill shortages, or are new in the industry and are unaware of key contacts for information.

They have little time to interact with government and other agencies not central to their hospitality business. Navigating the various agencies keen to help in the industry can be complex and frustrating to small business in particular.

There needs to be a more streamlined way for this industry to access and interact with services.

This situation also applies to training providers who should be taking their information to the employers or inviting them into the training facilities to ensure employers understand the training market.

*'Training providers should bring businesses to them and see how training can now be undertaken. It is not like it used to be.'*



## Finding 10

Develop and support training packages for the seasonal workforce, particularly in regional areas.

People on working holidays make up much of the seasonal workforce, especially in the regions. Many of these are not Australian residents. Many stakeholders were very satisfied with this group as a source of labour, as they were often more aware of hospitality standards, were working in the region from choice and were often well educated.

However many of these employees were not formally trained in hospitality. Some regional employees had difficulty addressing suitable training from training providers due to distances, while it was also noted that the workers usually moved on after being trained, creating a recurring training need and cost.

There is also no public training assistance provided for these people as they are not Australian residents, but there is often no other source of local labour to be trained.

It was acknowledged that mature age domestic tourists ('grey nomads') were an under-utilised resource. Strategies to train, support and assist these people to move from work opportunity to work opportunity would decrease labour shortages and increase market efficiency. They often travel with their own housing which also assists businesses.

## Finding 11

### Promote opportunities for indigenous people and indigenous tourism.

Indigenous tourism is a key area for development in the tourism industry as many tourists from overseas are seeking experiences within this sector.

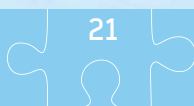
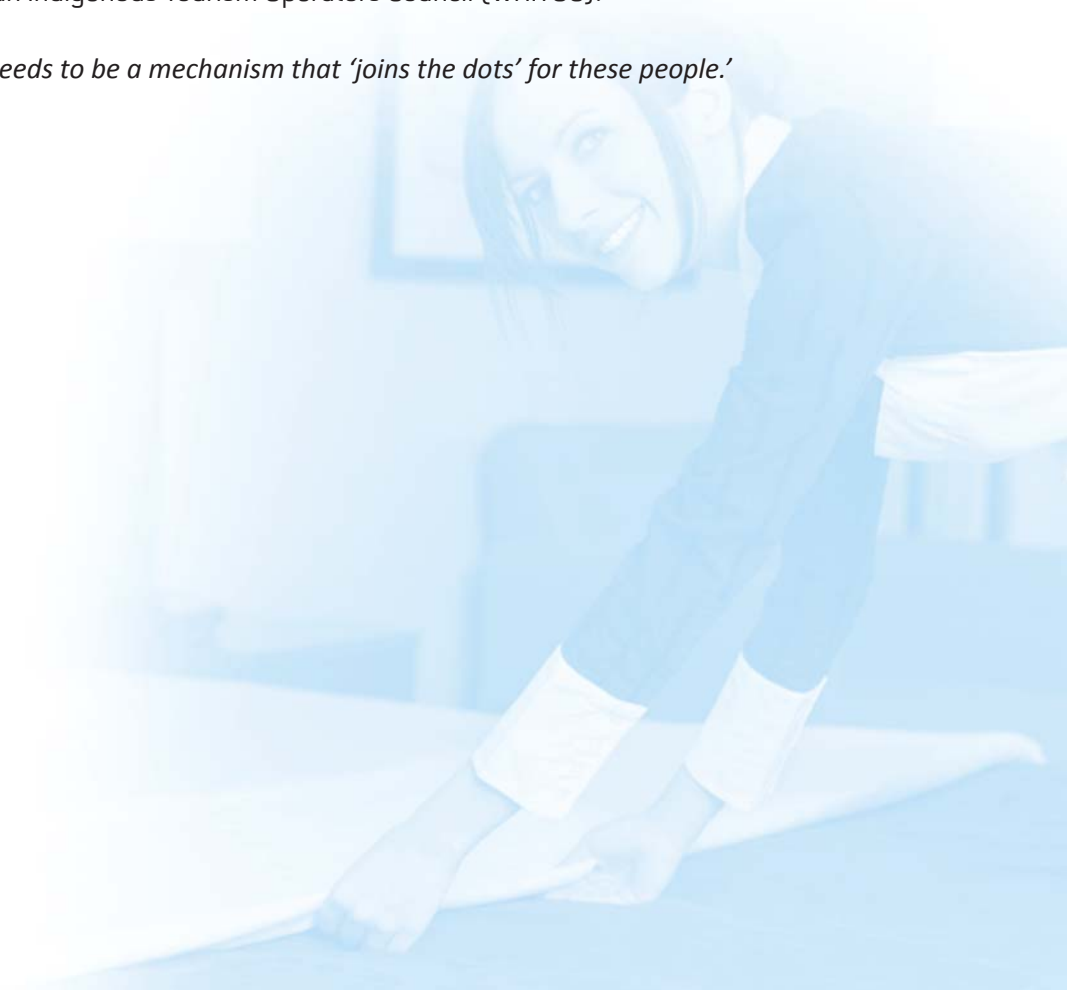
It appears that few indigenous youth are aware how to access information for training and support. In fact even in ecotourism businesses there are very few indigenous staff.

