

LABOR'S TOURISM POLICY

WE'LL PUT PEOPLE FIRST

Labor



INTRODUCTION

After three years of neglect and cutbacks by the Liberal Government, Labor will restore tourism to the heart of Australia's economic narrative, recognising its importance as a super-growth sector for local jobs and the economy.

Tourism is Australia's largest services export and employs over one million Australians. There are more than 276,000 tourism businesses in Australia, which deliver \$94.5 billion in revenue every year.

Tourism GDP increased 5.3 per cent in 2014-15, more than three times the growth for the total economy. This trend is expected to continue over the next 20 years – but a coordinated approach by the Federal Government is essential to realise its full potential.

LIBERALS' TOURISM RECORD

The Liberals have wasted three years in office: failing to appoint a Tourism Minister for more than two years; abolishing key grants programs and critical research surveys; introducing a flawed backpacker tax; and failing to invest in infrastructure.

While our competitors have spent the last three years investing in the infrastructure and relationships needed to compete in the booming Asian market, the Liberals cancelled Australia's membership of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation.

Labor will fix the damage by: investing in tourism infrastructure; providing adequate resources for marketing and research; supporting taxation arrangements conducive to the industry's growth; and pursuing visitor visa reform.

We will set tourism up for long term success by protecting our natural assets; building skills and career pathways; using government to attract more major events and exhibitions; and re-engaging the Federal Government domestically and internationally.

THE LIBERALS' RECORD

After the Liberal Government took office in 2013 it immediately scrapped more than \$4 billion in proposed investment in public transport, cancelling projects that had already been assessed and approved by Infrastructure Australia. It transferred that funding to proposed toll roads that had not been assessed by Infrastructure Australia.

Of its three signature toll road projects, Melbourne's East West Link has collapsed, the Perth Freight Link has been halted by the courts on environmental grounds and the budget for Sydney's WestConnex project has blown out from \$10 billion to \$16.8 billion. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures reveal total public infrastructure investment fell by 20 per cent between the September quarter of 2013, which was Labor's last term in office, and the September quarter of 2015. Those figures do not take into account \$1 billion of extra infrastructure cuts in the 2016 Budget.

LABOR'S TOURISM RECORD

Labor is proud of its record in government investing in the infrastructure and skills to deliver long-term growth. The previous Labor Government delivered Australia's first integrated tourism policy to increase our competitiveness and grow visitor demand.

We made tourism a national investment priority; and reached agreement with industry and the States and Territories on six areas of focus. We delivered hundreds of grants and millions of dollars to industry to help improve tourism quality.

We launched the Tourism Major Project Facilitation program in November 2012 to give projects over \$50 million a dedicated government contact to help the approvals process.

Labor has always ensured that tourism receives representation at the highest levels of government, sending a message around the Cabinet table and around the world that tourism matters.

RETURNING TOURISM TO THE CENTRE OF GOVERNMENT

Labor will appoint a Minister for Tourism, aligning the portfolio within a newly configured Department of Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and providing senior leadership with a focus on cross-portfolio and agency cooperation and engagement.

This will restore tourism's standing as a key economic portfolio after three years of cutbacks and neglect by the Liberals, including two out of three years without a Tourism Minister and the designation of tourism as a last priority by Austrade.

Co-locating the Tourism portfolio with Infrastructure and Transport provides a strategic advantage for the tourism sector around the Cabinet table, ensuring industry has the opportunity to engage with decision making processes.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Labor will resume its record investment in tourism infrastructure including airports, ports, roads and public transport to lift our international competitiveness, support growth and provide a high quality experience for domestic and international visitors.

The World Economic Forum ranks Australia 7th for tourism competitiveness worldwide but 20th for tourism infrastructure. To ensure we can compete with our competitors in the Asia-Pacific region, we must invest in infrastructure now.

Labor has announced a range of measures for tourism infrastructure during the election campaign, detailed below. These measures complement Labor's existing approaches to infrastructure funding and urban policy already announced.

NORTHERN AUSTRALIA TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

Northern Australia is a strategically located close to neighbouring countries in the Asia-Pacific region, giving it key advantages for aviation and tourism compared to the southern states. It is home to many of Australia's natural wonders including the Daintree Rainforest, Kakadu and the Great Barrier Reef.

