



AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION

24 Brisbane Avenue Barton ACT 2600 • PO Box 4286 Manuka ACT 2603 • Australia
email: aha@aha.org.au • Facsimile: (02) 6273 4011 • Telephone: (02) 6273 4007
Web: www.aha.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

12 June, 2008

CONSUMER CONFUSION HURTS TOURISM

Confusion among consumers who are booking accommodation is damaging Australia's tourism industry.

That's why the AHA is continuing to push for an accreditation system that is much clearer for the travelling public.

"Star Ratings have been around for a long time, but what many people don't realise is that under this scheme, properties can be rated in one of 10 different categories," said the AHA's National Accommodation Division Manager, Hamish Arthur.

"As a result, hotels are aware of overseas visitors who have booked five-star accommodation in Australia and anticipated a five-star hotel which has service of an international standard, only to instead end up with a five-star self-catering apartment that has little or no service.

"Such a scenario damages Australia's tourism brand and hampers our ability to continue to attract high numbers of international visitors."

With an increasing amount of accommodation booked through the internet, it's vital that accommodation websites play their part in reducing consumer confusion.

"The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) recently announced that it is 'focused on ensuring that internet advertising and marketing is not used to mislead or deceive consumers', an announcement that is welcomed by the hotel industry," Mr Arthur said.

"In the period since that announcement, leading website www.wotif.com has taken steps to make it easier to identify the different types of accommodation it lists and the AHA applauds this move.

"The AHA is now calling on the operator of the Star Ratings scheme – AAA Tourism – to follow this lead and improve its strategies to educate the public about the different categories of accommodation.

"A good place to start would be ensuring the website that acts as the official on-line booking service for properties which are assessed under the Star Ratings scheme more clearly defines different types of accommodation."

The AHA continues to hold ongoing discussions with AAA Tourism about improving the Star Ratings scheme as it relates to hotels.

For further information:

Hamish Arthur

Manager – National Accommodation Division

0407 718 307

The Australian Hotels Association (AHA) is the pre-eminent tourism and hospitality industry organisation in Australia. It has around 5000 members operating general and accommodation hotels. It has a national office and branches in each State and Territory. It also has a discrete branch to represent the interests of its accommodation members that covers four and five-star properties.