Some of these indigenous businesses may need assistance in their development.

Institutes have some elements of training, but there is not a collective approach to this sector. Encouragement is required for progress through career paths, and gaining national and international experience.

Western Australia is the only State with an indigenous tourism organisation, Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC).

*'There needs to be a mechanism that 'joins the dots' for these people.'*



## Finding 12

### Concerns with the Federal Awards that impact on the Hospitality Industry: Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2010, (Fair Work Australia Modern Award) and Awards covering penalty rates.

There was considerable concern expressed about the Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2010, and the way it discourages training.

The essential issue, for the larger employers who are covered by this award, is that progression through the qualification scale has the potential to result in higher wage rates. If a staff member undergoes training in advance of the work being available then the employer must pay the employee at the trained level regardless of the work that is being undertaken by the employee.

As a result some large employers have abandoned higher level structure training and traineeships for this reason, and small employers have acted with caution even though they may not be covered by this award.

Because of these award provisions many employees are now being denied traineeships and other training opportunities that would improve their long term career path.

In addition many employers are avoiding recognition of competency because of possible pay implications. The total result of these issues significantly reduces the amount of public funding otherwise available to the industry, as traineeships provide much of this funding.

It was also suggested that people with dated experience or qualifications, or those with qualifications but little experience, may also find this wage issue a significant barrier to employment in the industry, despite labour shortages.

*'Classification rates should still be based on responsibilities not training.'*

*'Federal IR laws are turning organisations and businesses away from training of staff.'*

Many employers raised concern that the penalty rates for staff over weekends and public holidays creates great difficulty for their business and its success.

*'IR Laws could be an issue for staff and lecturers if flexibility of training is to be pursued.'*

*'Hospitality is one of the few industries that are hit by penalty rates during their busiest periods.'*

## Finding 13

### International hospitality students are an asset to the industry.

The sector developed a significant reliance on international hospitality students who were committed to the hospitality industry from training and participating in the industry in Western Australia.

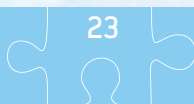
Unfortunately the program was being abused by some agents and training providers in that many students were completing the course with a view to gaining permanent residency, rather than any commitment to the industry.

Given that these students fund their own training and the industry cannot recruit enough domestic apprentices or students, an international student visa again should be contemplated, subject to being able to permit genuine students to train for industry careers.

It was also suggested that these visas be extended in their length of time and the number of working hours available on each visa be doubled. This would create an additional workforce.

*'Extend backpacker visas.'*

*'Reduce the red tape for immigration.'*



# Food for Thought

## Finding 14

There is a need to define the benchmarks for a Western Australian service culture.

It is recognised that Western Australia does not have a strong service culture, but it was not defined what the benchmark should be for this culture.

It was suggested that a panel of experts should set the service benchmark for the industry, so that the staff within the industry know at what level they should be operating and the public know what level of service they should be receiving.

