



Australian Hotels Association
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Media Release

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Keelty Report - Margaret River

The release today of the recommendations of the report into the November 2011 Margaret River bushfire, 'Appreciating the Risk', has been welcomed by the Australian Hotels Association (WA), but has warned that the tourism and hospitality region is still suffering.

AHA (WA) CEO, Bradley Woods, said the Margaret River tourism and hospitality industry had been significantly impacted by the fire last year as confusing messages had led potential tourists to believe the entire Margaret River region was effected.

"The tourism industry is vital for a significant number of people in the Margaret River region. The region has been recognised as the best tourism town in the nation," said Mr Woods.

"In response to the decrease in visitor numbers, the State Government, through Tourism WA, recently launched a new \$250,000 advertising campaign encouraging visitors to the Margaret River region. This may need to be reviewed and supplemented depending on the medium and long term impact.

"The creation of the new Office of Bushfire Risk Management to oversee changes to the prescribed burns program should reduce the danger that another community will suffer as Margaret River has.

"Margaret River is a large region and many hotels and restaurants were unaffected directly by the fires. However the perception outside the region was that hospitality business were closed. This is simply not the case.

"Margaret River's many fine hospitality venues are open for business and ready to provide the hospitality visitors have come to expect from one of our top tourist destinations.



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"Industry data showed around a ten per cent decrease in bookings to the region since November 2011 compared to the same period in the previous 12 months.

"AHA (WA)'s industry data shows the south west has some of the lowest hotel occupancy rates in the state. The fires affected less than 1.5 per cent of the region; however this has had a dramatic effect on tourism across the region."

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For further information please contact Chuck Ellis, AHA (WA) Public Affairs Manager on (08) 9321 7701, pubaff@ahawa.asn.au or 0410 503 301.