



fact sheet

Customers, workers, environmental groups and the Australian community want to see responsible and sustainable hotels. The First Star is an exciting collaboration between key stakeholders to make Australia's hotels better for workers, customers, investors and the environment.

Luxury hotels - the environment

- Climate change is a concern for accommodation industry workers: the destruction of major tourism destinations such as the Great Barrier Reef and Kakadu would have very real economic consequences.
- Climate change is a concern for hotel customers: the market for eco-travel is growing at four times the rate of traditional travel.
- Many businesses and event planners now include environmental responsibility in their criteria for travel and event spending. The World Economic Forum notes that destinations which do not address consumer concerns around sustainability will lose market share.
- The term 'greenwash' (used to describe businesses that claim to address environmental concerns, without making real change) was coined to describe the hotel industry.
- The industry has struggled for credibility on environmental issues: one study showed almost half of hotel business customers thought that green claims from the industry could be 'untruthful or misleading.'
- There is no single standard in Australia that is understood by consumers to differentiate between competitors. Companies' responses to climate change range from manufacturing 'eco-friendly' pens, to towel re-use programs.
- After aviation, accommodation is the largest single greenhouse gas emitter in the Australian tourism industry.

Luxury hotels - the workers

- Even in boom times, the industry has struggled to attract stable, mature investment – current market conditions (which favour opportunistic buyers) are exacerbating this problem.
- Chronic long term labour problems have also plagued the industry, with high rates of injury, turnover, casualisation and low pay the norm.
- According to the most recent National Health Survey, 9.7% of employees injured in the sector are each year, only marginally behind the construction industry.
- In boom times, the industry had extraordinarily high turnover - most recent ABS statistics show a turnover rate of 41% within the Accommodation and Food Services Industry, close to double the national average of 22%.
- Most recent ABS statistics (November 2007) show that 65% of employees are casual within the Accommodation and Food Services industry.
- The Fair Pay Commission acknowledged that the industry has a large concentration of low paid workers, and noted that over the ten years to the 2008 September quarter average wages in the industry had grown more slowly than average wages across all industries.
- Large multinational operator companies, such as Marriott, have tended to move away from owning their own hotels. Instead, hotels are often owned by a property entity, which then has a long term management contract with the operator.
- Many operators rapidly rolled out contracts in the dying days of WorkChoices (before July 1), using questionable processes and pressure tactics, to lock workers out of the new Fair Work laws for three more years.