*'We need to develop the Australian service culture we want.'*

*'Some people come into the industry and they do not know how to set a table anymore.'*

*'Some staff do not know how to greet or talk with people.'*

*'The public have let the standards slip by not speaking up when they experience poor service.'*

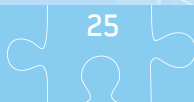
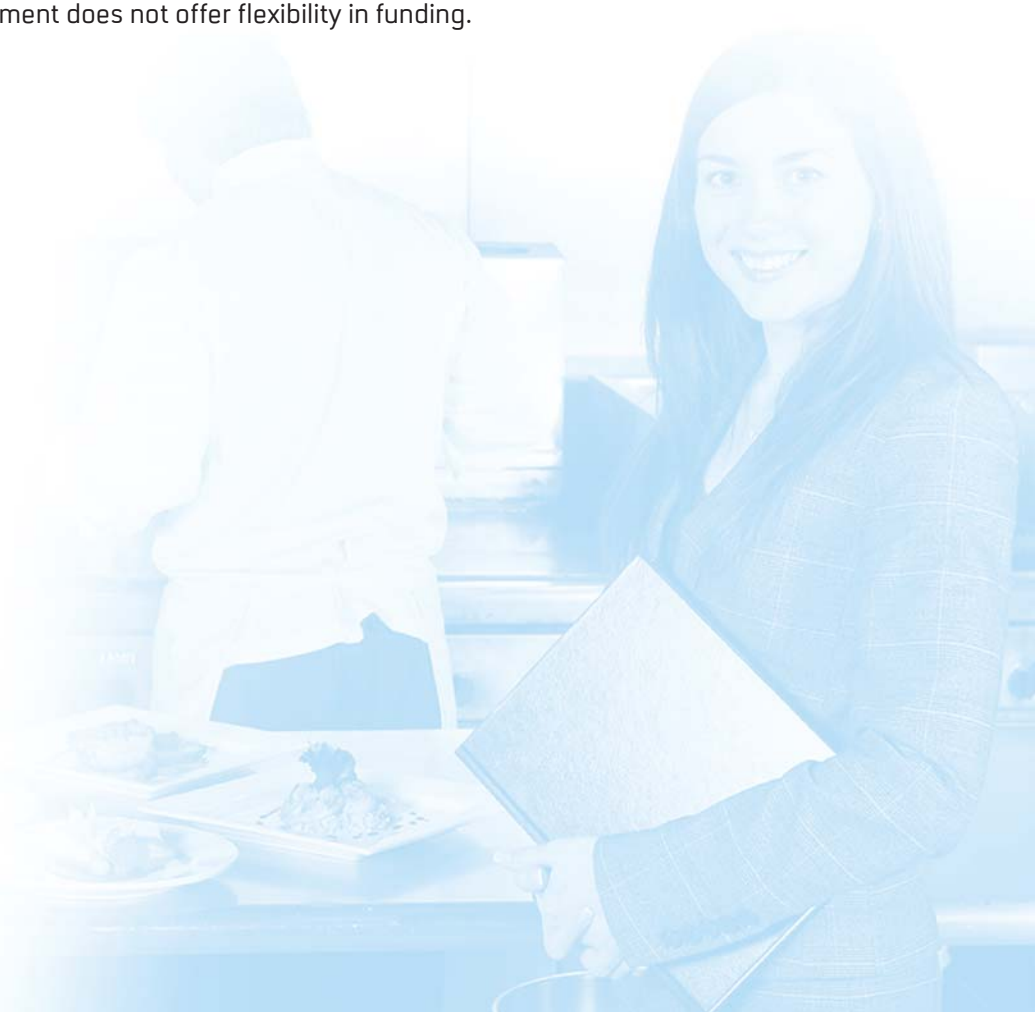
## Finding 15

The Department of Training and Workforce Development should allocate training places based on merit and reduce the time taken for processing the applications from training providers. There was no flexibility in funding options for providers.

It was raised that the allocation processes for training places to providers should be based on performance and merit, not just on a numbers allocation as this does not recognise quality training but supports mediocrity. It does not reward competent training providers.

The tendering process needs to be adjusted as it is too cumbersome ie the Department requires information earlier but informs providers much later of the allocations to training providers. This mechanism of allocation should be relevant and efficient to the training providers, not just a bureaucratic process.

The Department does not offer flexibility in funding.



# Food for Thought

## Finding 16

### Innovation and quality need to be recognised within the industry.

The industry is changing and businesses that are doing the same thing year after year are in fact falling behind.

The industry needs to overcome the reliance on Government handouts. Industry is in the best place to develop the industry.

The wine sector has recognised that it needs to bring other people into its industry and is thriving as a result. How should hospitality do this?

