

BILL SHORTEN AND LABOR

TOURISM POLICY 2019



Labor



A Fair Go
For Australia

INTRODUCTION

Tourism contributes \$100 billion annually to Australia's GDP and employs almost one million people, underpinning the local economy of towns and cities across the nation.

To unlock its potential, Labor will restore tourism to the heart of Australia's economic narrative, recognising its importance as a super-growth sector for jobs and the economy.

THE LIBERALS' RECORD

The Liberals have taken a number of short-sighted and retrograde actions against the tourism sector. This includes shutting down all industry development projects, including those targeted at regional tourism infrastructure, and directing Tourism Australia to not undertake any domestic advertising.

Additional Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government failings include:

- No Tourism Minister for the first two years in office.
- Cutting \$35 million in funding to Tourism Australia in the 2017 Budget; and failing to restore it in the 2018 Budget.
- Cancelling Tourism Industry Regional Fund (TIRF) and TQUAL Accreditation.
- Withdrawing Australia from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation.
- Implementing the disastrous Backpacker Tax and hiking the Passenger Movement Charge.
- Privatising the Survey of Tourist Accommodation (STA).

LABOR'S RECORD

Labor has a strong record of investing in tourism, as well as the infrastructure and skills that underpin this sector's success – all of which are needed to deliver long-term growth.

The former Labor Government's achievements include:

- ✓ Delivering Australia's first integrated tourism policy to increase our competitiveness and grow visitor demand.
- ✓ Making tourism a national investment priority – reaching agreement with industry and the states and territories on six areas of focus.
- ✓ Launching the Tourism Major Project Facilitation program in November 2012 to give projects over \$50 million a dedicated government contact to help the approvals process.
- ✓ Providing financial support to industry to help improve tourism quality.

A Shorten Labor Government will build on this legacy to grow the success of tourism in Australia.

RETURNING TOURISM TO THE CENTRE OF GOVERNMENT

Labor will realign the tourism portfolio within a newly configured Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Cities and Tourism. This will restore tourism's standing as a key economic portfolio after six years of cuts, new charges and underinvestment by the Liberals and ensure it has a place at the Cabinet table.

Labor will also reform the Tourism Access Working Group (TAWG), which we established in 2010 to provide an opportunity for industry to genuinely engage with government on decision making processes. The Liberals have treated the TAWG as a "tick and flick" exercise and failed to take advantage of the expertise this group brings to policy development.

INFRASTRUCTURE

A rising global middle class and a shift towards independent travel means quality infrastructure and services, including telecommunications, are more critical than ever before.

Labor will build on its record of investing 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.

Labor has already announced a range of measures for tourism infrastructure, which are detailed below.

NORTHERN AUSTRALIA TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

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.

Categories of tourism eligible for the funding will include:

- ✓ Projects targeting the expanding Asian tourism market.
- ✓ Projects promoting Australia's natural environment such as the Great Barrier Reef.
- ✓ Eco-tourism.
- ✓ Indigenous tourism ventures.
- ✓ Event-based facilities including stadiums and convention centres.
- ✓ Transport and access upgrades, including for ports and airports that support tourism.

Funding would be available through concessional loans and other forms of project finance, ensuring that projects will need to stack up and also potentially attract private financing.

WANGETTI TOURIST TRAIL

We will invest \$5 million to complete Stage One of the Wangetti Tourist Trail in Cairns. This Trail will deliver a new tourist site along the coastal ranges between Palm Cove and Port Douglas, north of Cairns and give walkers and cyclists access to the region's unique flora, fauna and natural landscapes, by winding through rainforests and along beaches.

LABOR'S PLAN FOR TASMANIAN TOURISM

Labor will invest \$120 million in key Tasmanian tourism projects to manage growing visitor numbers and unlock future jobs growth as well as the State's potential as a world-class destination for domestic and international tourists.

Tourism underpins the Tasmanian economy, injecting more than \$3 billion each year and supporting more than 40,000 jobs.

Labor's record announcement includes:

