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## GROWTH PREDICTIONS PROMOTE BUSINESS CONFIDENCE

Australia's accommodation industry is encouraged by new figures which are forecasting strong growth for tourism in the next decade.

Speaking on behalf of the industry, the Accommodation Association of Australia said the Tourism Research Australia figures, which predict that in 2026/27 there will be 15 million international visitors to Australia, which would represent growth of 75 per cent on 2016/17, should increase business confidence.

"If the forecasts turn out to be correct, tourism is on track to become a powerhouse industry - again," said the Association's Chief Executive Officer, Richard Munro.

"Many people like to look back at the successful international promotion of Australia in the 1980s by the likes of Paul Hogan, but the reality is, there could be similar exciting times ahead for tourism.

"If the predicted growth is to be achieved, dispersal of international visitors outside of our major capital cities must be a priority and therefore, all levels of government - particularly local government, who reap tens of millions of dollars in fees and levies from accommodation businesses - should implement strategies which stimulate regional businesses and employment to cater for the influx of these visitors.

"For example, investment in events in regional Australia is a mechanism which helps facilitate visitor dispersal.

"Also important, given the number of visitors from China is forecast to increase by 168 per cent in the next decade, is accommodation businesses being adequately prepared for higher numbers of Chinese tourists."

Mr Munro said Australia's reputation for providing high-quality and safe accommodation options for international visitors should not be taken for granted.

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"The Accommodation Association welcomes the fact that some state governments have decided to take action against the practices of rogue sharing economy providers by introducing and/or tightening enforcement of standards for properties which are used for tourism accommodation," he said.

"The practice of residential apartment blocks having most or all of their rooms posted on sharing economy platforms - which makes them quasi-hotels - must be stamped out."

Tourism Research Australia's *Tourism Forecasts 2017* report is available at <https://www.tra.gov.au/>.

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