New chefs and owners have returned to Perth and opened restaurants. They are leading the way forward and setting a new culture. How should they be supported in this additional role of 'industry leaders'?

Businesses should be acknowledged for innovation.

*'The industry needs to adopt a 'sales culture' – 'do you want fries with that' was mentioned often as the next phase within a successful business.'*

*'Be creative in your rostering and wages – if someone works harder or covers the wages of more hours, pay them.'*

*'I am trying a fly in-fly out roster with my staff to assist them with their social life. They are working a 10 day roster ie 10 days on and 4 days off – in the metropolitan area.'*

## Finding 17

During the summer months there is always a shortage of staff in the south of the state, and during the winter months there is a need for more staff in the north.

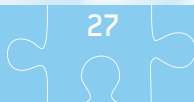
There is no coordinated system to assist personnel to move from positions in the north of the State after the winter tourist season to take up work in the south for the summer or vice versa.

It is perceived that a ready workforce is available but not harnessed to ensure that there is a greater and easier transition of personnel within Western Australia. There may be some ad hoc arrangements, but a coordinated approach would reduce staff shortages in regional areas during peak seasons.

Likewise within the tourism season there are people travelling (eg grey nomads) who may welcome some part-time work. These people have their own accommodation which overcomes issues for management in these areas.

*'We should be using the tourism cycle more effectively with staff.'*

*'Be creative with the people who may be in the region during the busy periods.'*



# Food for Thought

## Finding 18

Western Australian training providers and businesses need to develop strong links with national and international schools of excellence and universities to further establish their credentials and offer opportunities for personnel in the industry.

There is no doubt that the key training providers in hospitality have established quality training institutions. It is now opportune for these organisations to extend their courses, offer programs of excellence and develop working relationships with other national and international colleges and businesses.

My interaction with Westminster College, Singapore International Hotel & Tourism College and Tourism Management Institute of Singapore outlined their strong relationships with other international colleges. Singapore also links with colleges and universities in South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria.

Some Western Australian institutes have commenced discussions with overseas universities, but I would counsel that every endeavour should be made to ensure that the links that are developed are with the best international colleges and universities, rather than just getting into the market.

Some businesses have also developed relationships with international universities to support their staff, while others are currently investigating this option. This is a very good and natural strategic move for this industry, as the culture of service and the career in hospitality should be experienced by students as part of their development.

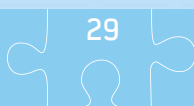
## Finding 19

A Centre of Excellence is not a priority for the industry at this stage.

Comments were raised regarding the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for the industry as the next stage of development for training and workforce development.

At this stage I would not be recommending the development of such a single centre of excellence for a number of reasons:

- Western Australia is too large to expect all students to travel to one location for this experience
- Institutes and providers are continuing their educational development through other avenues and should be encouraged to do so
- As there is such diversity in the sector it is unreasonable to think that one centre of excellence should be preferred
- There is a case for a number of institutes to create a specific focus for themselves, whilst ensuring there is a quality general program operating as well
- Consideration should be given to partner a hotel to establish a hotel training school. This would be an excellent initiative if a new hotel was constructed in Perth.



## Finding 20

There remains considerable need for a skilled and semi-skilled migration strategy for the industry.

A shortage of labour cannot be solved only through training and workforce development of local people.

It is also highlighted that there is a need for skilled and semi-skilled migration for this industry. Many sectors of the industry would benefit from a more flexible approach from the Federal Government for skilled and semi-skilled migration visas.

This issue is outside of the scope of this report, but the matter is well understood by the Minister for Training and Workforce Development.

Comments were made about the difficulty in securing personnel through migration, particularly for small businesses or people who were new to this market. The expense of consultants was also mentioned and considered a hindrance. Greater assistance to small businesses in this area would increase the workforce.

*There remains considerable  
need for a skilled and semi-skilled  
migration strategy for the industry.*



A photograph of a smiling man sitting at a table with a cup of coffee. The image is overlaid with a blue tint and a puzzle piece graphic in the bottom left corner. The word "RECOMMENDATIONS" is centered in the image.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

# Food for Thought

## Recommendation 1

A campaign be conducted promoting the Tourism and Hospitality Industry as a career of choice.