- ✓ **Cradle Mountain:** \$30 million to ensure Cradle Mountain's tourism infrastructure is world-class.
- ✓ **North West Coastal Pathway:** \$8.8 million to complete this 110 kilometre track.
- ✓ **George Town Mountain Bike Trail:** \$4.4 million to build on Tasmania's reputation as a world class mountain bike destination and drive increased tourism visitation to George Town, supporting local business and creating jobs.
- ✓ **Mona:** \$50 million to support public facilities including a new convention centre, theatre, library, auditorium and playgrounds, while delivering significant jobs growth.
- ✓ **Freycinet National Park Management Plan:** \$10 million to fast-track priority visitor infrastructure projects within Freycinet, which is Tasmania's most visited National Park.
- ✓ **Mt Field National Park:** \$5 million to improve facilities and sustainably manage the significant growth in visitor numbers.
- ✓ **Tahune Airwalk and Hastings Cave:** \$5 million to repair the Airwalk and upgrade infrastructure at Hastings Cave following the devastating bushfires in the Huon Valley earlier this year.
- ✓ **Agritas tourism development:** \$2.8 million to deliver Stage 3 of this project, which is located in Smithton and will see the construction of a world class heritage and interactive museum.
- ✓ **Tourism trails:** \$300,000 for projects across northern Tasmania to provide strategic shared pathways that link destinations, while creating local job opportunities and improving liveability for residents and visitors alike.
- ✓ **Junction Arts Festival's Little Devil Tent:** \$80,000 to upgrade this community asset and performance space, which was designed and built in Launceston.
- ✓ **Dial Range Strategic Mountain Bike Plan:** \$280,000 to attract more visitors to the North West.
- ✓ **Beauty Point Foreshore Development:** \$3 million to improve the visitor experience, better connect the foreshore to the town, upgrade community amenities and enhance the appeal of Beauty Point as both a general visitor destination and Tasmania's leading small luxury cruise ship port.

INVESTING IN JABIRU'S FUTURE

Labor will invest \$220 million in infrastructure and community development projects to dramatically improve Kakadu National Park as a tourist destination and secure the future of the township of Jabiru.

Labor will achieve this by investing:

- ✓ \$100 million to upgrade four key access roads in the Kakadu National Park, to allow for year-round access to key sites in Kakadu.
- ✓ \$44 million for environmental and national park infrastructure upgrades, including work to tackle invasive species, better fire management, and improved camping facilities and car parking.
- ✓ \$25 million for a new Kakadu visitor and world heritage interpretive centre in Jabiru.
- ✓ \$2.5 million to improve mobile connectivity in the Park, for increased visitor safety and better reception for locals.
- ✓ \$2.5 million for a new Tourism Masterplan to help ensure Kakadu remains a world tourism leader and continues to grow visitor numbers.
- ✓ \$45 million to undertake urgent asbestos remediation work in Jabiru.
- ✓ \$1 million for a new roads strategy to be developed to improve safety on Kakadu's remote roads.

GREAT KEPPEL ISLAND

Labor will invest \$25 million to rejuvenate Great Keppel Island, helping to grow tourism, create jobs and deliver an \$80 million a year boost to the region's economy.

Great Keppel Island has amazing, untapped tourism potential but it is held back by a lack of basic infrastructure, including drinking water and a reliable power supply.

Federal Labor's investment – which matches the Queensland Government's investment – will deliver new infrastructure for permanent and reliable electricity and water supply on the Island.

SHIPWRECK COAST

Labor will invest in key tourism projects along the Shipwreck Coast as well as the Great Ocean Road to protect and enhance this national icon.

Ensuring this truly unique part of Australia remains accessible requires urgent action, specifically for protection works, upgrades to the road, tourist facilities, viewpoints and visitor safety.

A Shorten Labor Government will work closely with the Andrews' Labor Government, local councils and tourism authorities to make sure the region can not only handle existing tourism demand but drive growth in the sector to create more jobs, economic activity and, importantly, protect the Great Ocean Road from climate change.

BOOSTING TOURISM AUSTRALIA

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.

This includes providing a \$25 million boost to support domestic marketing activities and aviation attraction. 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.

Tourism Australia has a role to play in coordinating domestic marketing campaigns and retaining a high level of collaboration with industry and state and territory tourism marketing organisations to avoid duplication and target investment strategically.

There is also an opportunity to boost investment in aviation attraction, which involves Tourism Australia collaborating with state and territory organisations, airports and airlines to undertake joint marketing activities that increase the number of people wanting to visit a particular destination. This could benefit destinations such as Cairns, Darwin and Western Australia.

FIRST NATIONS TASKFORCE

Australia is home to the world's oldest continuing culture, which stretches back at least 65,000 years. Already many First Nations communities showcase their rich cultural stories and deep connection to land through tourism experiences.

There is a role for the Federal Government to play in supporting the development of these tourism experiences. This is why a Shorten Labor Government will establish a taskforce to work with tourism operators, industry, communities and other levels of government to investigate opportunities to showcase First Nations culture and history to visitors – growing the local economy and employment opportunities at the same time.

GROWING REGIONAL TOURISM

Labor's Regional Tourism plan, the result of extensive consultation with industry, local communities and local government, will bring a new focus to regional tourism.

It includes:

Building up existing tourism offerings:

- ✓ Investing \$40 million to improve infrastructure around existing regional tourism attractions to build upon their success and improve the experience of visitors:
 - Projects will be delivered in partnership with local and state governments or industry.
 - Labor's investment will include support for Rottneest Island in Western Australia, Freycinet National Park in Tasmania and Sovereign Hill in Victoria.
- ✓ In addition, there will be a further \$55 million for infrastructure and facilities upgrades at other world-renowned tourism destinations.

