



AUSTRALIAN HOTELS ASSOCIATION

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MEDIA RELEASE

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TOURISM TO BENEFIT FROM US VISA ARRANGEMENT

Australia's tourism industry will benefit from a new work and holiday visa arrangement that our nation has entered into with the US, according to the hotel industry.

The reciprocal deal, which allows Americans who meet certain criteria to stay in Australia for 12 months, was announced by Prime Minister Howard and President Bush today.

"Australia's new visa arrangement with the US will have enormous benefits for the hospitality and tourism industries," said AHA Director National Affairs Bill Healey.

"At a time when labour shortages are biting across Australia, it will increase the pool of labour that is available to employers."

Mr Healey expects there will be spin-offs for the wider tourism industry as well.

"Americans often comment how they would love to make the trip 'Down Under', but they have traditionally found it difficult because of their holiday system," he said.

"There is also evidence that many holiday workers become ambassadors for Australia when they return home.

"There is a strong chance they will return to Australia and bring more visitors with them.

"And for parents of US children working in Australia, they now have an even greater incentive to travel to our country.

"The bridges to the US tourism market will be enhanced."

For further information:

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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.