### Strategies

1. Marketing campaigns must be developed and conducted to attract people into the industry from all ages and abilities.
2. Develop 'Ambassadors of Tourism & Hospitality' to complement the marketing campaign.
3. Create a positive image for the industry through promotion, advertising and positive experiences from customers.
4. Recognise the vibrant owners who are in the industry and setting new standards for the industry.
5. Prepare promotion for teachers and students in schools demonstrating the benefits and opportunities of a career in the industry.
6. Government and industry sectors must work constructively together to overcome the fragmented image of the industry.
7. Create a 'Master Class' or 'Corporate Cooking' initiative to promote the industry to the wider community of adults.
8. Explore the potential of social networking sites to promote the industry and career opportunities within it.
9. Bring more events to Western Australia to generate excitement and a purpose to the industry as they add an incentive to join the workforce, provide on-selling opportunities and create more income so smaller operators can invest in more staff and training.

## Recommendation 2

Develop strategies to create a culture that is positive for the industry, about the industry and the people working within it.

### Strategies

1. Develop a minimum benchmark of service for Western Australia.
2. Incorporate the service standards into training courses.
3. Promote these standards throughout the community, so that the customer does not accept poor service.
4. Recognise staff who provide service above the minimum standards:
  - A culture of 'sales' must be introduced amongst staff
  - Staff should have full understanding of the business ie where the produce is from, how it is prepared
  - Staff should be promoting more than the business they are working in eg.  
*'Can I assist you in getting to your next meeting?'*  
*'Can I assist you with accommodation in your next location?'*  
*'Will you be visiting the Art Gallery while you are in Perth? It really is worth seeing.'*
5. Create a campaign within the industry that promotes the positive culture of the industry to overcome the negative image of the industry that exists.
6. Promote and recognise innovation and productivity throughout the industry.
7. Industry must embrace technology to improve service and allow staff to undertake other roles:
  - Customers could make bookings or place orders over the internet
  - Guests could use televisions in rooms to make reservations, order room service, or complete payments online

# Food for Thought

The introduction of the 'Tourism Ap' is a great initiative, and it is imperative that this level of technology is reflected in local businesses.

8. Tourism WA must undertake industry inductions for specific markets throughout the year for small hospitality businesses eg the new and emerging Chinese market:
  - Guides
  - Translators
  - Cultural awareness for staff
  - Awareness of cuisine
  
9. Investigate courses like '*AussieHost*' as a short one day course for customer service for the hospitality sector.

## Recommendation 3

Training systems must reflect and meet the needs of the industry.

### Strategies

1. Expand flexible training options to suit the needs of the industry, taking into consideration the business based on the location and type of business. Department of Training and Workforce Development should consider funding training in modules or stages.
2. Create a training culture and system within the industry to position training as a 'must do' activity for all staff, rather than an 'optional extra'.

Employers who train their staff, excluding apprenticeships & traineeships, could also be considered for incentives.

3. Supervisor and management training requires specific and immediate actions. Managers should activate training plans for staff identified for management training.
4. Create stronger links between businesses and training providers so that businesses become familiar with modern training methods, ensuring they are very clear on the training provided and the process of training that is suitable for their staff and their business.
5. Training providers should customise and undertake the paperwork for training programs to reduce the impact on businesses.
6. Create a culture of upskilling and promote pathways. Do not expect that people will look for them. An employee's skill sets and training should be recorded formally and be transferable.
7. Establish an 'industrial' pathway for the industry, with a focus on the resource sector.
8. Develop courses so students can commence at any time throughout the year, rather than having to wait until the start of a calendar year.

# Food for Thought

9. Develop strategies to increase the retention of students to complete their training. Training currently rewards the employer, should some incentive be provided to the employee as well?
10. Training providers to develop relationships with national and international colleges for further opportunities for exposure of students, or international students to attend their institutions.
11. Establish an entry base, short and online qualification for all staff who wish to work in the industry.
12. Training providers and institutes seek to develop specific centres of expertise.
13. Department of Training and Workforce Development to adopt more flexibility with the allocation of training places and be more responsive to the notification of places granted. Funding for training places should also be allocated on merit and performance of the training provider.
14. Tourism WA must take an active role in the training and development of people within the industry and include a section on people development in the Tourism Strategies of Towns and Regions.
15. Education and Training Awards should be introduced into other award presentations.
16. Ensure quality training is improved to industry's satisfaction – not just to an audit standard.
17. Quality assurance of training providers must continue to be monitored to ensure standards are maintained for the industry.
18. Changes to working conditions for staff and lecturers to support more flexible training programs should be free from industrial relations provisions.

