

**Submission
No 25**

INQUIRY INTO TOURISM IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Organisation: Australian Hotels Association NSW

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LEGISLATIVE
COUNCIL

The Hon Natasha Maclaren-Jones MLC
Chair
Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

By Email: gpsc3@parliament.nsw.gov.au**Natasha**

Dear Ms Maclaren-Jones,

RE: INQUIRY INTO TOURISM IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

In making this brief submission, we also note that our affiliate organisation, Tourism Accommodation Association (NSW), intends to lodge a separate submission in relation to the star-rated accommodation sector in NSW.

THE PLACE OF 'PUBS' IN TOURISM

AHA (NSW) represents the oldest and most diversified group of operators in tourism who, to this day, provide a well-recognised 'one-stop shop' for tourists.

Pubs, with their laid back approach and laconic humour are Australia's traditional hubs of social interaction, community gathering and relaxation. Pubs are accepted as the heart and the pulse of each local community.

They offer accommodation, food and beverage, and serve as an after-hours 'country concierge service' welcoming visitors and locals and advising what's currently '*on the local menu*', be it sport, culture, history, sightseeing or activities for kids.

Pubs cater for those whose preference is for mixing with locals, immersing in the local flavour, experiencing interesting things to see and do and exploring a region at their own pace.

Apart from the obvious commercial advantages of tourism, the association of tourism, food and entertainment, shapes the attitudes of patrons to each local area or region.

In NSW, regional hotels provide the following tourism services:

Tourism Beds: more than 3000
Tourism Staff: more than 28,000
Dining Options
Entertainment Venues
Banking/ATM facilities
Wi-fi access
Public Toilets

AHA (NSW) member hoteliers are the largest stakeholders in NSW and Australian Tourism – providing work for approximately 45 per cent of employees in tourism.

Without a flourishing local tourism industry, our members businesses would rely solely on local residents as their patrons and many would not remain viable business undertakings.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT & RETURN ON INVESTMENT

AHA (NSW) welcomes and appreciates the increased focus placed on tourism by the O'Farrell Government and recognises the work of DestinationNSW which has not only concentrated effort into promoting and administering the various facets of tourism but has drawn together some of the previously and often competing efforts of a variety of local tourism bodies and initiatives.

It is the hope of our members that the general oversight of local tourism by DestinationNSW will avoid past situations where tourism initiatives and ventures were based on 'feel-good' proposals but lacked the vital operational and commercial considerations necessary to ensure their continuing economic success.

It is also the view of our members that Government support and co-ordination is vital to keep NSW on the 'tourism map', and especially to counter the fierce competition from other neighbouring states – and with overseas travel becoming more affordable.

AHA (NSW) PROMOTION OF TOURISM

For the past three years, AHA (NSW) in conjunction with Fairfax Media and in 2013 also in partnership with DestinationNSW, has produced the **Good Pub Food Guide** and iPhone app which showcase the best value-for-money food offerings in over 400 hotels across NSW and which have prompted people to rediscover pub food, accommodation, regional destinations and community events.

The Guide is organised to reflect NSW tourism regions with regional information added at the beginning of each section and in the i-Phone app which also links to the Destination NSW events calendar.

The Good Pub Food Guide judging process involved 72 of the *Sydney Morning Herald's* best food reviewers travelling anonymously across

New South Wales, eating in pubs from Byron Bay to Bathurst and Bondi to Broken Hill and the Guide is a distillation of their independent and unbiased reports.

In 2013, 5000 copies have been distributed and over 6000 i-Phone apps downloaded.

From the positive feedback received, we believe that this is a major contribution by the hotel industry to supporting tourism in both regional and suburban areas.

The AHA (NSW) Executive and our members remain committed to contributing in every way we can to a vital and thriving tourism industry in NSW. To that end, we would appreciate the opportunity to comment on any suggestions made to the Standing Committee's Inquiry so as to provide input from a local and commercially oriented perspective.

Yours faithfully,

PAUL NICOLAOU
Chief Executive Officer