

**THRIVE 2030 Workforce and Skills Technical Working Group**

**Summary of meeting – 19 May 2022**

The first meeting of the *THRIVE 2030 Workforce and Skills Technical Working Group* (Working Group) was held in Canberra on 19 May 2022.

Austrade acknowledged traditional custodians. The Chair provided Working Group members with a briefing on the visitor economy workforce and skills needs that have been identified through the Reimagining the Visitor Economy Expert Panel Report and THRIVE 2030 (The Re-Imagined Visitor Economy), the national strategy for Australia’s visitor economy. The role of the Working Group was discussed.

Members agreed that data on the workforce size and shape was essential and noted the work of the Industry Data Expert Analysis (IDEA) working group would be valuable in this regard. Members noted it would be worthwhile exploring research and analysis already underway in Australia on workforce issues. Austrade undertook to review the scope of existing research and data on visitor economy workforce related issues and identify any gaps. Members agreed it would be valuable for Austrade to undertake analysis on global and domestic approaches to workforce and skills issues, to develop a more up to date understanding of current workforce and skills challenges in the sector.

Members discussed the importance of national collaboration and cooperation, between governments and industry, and across States and Territories. Members agreed that examples of best practice should be communicated for others to learn from. Members acknowledged the long-standing challenges around visitor economy credentialling across state and territory borders. Austrade undertook to coordinate analysis of State and Territory-related barriers to cross-border qualifications recognition.

Members agreed that domestic capacity building was vital for a secure and resilient visitor economy workforce. Members were briefed on Austrade’s pilot with the Department of Social Services which is designed to increase the confidence of small businesses to employ people with a disability. Members agreed there were opportunities for Indigenous businesses and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the visitor economy. Members were briefed on Crown’s program for Indigenous employees and on the Northern Territory’s Flexible Workforce Initiative fund. It was agreed Australia’s migration program, and migration settings, had an important role, particularly to fill workforce capability gaps in the immediate term.

Members agreed that a core focus for the Working Group would be the development of a *Visitor Economy Workforce and Skills Long-Term Strategy*. It was suggested the strategy be focused on measures that increase workplace productivity, increase labour supply, and build workforce capability. Promoting the visitor economy as a career of choice was important to achieve this outcome. The Working Group will provide advice as the Strategy is developed including through stakeholder engagement and communications. Members agreed to develop the scope of the long-term strategy at the next Working Group meeting.

Members agreed to meet quarterly with the next meeting of the Working Group to be held in August 2022.