

# THRIVE 2030 Workforce and Skills Technical Working Group

## Summary of meeting – 15 June 2023

The third meeting of the *THRIVE 2030 Workforce and Skills Technical Working Group* (Working Group) was held on 15 June 2023.

The Chair briefed the Working Group on the workforce-related 2023-24 Budget measures and noted that all the workforce actions under THRIVE 2030 were underway. This included the Government’s communication campaign to attract Older Australians to work in tourism, and the Choose Tourism grant program with State and Territory Governments.

The Chair thanked Working Group members for their input and engagement in developing the *Visitor Economy Workforce and Skills Interim Action Plan* and the Working Group’s 12 month status report. Both documents would be published on Austrade’s website.

The Chair proposed, and members agreed, that the focus of this group would turn to development of the *Visitor Economy Workforce and Skills Long-Term Strategy* (the Strategy). The Employment White Paper and Migration Strategy would inform the Strategy.

Mr Michael Willard (Department of Home Affairs) provided an update on the *Review on the Migration System*, and release of *A Migration System for a More Prosperous and Secure Australia: Outline of the Government’s Migration Strategy*. The Chair noted that the Migration Review had picked up a number of issues critical to visitor economy stakeholders. Members discussed implications for the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold and the Working Holiday Maker visa program.

Ms Louise Rawlings (The Treasury) provided an update on the development of the Employment White Paper.  The Employment White Paper would provide a roadmap for Australia to build a better-trained and more productive workforce. It would explore issues, frameworks and policy approaches relevant to the future of Australia’s labour market over the medium and long term. Over 4,000 submissions had been received to inform the White Paper’s development. The Chair acknowledged that many of the Working Group members had provided submissions. Ms Jessica Keen (Australian Tourism Export Council) reiterated the importance of harmonising the education system. Dr Donna Odegaard (First Nations Broadcasting) pointed to the cultural knowledge and insights First Nations People could provide from a tourism lens.

Professor David Solnet and Associate Professor Richard Robinson, from University of Queensland and representatives of the Council for Australasian Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE) presented recent tourism workforce academic findings related to structural workforce issues (including attraction of workers to the sector and retention opportunities), youth experience in the sector and the role of managers in tourism businesses. The Chair proposed the Secretariat would identify support available for tourism businesses to strengthen their management capabilities given this was a significant area impacting retention of the workforce.

The Chair invited members to identify key considerations for inclusion in the Strategy. Members noted the importance of data. Attraction, retention and skills were identified as the key issues for a strategy focussed on the long term. Addressing the skills gaps, including through training that aligns with industry needs, is a current priority with Ms Miranda Lauman (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) noting the Government’s education and training reforms were relevant. Communicating the benefits of working in tourism was also important. The Chair proposed that the Secretariat develop an outline of the Strategy for members’ feedback.

Members agreed that the next meeting of the Working Group would be held in late 2023.