
HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY SAYS FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S BUDGET SERVES MENU OF LUKEWARM INITIATIVES

Restaurant & Catering Australia (R&CA), Australia's peak body for restaurants, cafes and catering businesses, states that the Albanese Government's budget will leave gastronomy in Australia in limbo, with only a few promising initiatives announced for hospitality.

R&CA CEO Mr Suresh Manickam said the budget was crucial to ensure the viability of small businesses in hospitality, as they face energy costs spiralling out of control, a skilled shortage crisis and turbulent economic headwinds from volatile consumer sentiment.

"The Budget provided an opportunity for the Federal Government to demonstrate their support for Australia's hospitality industry, but the announcements tonight are a mystery box filled with very few initiatives for the hospitality sector. The Budget leaves small businesses in hospitality hungry for more; more skills, more staff and more support."

"The Small Business Energy Incentive provided a taste of a positive announcement to assist businesses who are bearing the burden of the rising cost of electricity prices and inflationary pressures. However, the government's two-fold reduction in employment opportunities by raising the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold to \$70,000 and forcing underemployment of 24 hours per week for student visa holders will hurt the creativity and future of innovation of gastronomy in Australia" he said.

"The announcements in training and education does not address the current skills shortage and requires businesses to wait years to reap the fruit of this harvest. Small businesses reliant on the undertakings of the government to skill-up domestic workers while being forced to reduce the employment opportunities for migrants demonstrate that difficult business conditions are cooking up ahead in 2023/24."

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