## Recommendation 4

A focus on Workforce Development must be actioned for the industry.

### Strategies

1. Formally explore and implement a system for the coordination of itinerant workers to achieve maximum labour market efficiency and retention within the State. This applies particularly to those who might follow seasonal work from the North West to the South West of the State (and vice versa).
  - Establish a register of businesses which would benefit from receiving staff from other businesses who no longer require them in off peak times
  - Coordinate and support staff who are willing to move through this register
2. Create avenues to attract people into the industry who would not have considered a position in the sector:
  - Older people travelling throughout the State
  - Corporate cooking classes similar to corporate bowls
  - Select people who have slipped out of education at university level
3. Establish a dynamic indigenous tourism sector in metropolitan and regional areas:
  - Establish areas suitable for indigenous tourism
  - Create avenues to include indigenous tourism in businesses
  - Attract indigenous persons into training for all industry sectors
4. Strong partnerships must be established between schools, industry and training providers.
5. Create a culture of innovation and change to reflect the dynamism of the industry as a way of overcoming concerns about salary levels and conditions of employment.
6. Businesses should identify pathways for staff development and prepare programs for their action. Recognition should be provided for their implementation.
7. Provide transition training to 'grey nomads' and 'sea changers' that commit to stay in a given region and work in the industry for at least 3 months.
8. Provide a coordinated process with training and mentoring to capture itinerant workers interested in working in a new region, and maximise their contribution to that workforce.

# Food for Thought

## Recommendation 5

A dedicated focus on attracting, training and retention of high quality staff must be undertaken. People are the important asset in this industry. They have a lasting impact on tourism experiences and the image of Western Australia as a destination.

### Strategies

1. Promotion of the industry as a career of choice must have the systems in place to capture any interest that is shown by people, allowing them to enter the industry. These systems will also be effective in determining if the campaign has been effective.
2. Complement traditional attraction initiatives with innovative avenues for people to make a transition into the industry.
3. Place a major focus through the school system as an important lead-in to the industry. Develop educational packages for students, staff and parents that support a career in the industry. This must involve businesses, ambassadors for the industry and training providers.
4. Stimulate innovation and recognition in retention and training of staff in the industry. The options and opportunities rely on creativity and communication:
  - Flexible rostering of staff
  - Staff fully briefed by managers/chefs on meals/wines being served
  - Staff visiting other establishments to assess their operations and staff performances
5. More support and guidance provided to employers on how to train and retain staff.
6. Investigate changes in work practices that might permit older workers to be engaged and/or coax workers back into the industry or enter the industry.
7. Link mature age job seekers and people returning to hospitality mentors to ensure that the transition to the industry is successful.

8. Review financial support arrangements to remove or reduce any imbalance in incentives and funding for different age groups.
9. Establish a *Record of Employment* system so that staff can accumulate long service leave provision if they remain in the industry even though they move from employer to employer within the industry.
10. Establish a system that coordinates personnel moving from positions in one part of Western Australia to another to support staffing during peak tourism periods.



## Recommendation 6

Vocational education and hospitality training in schools must change from being school driven to being a partnership between school, industry and employer.

### Strategies

1. Develop the *'Try a Trade'* in the hospitality sector for schools, either using new trade training centres or accredited training providers.
2. School students should complete a standard core of specified units as a minimum and carry a record of this achievement onwards to employers. This would replace the current ad hoc unit choices made by schools.
3. Registered Training Organisations used by schools should be chosen by the employer or industry association rather than the school.
4. Schools need to do more to initiate interaction with businesses and to package work experience very efficiently, consistent with normal business processes, rather than educational processes. Small business will generally cooperate with schools, but they are not likely to instigate connections. If they have a poor experience with a school they are less likely to participate in work experience in the future.
5. Best practice standards must be implemented across the school sector as standard practice which is acceptable to the industry.
6. Schools should focus on ensuring an understanding of service etiquette and acceptable customer service communication skills appropriate to the industry is achieved whilst the student is at school. This matter would be well received by the industry.

## Recommendation 7

The Western Australian Government champion the concerns to the Federal Government of the industrial relations awards that are having a detrimental impact on the Tourism and Hospitality Industry.

