

# 2023 Election Manifesto



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## Restaurant Association Priorities at a Glance

<b>Immigration Policy</b>	→	<b>Immigration policy</b> to address skills shortage and ensure long-term sector sustainability	<b>Liquor Licencing Review</b>	→	<b>Review Liquor Licensing settings</b> , including cost benefit assessment on actual harm.
<b>Industry Training</b>	→	<b>Increased training</b> for New Zealanders to meet the skills shortage needs, both in terms of availability and quality	<b>Minister for Hospitality</b>	→	Establish a <b>Hospitality Minister</b> or dedicated hospitality unit within MBIE hospitality unit within the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.
<b>Employer Accreditation</b>	→	Invest in <b>HospoCred</b> to help expand the scheme.	<b>NZ's Food Story</b>	→	Working with Regional Economic Development Agencies to focus on the <b>New Zealand Food Story</b> .
<b>Regulatory Review</b>	→	Review the <b>regulatory environment</b> for hospitality	<b>Crime</b>	→	<b>Impacts on business</b> and staff in Hospitality
<b>Hospitality Narrative</b>	→	Reframing government's narrative around <b>Hospitality employment pathway for life</b> .	<b>Civil Defence</b>	→	<b>Emergency response framework</b> - future pandemic and emergency planning
<b>Immigration NZ</b>	→	Structural inefficiencies within <b>Immigration NZ</b> creating confusion and loss of productivity (visa processing delays)			

## Immigration:

Immigration plays a significant role in bolstering the Hospitality sector's workforce.

Aotearoa New Zealand has set itself apart on the international stage for its culinary excellence and diversity.

Although unemployment rates have reached record lows, hospitality industry staffing challenges have peaked. The constraints of operating with a deficit of workers is often referred to by operators as their biggest ongoing challenge.

Our hospitality businesses must be able to attract, recruit and retain overseas talent to bolster our skills shortage in the short term and to ensure we can successfully build and upskill our domestic workforce and provide patrons with authentic culinary experiences.

A one size fits all approach to immigration settings does not meet the unique needs of our sector. In 2023 and beyond, our sector needs a clear roadmap from the government pertaining to short, medium and long-term immigration plans that provides clarity for businesses, and that is responsive to our sector's unique needs and reflective of the realities of operating a hospitality business.

## Immigration | Actions the Restaurant Association wants to see



### 1. Clear guidance

Clear guidance on short, medium and long-term plans for immigration and the role it plays in the country's economic recovery - including the introduction of an Immigration Statement of Intent which will provide transparency on the government's intentions and allow time for businesses to plan.



### 2. Effective Immigration Policy

Effective immigration policy in the immediate short-term to address crippling staffing shortages

Removal of median wage on the accredited employer scheme and replace with industry salary benchmarks.



### 3. Immigration NZ Policies

Address structural inefficiencies within Immigration NZ creating confusion and loss of productivity. This includes:

- Up-skilling Immigration NZ staff with industry-specific knowledge
- Ensuring greater consistency with the assessment of visa applications
- Improved case management and streamlining of applications, so employers and employees know where their application stands
- Closer ties with the Regional Skills Leadership Groups to understand regional shortages etc

## Education

Education is an integral factor in the overall upskilling and future-proofing of our industries.

Despite being one of New Zealand's biggest sectors, hospitality is still plagued with perception issues that prevent New Zealanders from viewing the industry as a viable and desirable career path.

With educational institutes and polytechnics across the motu considering no longer holding their tourism offerings - the next Government must prioritise educational initiatives aimed at inspiring Kiwis from all walks of life to upskill and enter the hospitality industry as a life-long career path. Industry bodies such as the Restaurant Association have been working tirelessly to create programmes to fill these gaps - but we cannot do so alone.

Additionally, for many years, immigration and education policies have been viewed as separate issues. However, in order to ensure the sector's long-term sustainability, it is essential that the next Government of New Zealand adjusts its educational policies in line with Aotearoa New Zealand's current immigration settings. Most importantly, it is vital that our education and immigration public bodies work together to recognise international qualifications and on the job training to ensure kiwi businesses are not missing out on much-needed talent.

## Education | Actions the Restaurant Association wants to see



- Increased training for New Zealanders to meet the skills shortage needs, both in terms of availability and quality
- Government to invest in already working sector-led training opportunities
- A review of the existing education framework to be reviewed and gaps identified
- Stronger links between education and immigration policies - particularly in recognising overseas registrations and certifications
- While ROVE seeks to ensure that education and training is fit for purpose, we do raise this as an ongoing challenge for operators. Further support for industry-led partnerships, like that between the RA and Northtec, would help ensure that training is fit for purpose.
- Closer links with the RSLG (Regional Skills Leadership Groups) in identifying relevant funding for programmes.
- Stronger links with education and training policies through a Government Policy Statement and by requiring Workforce Development Council's to report on how demand for migrant labour and skills gaps inform their training priorities
- Training to be centralised or accredited centrally to ensure education is consistent and targeted to address skills shortages

## Workplace Relations & Safety

Lack of resourcing and capacity has meant the Government often lacks proactive measures to get ahead of worker relations and safety issues but rather acts as an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff.

A key priority for our industry is to address perception issues by lifting employment standards and tackling exploitative working conditions. While we welcome efforts to increase transparency and awareness of employment standards within the hospitality and tourism sectors - we believe that these changes should be led by the industry itself.

### Actions the Restaurant Association wants to see:

- Government to invest and expand HospoCred in order to create a clearer picture for consumers, businesses and current and prospective employees about what it means to be a responsible and transparent hospitality business
- Government to use the sector as a collective force to prevent exploitation by collaborating and supporting industry-led-initiatives
- Tap into successfully led industry programmes before recreating the wheel





## Small Business

Within the hospitality sector, employers are predominantly owner-operators, who are intimately involved in the day-to-day running of their small business, which means their access to time and resources is often limited.