Labor will allocate \$1 billion from the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility to a Northern Australia Tourism Infrastructure Fund, to boost partnerships with the tourism sector and provide incentives for investment in new and upgraded tourism infrastructure across the north.

Projects targeting key growth markets; promoting Australia's natural environment such as the Great Barrier Reef; eco-tourism projects; Indigenous tourism ventures; event-based facilities including stadia and convention centres and transport and access upgrades, including for ports and airports will be eligible for funding.

Funding will take the form of concessional loans and project finance, with successful projects required to pass through rigorous selection processes. Projects will be encouraged to attract private financing in addition to grants. Finance will be available to projects in northern Australia.

TASMANIA TOURISM INVESTMENT FUND

Tourism directly and indirectly supports around 38,000 jobs in Tasmania or about 16.2 per cent of total Tasmanian employment – the highest in the country. The need to diversify Tasmania’s economy following the transition from forestry is urgent.

Fortunately, Tasmania is a fast growing destination for domestic and international tourists; declared the number four destination on Lonely Planet’s Best in Travel 2015. Labor believes in tourism as a major source of jobs and growth in Tasmania.

A Shorten Labor Government will create a new \$44 million Tasmania Tourism Infrastructure Fund, recognising its potential as a key growth area for domestic and international tourism and its status as a major source of jobs for the State.

Labor has announced funding for seven projects during the election campaign:

- Cradle Mountain Amenities Upgrade.
- Coastal Promenade and Shared Pathway (Burnie Waterfront Masterplan).
- Last stage of the Three Capes Walk.
- Turning ex-HMAS Tobruk into a dive wreck off Tasmania’s north-east coast.
- Shared walking and cycling pathway between Latrobe and Devonport.
- Berridale Foreshore Public Access Boardwalk.
- Royal Tasmania Botanical Gardens Revitalisation Project.

The remaining funding will be subject to further announcements.

TOWNSVILLE STADIUM

Townsville continues to grow as a key northern Australia hub, critical to the economy of Far North Queensland. Additional investment will enable Townsville to attract more major sporting events, helping to drive growth and local jobs.

The home of the North Queensland Cowboys, the current stadium will reach the end of its useful life within a decade. Labor will provide \$100 million to build a new Townsville Stadium in partnership with the Queensland Labor Government.

Construction of the project is expected to support over 700 jobs in the region, and make a significant boost to the local economy. Construction should commence by early 2018, with the ground complete for the 2020 NRL season.

The stadium is the centrepiece of a comprehensive plan for urban renewal in Townsville that will drive economic growth and improve the liveability of this regional city.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Over 1 million international tourists use public transportation in Australia every year. Around the world, iconic public transport projects in major cities help to define a city’s identity and have a significant impact on the overall quality of the visitor experience.

The previous Labor Government invested more in public transport than all previous Commonwealth Governments combined from Federation to 2007. Labor will resume this work, investing in modern and efficient transport projects around the country.

This includes a focus on rail links to airports in Perth, Adelaide and Sydney. Labor has announced commitments, subject where relevant to final business cases, for public transport projects in our five largest cities:

- In Sydney, Western Sydney north-south rail via Badgerys Creek.
- The Melbourne Metro.
- The Cross River Rail project in Brisbane.
- Perth public transport (more specifically Metronet).

AIRPORTS & AVIATION

Australia is an island continent relying heavily on aviation for the movement of our international and domestic visitors. Labor will work with industry to ensure Australia continues to grow our aviation capacity to support visitor growth.

Labor developed Australia's first ever comprehensive National Aviation White Paper which recognised investment in well planned airports and a strong domestic market and general aviation sector are crucial for the long-term future of Australian aviation.

Labor will maintain a strong aviation industry with a secure Australian workforce. Where new gateways are approved, Labor will provide timely support through federal agencies such as customs and security.

More details about Labor's aviation policy are available in Labor's infrastructure policy document.

REGIONAL AVIATION

Labor will maximise the growth potential of non-gateway airports by ensuring they are formally classified as stand-alone airports; ensuring they are not constrained by the same Air Services Agreements with international airlines that apply to the gateway airports of Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Perth.

The current link between airports such as Avalon and Melbourne Airport means there is no incentive for international airlines to choose to fly direct to Avalon.

Designating more regional airports will unlock jobs growth and boost regional Australia's tourism potential, just as the Gold Coast Airport benefits from not being treated as an adjunct to the Brisbane Airport.

