

24 March 2016

HIGH PENALTY RATES TO RESULT IN REDUCED SERVICES OVER EASTER

Visitors staying in Australian hotels, motels, serviced apartments and other forms of tourism accommodation can expect reduced services over Easter because of excessive penalty rates.

Speaking on behalf of the industry, the Accommodation Association of Australia said this is the unfortunate reality facing operators because of the high cost of staff wages on public holidays.

"Although cafes, restaurants and retail businesses may choose to close over the Easter long weekend, accommodation providers do not have this option, as the vast majority have to remain open 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said the Association's Chief Executive Officer, Richard Munro.

"In an attempt to compensate for the high penalty rates which apply on public holidays, accommodation providers may have less staff rostered, shut the restaurant or bar within their business or reduce services and operating hours.

"In extreme cases, guests could even be turned away.

"These are the direct consequences of staff costs over the four days of Easter being the equivalent of almost two normal working weeks.

"To reduce the cost burden, the Accommodation Association continues to support Saturday penalty rates being applied on Sundays and public holidays, as well as a capped number of public holidays being built into the award."

The different rates of pay which apply in different parts of Australia across Easter is another challenge for operators of accommodation businesses, notably national chains.

"With each state and territory declaring different public holidays over Easter, this can be both confusing and expensive for operators as they attempt to ensure they comply with all legal requirements," Mr Munro said.

Member properties who wish to check on their obligations over Easter are urged to contact the Accommodation Association.

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