### Strategies

1. The Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2010, (Fair Work Australia Modern Award) should be amended, with regard to a person's salary level, to reflect the level of responsibility undertaken in the workplace not the level of training completed by the person.
2. Advocate for the hospitality industry not to be imposed with penalty rates.



# Food for Thought

## Recommendation 8

The Western Australian Government advocate to the Federal Government to gain greater flexibility with visas for the skilled and semi-skilled positions in the industry to:

- increase the number of international hospitality students
- increase the length of working visa
- overcome the issues with extending visas
- maximise the benefit from this labour source by assisting them to move from region to region within the State rather than out of the State or out of the country

There is significant need for the recommendation to be actioned at a Federal level to support the tourism and hospitality industry into the future.

### Strategies

1. Monitor the quality of training for international hospitality students more closely.
2. A fee for service apprenticeship for international students would increase the skilled workforce more quickly and introduce these students to the workforce much earlier.
3. Encourage the Federal Government to review the language requirement for longer term visas particularly for some sectors eg a Chinese chef working in a kitchen with others speaking Chinese may not require IELTS 6.
4. A gap training program should be developed for cooks from overseas to allow them to be lifted to the standard required for 457 or permanent migration. This could address the problem of bringing people in who appear to meet a standard but are then found to lack key industry knowledge.
5. Provide more support at a reduced cost to assist small businesses to attract international people to work in their business.

## Recommendation 9

Indigenous tourism opportunities must be actively encouraged, while at the same time supporting indigenous people to work within both indigenous tourism operations and mainstream tourism.

### Strategies

1. Foster flexible delivery of hospitality work skills and mainstream English literacy and numeracy through a work experience model, where practical language and skills are developed with a trainer/mentor visiting and supporting the worker.
2. Pilot training in indigenous cuisine to motivate indigenous communities to develop bush tucker and indigenous cuisine as part of the outback tourism experience.
3. Expand indigenous tour guiding training.
4. Provide greater support for indigenous owners and employees in existing indigenous tourism ventures.



## CONCLUSION

The Tourism and Hospitality Industry is exciting and dynamic and is vital to the economy and lifestyle of Western Australia.

There is a desire to address the issues and concerns that have been raised but the fragmentation and diversity has made it difficult to make significant progress.

The industry requires leadership and a way to join the sectors of the industry.

There is energy, commitment and knowledge, but it is not consistent across the industry and within the sectors. There is a diverse range of standards of service and business operations.

Government should not become the solution for this industry but there are many ways that it could provide leadership and support to the industry which will demonstrate its commitment to the industry and the need for the industry to take responsibility for its strategic future.



ATTACHMENT

## Hospitality and Tourism Industry Contacts consulted by Ms Andrea Mitchell MLA

### List 1

	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
1	Keith Spence	Chair	State Training Board
2	Mal Gammon	CEO	FutureNow (Industry Training Council)
3	Stephanie Buckland	CEO	Tourism WA
4	Iain McDougall	General Manager	Hospitality Group Training (HGT)
5	Bradley Woods	CEO	Australian Hotels Association
6	Neil Randall	WA President	Australian Hotels Association
7	Rob Broadfield	Journalist	The West Australian
8	Sue Slavin	Managing Director	West Coast Institute of Technology
9	Wayne Collyer	Managing Director	Polytechnic West
10	Liz Harris	Managing Director	Challenger Institute of Technology
11	Chris Taylor	Managing Director	Frasers Restaurant
12	Barry Felstead	Managing Director	Burswood Entertainment Complex
13	Warwick Lavis	Managing Director	Matilda Bay Restaurant
14	Colin Gourdis	State Manager	ALH Group WA
15	Fran Kirby	Regional HR Manager WA/NT	Accor Asia Pacific
16	Johnny Edmonds	CEO	WA Indigenous Tourism Operators