This measure is consistent with the recommendations of the Aviation White Paper commissioned by the previous Labor Government.

HOBART AIRPORT ACCESS UPGRADE

Labor has announced it will upgrade the Hobart Airport Roundabout to ease congestion and boost tourism and trade, delivering a grade-separated overpass to remove bottlenecks and allow free movement of vehicles on the Tasman Highway.

The Hobart Airport is the main gateway to Tasmania with two million passengers entering the State by air every year. Passenger numbers are forecast to increase by 130 per cent and aircraft movements expected to double over the next 20 years.

Traffic around the airport will more than double over the coming decade making tackling congestion and boosting productivity critical tasks to supporting the strong growth of the visitor market.

This project will reduce travel times for visitors arriving and departing from the airport; increase productivity for truck freight; enhance trade opportunities for local producers; and improve access to the commercial precinct.

CRUISE SHIPPING

Cruise shipping is among Australia's fastest growing tourism sectors with growth of over 20 per cent occurring in recent years. A coordinated approach is needed to ensure Australia has sufficient infrastructure to accommodate the sector's growth.

Labor will work with industry to ensure adequate port and visitor infrastructure is available to accommodate growth in the cruise ship sector. We will ensure that we maintain a strong Australian domestic shipping industry, including cruise ships.

Labor will work with the sector and local communities to ensure that the cruise ship industry that appropriate consideration is given to environmental impacts.

HIGH SPEED RAIL

High Speed Rail will be a game-changer for Australia's tourism industry, reducing travel time between Brisbane-Sydney and Sydney-Melbourne to less than three hours and opening up regional towns and cities along to route to visitor growth.

Labor will establish and resource a High Speed Rail Planning Authority to coordinate planning for the corridor, and call for expressions of interest from the private sector in future planning and development. This will include the States and the ACT, local government and the Australasian Railway Association.

VISA REFORM

Australia's visa costs weigh significantly on our competitiveness as a nation in the Asia-Pacific region. There is an imperative to ensure that every discretionary cost within government's control is minimised.

Labor has announced it will undertake an audit of Australia's tourist visa offering for each of our main target markets, and undertake an assessment of how that offering compares to our major competitors.

The tourist visa audit will assess the competitiveness of our visa fees, visa processing arrangements and the ease of interaction with the Australian border.

In addition, with a view to the growing Chinese market, Labor will review:

- The cost of the 10-year multiple entry visa so that it is competitive with that for Chinese citizens visiting the US and the EU.
- Introducing an online visa application, in both English and Mandarin, which can be submitted online at any time.
- Reducing the processing time for visas submitted online to within 48 hours.

This will help to arrest and reverse the decline in share of the Chinese tourist market, which has been stagnant since 2004 as a proportion of the total Chinese market.

PASSENGER FACILITATION

Officials at airports and ports are the first point of contact with Australia for international travellers. A friendly and efficient welcome is critical to delivering a high quality passenger facilitation experience which will encourage further visitor growth and return visits.

Labor will continue the rollout of SmartGates at our borders to speed processing time and continue to explore, develop and invest in new technologies which can further reduce processing time and modernise existing systems.

Labor will review the factors which have an impact on passenger facilitation at International Airports, with Perth International Airport to be looked at as a priority.

TAXATION

Labor supports taxation arrangements conducive to the tourism industry's growth. The reckless actions of the Liberal Government in introducing a flawed backpacker tax and then bungling its delay has caused significant damage to the working holiday market, resulting in fewer arrivals.

Labor will ensure that industry and stakeholders are adequately consulted on proposed changes to taxation arrangements via formal processes and utilise the best available evidence to ensure proposed measures are not counterproductive.

TOURIST REFUND SCHEME

Labor will review the feasibility of reforming the Tourist Refund Scheme by introducing an online, streamlined claiming process based on the Singapore model.

MARKETING

International tourism marketing provides significant return on investment with every \$1 spent producing \$16 in economic benefit. Labor supports the work of Tourism Australia and will ensure it is adequately resourced to grow visitation.

Labor will continue to focus on key international growth markets, but will re-engage the Federal Government with the domestic tourism industry, which accounts for more than 70 per cent of tourism expenditure in Australia.

Under the Liberals, coordination with State and Territory tourism agencies has been reduced.

