

## **TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY WORKFORCE**

### *Statement by Minister for Tourism*

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Tourism)** [12.17 pm]: I rise to inform the house about our government's efforts to boost the tourism and hospitality workforce in Western Australia. Tourism and hospitality workers come from all walks of life, from students starting their first job to mature age workers who may be looking for a career change or considering re-entering the workforce. It is incredibly important that we support workers in the tourism and hospitality sectors because they bring a wealth of life experience, local knowledge and understanding to our visitors and to our workplaces.

The tourism sector has always been a strong employer. In 2021–22, a total of 89 000 tourism-filled jobs made up 5.6 per cent of Western Australia's total jobs figure. The food and beverage sector accounted for almost half of those positions, and those working in accommodation services made up 16 per cent. However, we are still down on our pre-COVID employment levels by some 20 000 roles, which is why our government's efforts are so important. We are doing everything we can to address the labour shortage facing these industries.

Our tourism workforce development program includes funding for short-term programs to address the current shortage of workers and also builds a pipeline of talent for the future. We are offering free training and job placement assistance through our job reconnect program, as well as up to \$1 500 to cover work-related expenses.

One example of this is the chef apprenticeship program, whereby apprentices aged 45 years and over can access support to purchase equipment including chef knives, kitchen tools and uniforms, funded by the Department of Training and Workforce Development. We changed Western Australia's migration program settings to make it easier for skilled workers to migrate to the state and take up opportunities in the tourism and hospitality industries. We have partnered with the Australian Hotels Association WA to develop the [westernaustralia.jobs](https://westernaustralia.jobs) portal, a one-stop shop for businesses looking to advertise vacancies and for prospective workers looking for more information about moving to WA. We have also invested in a major marketing boost to showcase the incredible career opportunities available in Western Australia's tourism and hospitality industries. Our workforce recruitment ads have been live across the east coast and in New Zealand, Ireland and the United Kingdom. We are doing everything we can to attract and retain workers in these sectors. Addressing the shortage of skilled and unskilled workers in WA's hospitality and tourism industries will take time but our local tourism industry is the best in the country. We have world-class tourism and hotels. Recently, we conducted a forum at which I was represented by the member for Mirrabooka, my parliamentary secretary. It was targeted at mature age workers wanting to enter the tourism industry. We are very keen to see everyone participate in the tourism industry—both younger people starting off in their careers and older people who want to get back into the workforce. We are very keen to progress that.