

## Priority Area 3: Access to quality workplaces

**Whilst acknowledging that work in tourism and hospitality fulfils a wide variety of need for both full time and part time workers, greater effort is required to assess the impact of existing employment arrangements and job design on the attraction and retention of quality staff.**

An ongoing challenge facing the industry is how to reduce staff turnover and retain people in the industry for longer periods. Given some turnover is necessary given the profile of part time work, studies indicate that the tourism and hospitality sector has high levels of turnover which not only adds to business costs but also affects service levels and the industry's image. The industry should acknowledge that retention of full and part time staff has a link to the level of productivity and service offered.

The direct and indirect cost of high turnover needs to be monitored to assess the consequences a highly casualised workforce.

The industry has a focus to retain staff through a variety of measures; however, is aware of the demand for casual staff. The goal is to achieve a balance between staff, and have support from the skilled, full-time and part-time staff.

### Focus Area 1: Improved attraction and recruitment of staff

Improved recruitment strategies, job matching and career development opportunities need to be employed to encourage people to seek work and remain in the industry. Some casual employees may have the skills and interest to progress in the industry work needs to be done (through Discover Hospitality and by other means) to better articulate these opportunities to existing staff. Other employees may be working casually by choice and they benefit from the flexibility that this provides them.

The use of customised recruitment tools and screening processes<sup>7</sup> can assess whether staff have the potential to work long term in the hospitality and tourist sector. These processes and tools aim to assess aptitude for the industry, establish attitude to work, recognise relevant prior learning and experience and establish skills gaps for each potential and existing employee.

### Focus Area 2: Enhanced retention strategies

The industry's high turnover rate is due in part to the seasonal nature of the sector which requires that a large influx of workers in the peak season and smaller numbers in off peak seasons. These characteristics, in conjunction with very few, very busy periods in many businesses weekly work cycle, necessitates a large proportion of part time workers are engaged. Whilst this suits many employees, who want part time work to achieve their work life balance, the industry still needs a base employment pool. The industry needs to work toward a balance of employment options that achieve both quality and flexibility objectives. In addition to targeted recruitment strategies and employment models to expand the potential workforce, the industry will need to facilitate strategies to retain people who are already working in the industry and encourage them to commit to careers in the sector (where this fits with their work life objectives). This may include innovative strategies such as seasonal job sharing, incentives, better articulation of career paths, improved employment conditions and

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<sup>7</sup> Such as that developed by ACER (through the Hospitality NSSS Project).

the formal recognition of skills gained on the job to improve workforce retention. These initiatives may be developed at the individual workplace level or through an industry-wide approach. There can be a range of strategies that are flexible enough to be tailored to individual circumstances.<sup>8</sup>

### **Focus Area 3: Increasingly productivity through job re-design and more flexible employment arrangements and work practices**

Businesses will need to maximize the productivity of each employee and achieve the highest level of workplace efficiency if they are to maintain profitability. This is especially so in an industry which has both a large and mobile workforce and narrow profit margins.

**Greater collaboration between management and staff will be required to establish and maintain a workplace culture that fosters innovation and rewards effort.**

Consideration needs to be given to redesigning jobs to enhance business flexibility and responsiveness and maximize the opportunities to utilise the skills of individual workers. It could also lead to increased employment certainty for these employees. Flexibility will especially benefit smaller businesses, those in rural and regional areas and those affected by seasonality.

Flexible employment arrangements will need to take account of the particular needs of an increasingly diversified labour force. Some employees will increasingly seek a better work-life balance which in many cases will result in their preference for part time work. Employers in tourism and hospitality can facilitate this to allow their staff can spend time with their families and pursue their interests and responsibilities outside work.

### **Focus Area 4: Improving industry image and the provision of career pathways**

The tourism and hospitality industry by necessity engages a large number of part time employees and also needs a growing number of full time career aspirants to service healthy growth. Whilst this is the case, the industry involves, for many, working hours that are outside the 9-5, Monday-Friday traditional working day. This is to some unattractive and means that the drawing pool for potential employees is diminished.

In addition, the industry is made up of predominantly small businesses that operate on low margins. This makes it difficult for the industry to compete with industries that are in a boom cycle of higher returns that can afford to pay higher wages to attract workers.

**The industry has developed and is implementing a vocational education and careers campaign that promotes the opportunities that the industry presents to a range of potential employees.**

The resources (developed under the Discover Hospitality brand) feature a series of motivations that are designed to attract younger job seekers, those looking to change careers, older workers, those in the welfare system and Indigenous Australians.

The industry need to be behind the implementation of the career and education strategy to better prepare itself with a workforce to meet future needs.

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<sup>8</sup> The industry should seek to utilize the new training places announced by the Federal Government to support these strategies.