While regulatory change is inevitable, the sheer number and scale of legislative changes to New Zealand's employment, industrial relations, and immigration frameworks in the last 24 months, particularly with the Fair Pay Agreements, and Immigration Reset, has severely impacted our confidence as a sector.

The Restaurant Association, therefore, welcomes the opportunity to work with the incoming Government to ensure the regulatory environment is conducive to productivity and business growth - while ensuring the safety and well-being of employees and consumers remain a top priority.



### Actions the Restaurant Association wants to see:

- Review whether the regulatory environment for hospitality is conducive to productivity and business growth
- Adopt a pragmatic approach to regulatory changes, prioritising only those changes or new requirements that are as simple and cost-neutral to implement as possible—, particularly for small business.
- Address structural inefficiencies within Immigration NZ creating confusion and loss of productivity

## Tourism

Hospitality is an integral part of New Zealand's domestic and international tourism scene and local visitor economy. However, the use of the Hospitality sector as a default example of supposed 'bad employers' by the Government has been detrimental to the image of our industry. Thus, the Restaurant Association welcomes the opportunity to work with the incoming government to shift perceptions and misconceptions of New Zealand's hospitality industry in order to bolster its credibility and standing as an integral part of the New Zealand tourism scene.

While Tourism and Hospitality operations no doubt impact each other, a one size fits all approach to our industries has not adequately addressed the needs of Hospitality in recent years. While Tourism and Hospitality are inherently linked, Hospitality is often lost by the Government in conversations about the Tourism industry. We believe that seeing a more concentrated focus on Hospitality within Government, either through a ministerial portfolio or a specialised unit with MBIE, would be a game changer for our sector



### Actions the Restaurant Association wants to see:

- Re-framing the narrative adopted by Government and officials around Hospitality, which perpetuates the use of the Hospitality sector as a default example of supposed 'bad employers' has been detrimental to the image of our industry
- The establishment of either a Ministerial portfolio (e.g. Associate Minister of Tourism (Hospitality) or a specialised MBIE Unit focused on the Hospitality sector
- Work with Regional Economic Development Agencies to develop a New Zealand Food Story

## Justice

While liquor licensing regulations are a necessary and integral tool in ensuring the safe consumption and mitigation of alcohol in our communities - we believe the current liquor licensing settings are not nuanced enough for the different types of businesses operating within the industry, reflective of actual harm - particularly in relation to the harm by different types of businesses within the sector which can be attributed to hospitality business in light of the costs placed on businesses.

Liquor licensing processes have long been rigorous and time-consuming, resulting in confusion and loss of productivity in already time and resource-constrained business owners. The Restaurant Association would therefore welcome the opportunity to work with the incoming Government to review liquor licensing settings.

Moreover, while business owners have always had to deal with some element of crime and lawlessness in their operations - the increasing wave of crime in the last 12 months has made things increasingly difficult. Business owners and their teams should not be afraid to go to and from work and operate their businesses independently. Thus, the Restaurant Association would like to see an increase in social-investment by the incoming Government to address the determinants of crime and direct investment in crime prevention.



### Actions the Restaurant Association wants to see:

- Review Liquor Licensing settings including cost-benefit assessment on actual harm - particularly in regards to extending licences in public spaces
- Grant businesses who have received HospoCred accreditation a fast-tracked Liquor Licensing process
- Greater social investment to address the determinants of crime
- Direct investment in crime prevention

## Civil Defence

### Emergency response framework - future pandemic and emergency planning

After more than 3 years dealing with the repercussions of Covid-19 and other disasters and emergencies, now more than ever, Hospitality businesses across Aotearoa are walking a tightrope between recovery and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the industry.

One of the key insights that our sector has gleaned from the pandemic is the importance of the ability to prepare for large-scale disruptions – be that pandemic, other diseases or natural disasters like the Canterbury and Kaikoura earthquakes or the North Island flooding of January 2023 or the more recent Cyclone.

As customer facing / service operations Hospitality businesses are invariably significantly impacted

by events – our businesses can't reset to work from home and messaging and regulations often instigate customers to stay away, with resulting turnover impacts.

In the Association's view the Government must review and put in place an emergency response that provides clarity and sets in place processes to minimise confusion and mitigate disruption.

As part of this framework we also believe that an automatic trigger of financial support for impacted sectors and regions should be included in legislation.

While the most obvious costs to business, staff, salaries are front of mind, there are fixed costs that are sunk when businesses are not able to trade, including: rent, insurance, utility costs, product/food waste, numerous licensing fees.



### Actions the Restaurant Association wants to see:

- Review existing emergency response framework and put in place legislation that provides clarity and certainty for businesses owners.
- Provide automatic triggers of support for impacted sectors and regions that are embedded in legislation.

## about RA

**Good food is one thing. Good business is something else.**

Our mission is to be the bridge between the two, helping our members to become great. We are not-for-profit, owned by our members and dedicated to helping them succeed.

Restaurant Association membership is a badge of professionalism – we encourage members to actively promote their affiliation to our Association, which is the professional body representing and giving a voice to the industry's challenges and triumphs.

We're passionate about our vibrant industry, which is full of interesting, talented and entrepreneurial people, with our members representing a segment of the industry, focused on success. Our core membership are restaurants and cafes, but we also have food trucks, take away sites, chain restaurants, quick service restaurants, standalone cafes, bars, catering companies, accommodation providers and companies that feed into the industry.





## the link between good food and good business

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