Better engagement between federal agencies with local and State and Territory Governments, as well as international tourism bodies will help to reduce duplication, increase coordination, and maximise the return on marketing funding.

Labor supports the work of the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.

SKILLS AND TRAINING

Labor will work with industry to develop a strategy to foster and encourage long term careers in tourism and hospitality including better industry connections, training packages and programs and links with educational and industry institutions.

Labor will deliver a nationally recognised formal training package based on agreed industry standards, including appropriate training and safe work policies with career options; and appropriate recognition in wages of training and productivity outcomes; in co-operation with governments, industry and unions.

RESEARCH AND DATA

Robust tourism data is essential for investors, government and business. Labor will reinstate the Survey of Tourist Accommodation and ensure that Tourism Research Australia is adequately funded to support the needs of industry.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Labor recognises the threat of climate change to Australia's prized natural assets, including the Great Barrier Reef, Kakadu and the Australian Alps. Labor has announced a comprehensive plan to tackle climate change.

More information is available in Labor's climate change policy document.

Labor will support sustainable tourism and protect and promote Australia's environmental and cultural heritage to ensure generations of Australians and international travellers to come and experience Australia's natural wonders.

GREAT BARRIER REEF

The Great Barrier Reef is one of Australia's most precious national, environmental and economic assets. Labor will protect the Great Barrier Reef and help grow the 70,000 jobs already supported by the Reef by supporting sustainable tourism.

More information is available in our Plan for the Great Barrier Reef policy document which details \$500 million of investment priorities in the reef to support research, management, investment and preservation.

INDIGENOUS TOURISM

Labor believes in the potential to grow the understanding of Indigenous Australian culture through the tourism industry. Indigenous tourism represents an opportunity for sustainable economic development for many communities.

There is specific provision in the Northern Australia Tourism Infrastructure Fund to assist Indigenous tourism ventures.

Labor will enhance tourism employment and business opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in conjunction with appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative bodies.

REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

Regional Australia will particularly benefit from tourism growth with 42 cents in every tourism dollar being spent in the regions. Tourism will particularly benefit communities seeking to diversify their economics in the post-mining boom phase.

Upon coming to office the Liberals cancelled the previous Labor Government's Tourism Industry Regional Fund, representing a loss of more than \$94 million in matching private capital for tourism infrastructure from over 450 proponents.

Labor will support regional tourism growth through the designation of regional airports; by resuming record infrastructure funding for roads; public transport, ports and airports; through our Northern Australia Tourism Infrastructure Fund and Tasmanian Tourism Infrastructure Fund; and by preparing for High Speed Rail.

CITIES POLICY

Australian cities are the key international gateways for most tourists arriving in Australia and attractions in their own right as well as gateways to further travel into regional and remote Australia.

Labor has released a detailed 10 point plan for better cities which will benefit tourism including support for active transport and public transport, sustainability measures in infrastructure projects, and environmentally friendly design and urban spaces.

MAJOR PROJECTS

Labor will maintain tourism as a national investment priority and will ensure investors have reliable access to information needed for investment decisions, helping to facilitate the growth of private capital contributions for major tourism projects.

Labor introduced the Major Project Facilitation Service when we were last in office, ensuring project proponents are provided with assistance in securing necessary approvals from Federal and State and Territory Government Departments in order to proceed.

Labor will continue to support the work of the Major Project Facilitation Service.

SMALL BUSINESS

There are 267,000 tourism businesses in Australia, 95 per cent of those businesses being non-employing, micro or small businesses. Labor has announced a comprehensive policy for small business.

This includes including measures to improve access to finances for micro-businesses; to help small businesses incorporate; and support for a cut in the company tax rate to 27.5 per cent proposed in the 2016 Budget.

Labor will appropriately target assistance and advice schemes to include tourism operators.

A UNITED LABOR TEAM WILL PUT PEOPLE FIRST

From the day Bill Shorten became Leader, Labor's team has remained united, with a single-minded commitment to deliver those policies that put people first. A healthcare system underpinned by Medicare. An education system that gives every child in every school more individual attention – Public, Catholic or Independent. University and TAFE that is accessible for all.

**WE HAVE PUT FORWARD OUR POSITIVE PLANS.
WE ARE UNITED. WE ARE READY.**



WE'LL PUT PEOPLE FIRST

