



# 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

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### CABINET APPOINTMENT SHOWS RUDD GOVERNMENT WILL TAKE TOURISM SERIOUSLY

The Australian Hotels Association has welcomed the appointment of Mr Martin Ferguson MP as Tourism Minister in the new Rudd Cabinet.

Speaking on behalf of the hotel industry, the AHA says it is particularly pleasing that Mr Ferguson will be a Cabinet member.

"This announcement shows that the new government understands the importance of Australia's \$82 billion tourism industry to the national economy," said AHA Director National Affairs, Bill Healey. "Tourism is the ultimate renewable product and projections point to strong growth over the next decade."

The new government is already committed to maintaining extra funding provided under the Tourism White Paper. This money will provide the necessary resources to ensure Australian tourism businesses will prosper in an increasingly competitive international market. It will enable Australia to attract an increasing numbers of visitors from the fast growing countries to our north.

"The AHA and the broader Tourism industry has had regular contact with Mr Ferguson during his time as Shadow Minister," Mr Healey said. "We have always found him approachable and willing to listen to the legitimate concerns of the industry. We were keen to ensure that he kept the position in government. It is pleasing that the new minister will have the necessary knowledge and industry network to hit the ground running. His other areas of responsibility – resources and energy – will provide him with special insights into two major challenges in our industry – climate change and the impact of a rising Australia dollar."

The AHA was also pleased that the Government has grouped employment, workplace relations and education under one minister.

"Labour shortages will be a continuing challenge for the Australian economy," Mr Healey said. "The solutions will only come from a "whole-of-government" approach and close consultation with business and the broader community. Placing these key ministries under the stewardship of the Deputy Prime Minister shows that the government is serious about this challenge."

The hotel sector is one of the largest employers in Australia, particularly in regional communities. Our members anticipate that the strong economic growth of the past 16 years will continue. The AHA looks forward to building on its existing relationships with the new ministry and other government members to ensure this is achieved.

**For further information:**

**Bill Healey, Director National Affairs**  
**0419 627 693**

*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 operated by the major chains.*