



# AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION

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## Media Release

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### **AUSTRALIA'S INDIGENOUS CULTURE SET TO BECOME UNIQUE DRAWCARD FOR MAJOR HOTELS**

The demand from domestic and international tourists looking for an Indigenous cultural experience has prompted Australia's major hotels to boost their Indigenous employee numbers.

Major hotels (four and five star) across the country are set to take on at least 100 indigenous people within the next 18 months as part of the HOSTPLUS Indigenous Hotel Management Traineeship Program.

The Program will be launched in Canberra by the Minister for Tourism Martin Ferguson AM MP, on Wednesday 24 September 2008.

Australian Hotels Association (AHA) CEO Bill Healey said employees of Australia's major hotels are in a prime position to promote all that our country has to offer to their guests, including local unique Aboriginal culture.

"The HOSTPLUS Indigenous Hotel Management Traineeship Program is an important response to a burgeoning market in which overseas and domestic visitors have expressed interest in engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and learning more about their cultures," Mr Healey said.

It is predicted that an Indigenous cultural experience will be one of the most important factors for visiting Australia for over 200,000 international visitors by 2016.

The indigenous tourism market is set to get a further boost from the November release of Baz Luhrman's movie Australia, which promises to ignite domestic and international tourism with its portrayal of Australia's unique landscapes and its celebration of outback adventure and local Aboriginal culture.

"The Program is aiming to secure the interest and support of every four and five star hotel in the country, even those with their own indigenous employment programs. It is also our hope that it will help soften the impact of the skills shortage currently being experienced across the industry, Mr Healey said.

"We're confident that AFL SportsReady can emulate the success it has enjoyed in the Sport & Recreation industry over the past 6 years.

"We are particularly excited about the prospect of moving beyond the Hospitality Certificate III, by working with the major hotels to create a range of career advancement opportunities for any young Indigenous Australians looking to take up a career in the hotels industry.

"The AFL SportsReady program is designed to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait people to become exceptional members of a team. This requires more than screening and recruiting candidates; it depends on pre-employment training and cultural awareness training for trainees as well as hotel staff," he said.

The HOSTPLUS Indigenous Hotel Management Traineeship Program will be developed and delivered by a range of Registered Training Organisations including the Mint Group. The Mint Group have a long history of providing tailored training and human resource solutions in both community and commercial programs.

It will provide young indigenous Australians with the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge that it is hoped will ultimately see them in roles in the hospitality and tourism industry that will enable them to provide guidance and access to Australia's unique and diverse indigenous heritage and culture. Ends///

**For further comment please contact Bill Healey, AHA Chief Executive Officer on 0419 627 693 or Kelley White on 0411 270 057 or Marnie Procter on 0405 107 220 if you require further information**



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## Key Facts

### Indigenous Tourism

- Tourism Research Australia has estimated that the Indigenous experiences were a major factor in the destination choice of 149,000 international visitors per year.
- International indigenous tourism visitors accounted for around 16% of all international visitors to Australia during 2007. There were 677,000 domestic overnight indigenous visitors during 2007.
- Almost two thirds (65%) of international indigenous tourism visitors participated in only one indigenous tourism activity during their trip, while around 25% participated in two activities and 10% participated in three activities. 'Experience Aboriginal art/ craft or cultural display' was the most popular indigenous tourism activity accounting for around three quarters (76%) of all international indigenous tourism visitors or 634,000 visitors.
- Using the forecast annual growth in international visitors to Australia (Tourism Forecasting Committee 2007) an Indigenous cultural experience will be one of the most important factors for visiting Australia for over 200,000 international visitors by 2016.

### AFL SportsReady

- The HOSTPLUS Indigenous Hotel Management Traineeship Program is administered by group training organisation AFL SportsReady which specializes in culturally appropriate training and employment programs. AFL SportsReady assigns indigenous AFL stars as mentors during the course of the program to help inspire trainees take up, and fulfill, the challenge of training and longer term employment. The training will be developed and delivered by the Mint Group which has a long history of providing tailored training and human resource solutions in both community and commercial programs.
- Since 2002 AFL SportsReady has provided traineeship opportunities for over 450 Indigenous Australians predominantly in the Sport and Recreation Industry. STEP contracts have included Full time, Part time and School Based Nationally.
- One in five AFL SportsReady staff members are Indigenous (20%). It internally models our commitment to Indigenous Australia; we aim to have 20% Indigenous trainees by 2010. In 2007/2008 alone, 172 Indigenous Australians have taken up traineeship opportunities with a balanced representation of young men and women.
- The Inspiring futures mentorship program was developed to assist the retention rate of our Indigenous participants and to inspire the young trainees to develop themselves professionally and personally. Those mentors we have recruited have included some past AFL Premiership players/ current footballers along with our National Program Manager Belinda Jakiel who has represented Australia in Athletics. The mentors in each State are Shannon Motlop (SA and NT) Eddie Brown ( WA) Ralph White (Vic) and Marcia Laurie (QLD).

### REFERENCES

Tourism Research Australia's Sharing Culture- Indigenous Experiences and the International Visitor report, September 2007

Tourism Research Australia's Indigenous Tourism Visitors in Australia 2007