<u>Contact</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
17 Wayne Carroll	CEO	Joondalup Resort
18 David Strom	Managing Director	The Gate Bar & Bistro
19 Kate Brough	HR Manager	Hyatt Regency Perth
20 Kate Lamont	Chair	Tourism WA
21 Tim & Clare Leech	Owner	White Salt Restaurant
22 Evan Hall	CEO	WA Tourism Council
23 Hazel Blackmore	General Manager	Mounts Bay Waters Apartment Hotel
24 Anne McLean	HR Director	Parmelia Hilton
25 Katie Hodson-Thomas	CEO	Caravan Industry Association
26 Patrick O'Brien	State President and National Secretary	Australian Culinary Federation
27 Michael Collins	General Manager	Hospitality Pty Ltd
28 Hugh Gallagher	CEO	CCI Kalgoorlie/Boulder
29 Bert Giancristofaro	HR Manager	Compass Group
30 David O'Malley	CEO	Australia's Coral Coast
31 Juliette Adams	Managing Director	Vocational Training Services
32 Paul King & Gareth Thomas	CEO & Group General Manager (respectively)	Sea Shells Hospitality Group

<u>Contact</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
33 Alan Williams	Managing Director	Australian College of Applied Education
34 Jason Allen	State Manager	Franklyn Scholar
35 David Chaplin	Regional Manager (WA/NT/SA)	Mantra Hospitality Group
36 Neil Fernandes & Anne Blythman	MD & Executive Director (respectively)	Central Institute of Technology
37 Rod Tweddle	CEO	Marine WA
38 Glenn Gaynor	Director	Rottnest Express
39 Sandy Smith	Area Manager	William Angliss Industry Training Centre
40 Joe Camilleri	National Operations & Procurement Manager	Aroma Cafe Support Office
41 Clint Nolan	Owner	Harvest Restaurant
42 Grant Brinklow	CEO	Sandalford Wines
43 Tony Dichiera	Project Manager	Prendiville Group
44 Joan Mulcahy	Director Tourism Studies	Central Institute of Technology
45 Ron Ballucci	Workplace Relations Manager	Australian Hotels Association
46 Derrick Casey	Chief Operating Officer	Le Cordon Bleu (Adelaide)
47 Rodger Griffiths	Vice President	Le Cordon Bleu (Adelaide)

## List 2

### International Contacts

	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Company/Address</u>
1	Alan Low	Dean, Academia & Strategic Alliance Singapore	The Singapore International Hotel and Tourism College (SHATEC Institutes),
	Cheang Sai Ming (Simon)	Marketing Manager, Marketing Communications (respectively)	
2	Mr HP Loi;	CEO;	Tourism Management Institute of Singapore (TMIS),
	Mr Leonard Yap;	Deputy Director, Integrated Sales & Marketing;	Singapore
	Mr Andy Koh	Deputy Director, Integrated Sales & Marketing; (respectively)	
3	Geoff Booth	Assistant Principal	Westminster Kingsway College, London

## List 3

### Busselton Consultation Workshop

	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Company/Address</u>
1	Lynette Sleight	Manager	JET Consulting Busselton
2	Drew Bernhardt & Gita Ketharanthan	General Manager & Food and Beverage Manager	Cape Lodge Yallingup
3	Peter Gordon	Owner	The Equinox Café Busselton
4	Edith Kinninmont	HR Manager	Wyndham Resort & Spa, Dunsborough
5	Matt Walker	CEO	Geographe Bay Tourist Association Busselton
6	Peter Macdonald	Owner	Dive Shed Busselton
7	Simon Ambrose & Vicki Etchells	CEO & Chair (respectively)	Augusta Margaret River Tourist Assoc. Margaret River
8	Rob Gough	Manager (and President)	Settlers Tavern Margaret River (SW Division of AHA Margaret River)
9	Dee Smith	Executive Officer	Visitor Centre Association of WA
10	Jacquie Happ	Partner	Happs Pottery Dunsborough

## List 4

### Bunbury Consultation Workshop

	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Company/Address</u>
1	Andrew Horan	CEO	CCI Bunbury Bunbury
2	Ron Schroeder	Manager	Quest Apartments Bunbury
3	John Dudley	Owner	Singing Chef Bunbury
4	Sam Morris	Owner	Taffy's Chocolate Shop Bunbury
5	David Kerr	General Manager	Dolphin Discovery Centre Bunbury
6	Christine Mitchell	General Manager	Lord Forrest Hotel Bunbury
7	Lynette Sleight	Manager	JET Consulting Busselton
8	Sue Ward	President	Geographe Wine Region
9	Paul Hayward	Manager	City of Bunbury Visitor Centre





TRAINING & WORKFORCE  
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