Creating new tourism in our regions:

- ✓ Investing \$30 million to unlock new tourism opportunities so individual regions can offer a broader range of experiences to visitors:
 - Eligible projects could include feasibility or concept studies such as First Nations cultural experiences, agri-tourism, eco-tourism, new infrastructure or upgrades to existing infrastructure.
 - The fund could also be accessed to improve accessibility at tourism sites which could include disability toilets, improvements to pathways at lookouts for wheelchair access, charging infrastructure for mobility scooters and safety improvements to railings and signage.
 - These projects will also be delivered in partnership with state and local governments or industry.

Supporting regional aviation:

- ✓ Creating of a \$100 million fund to improve and grow the nation's regional airports:
 - Councils report a significant backlog in aviation in airport maintenance and would access this grant fund to clear the backlog with projects funded on a dollar-for-dollar basis.
 - Better maintenance of regional airports will not only improve the tourist experience, but more importantly, allow ensure that airports maintain the highest possible levels of safety.

Australia's tourism offerings are among the best in the world.

However, retaining Australia's competitive advantage as a tourist destination requires investment in high-quality, accessible infrastructure, particularly in regional areas.

SUPPORTING BUSINESS EVENTS

The business events sector plays a critical role in the Australian economy: attracting international visitors; encouraging regional dispersal; supporting employment; and unlocking international trade opportunities.

A consistent methodology that measures the economic value of international and domestic visitors at business events in Australia is required to track growth and strategically plan for the future. A Shorten Labor Government would develop this in consultation with Tourism Research Australia, the ABS and the business events sector.

Additionally, Labor would seek to audit and map the infrastructure needs of the business events sector to identify gaps and priorities, including in regional Australia.

Labor will continue to support the Bid Fund Program, which operates through Tourism Australia and assists with bids for new business events.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Tourism can be a career for life. Labor will work with the industry to develop a strategy that fosters and encourages long-term careers in tourism and hospitality through skills, education and training opportunities.

This includes working with industry on capability training to prepare for the diverse and evolving needs of the inbound market.

Labor will also invest \$6 million in the Quality Tourism Framework (QTF). This has been developed by the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) to improve and diversify Australian tourism products, which we know are among the best in the world.

The QTF will develop 10,000 high quality tourism businesses and bring to market an annual stream of new internationally competitive product by improving factors like the visitor experience, tourism workforce and business and product sustainability.

The QTF will also combine multiple existing programs including the Australian Tourism Accreditation Program, Star Rating, ReviewPro and the Australian Tourism Awards, which recognise excellence in tourism.

LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD

A Shorten Labor Government will ensure that Australia's accommodation providers have the ability to set their own prices so they can compete with the multinationals behind the world's largest online booking sites.

This will be achieved by stopping major online booking providers from using 'price parity' clauses in their dealings with Australian hotels. Price parity clauses prevent Australian hotels from telling their customers that they can get a better deal by booking directly. This has the effect of channelling bookings through the two major online booking platforms, which have a combined market share of 84 percent, and charge hotels commissions of up to 30 per cent.

Labor will ban these contract terms as a high priority.

VISA REFORM

Labor will reform visitor visas to maintain and grow Australia's competitiveness as a tourism destination. We will adopt new technologies to enhance the visitor experience so that Australia does not fall behind other countries.

AUSTRALIAN SKILLS AUTHORITY

Labor understands the challenges and uncertainty experienced by the tourism sector when it comes to finding people to fill the diversity of jobs available. Consequently, Labor will take a common-sense approach that unlocks greater training opportunities for Australians, while targeting temporary work visas to those areas genuinely in need.

This will be achieved through the establishment of an independent Australian Skills Authority, which will create a Skills Shortage Occupations List in consultation with business, industry, unions, higher education and TAFE sectors and state, territory and local governments.

For all skills on the visa list, a Shorten Labor Government will implement a plan and timeline to train Australians, with the aim over time to get as many of the occupations off the list as possible.

The Australian Skills Authority will also:

- ✓ Provide advice to Government on current skills shortages.
- ✓ Project Australia's future skills shortages.
- ✓ Identify circumstances preventing local workers from meeting Australia's skill needs and provide advice on skill bottle-necks.
- ✓ Regularly review the SSOL to add or remove occupations in response to changes in Australia's skills and job market.

TAXATION

Labor supports taxation arrangements conducive to the tourism industry's growth. In contrast, the Liberals and Nationals recklessly introduced a flawed backpacker tax and increased the Passenger Movement Charge with little industry consultation.

Labor is committed to not increasing the Passenger Movement Charge in its next term of government. We will also ensure that industry and stakeholders are genuinely consulted on matters that concern them.

RESEARCH & DATA

Robust tourism data is essential for investors, government and business. Labor is committed to adequately resourcing our key research bodies, including Tourism Research Australia, and ensuring that publications are delivered on time.

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 come and experience our natural wonders.

ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

Ensuring high quality tourism experiences are accessible to all people, regardless of their age or ability is essential. This is why Labor has announced it will provide funding to retrofit existing tourism facilities in regional Australia.

Labor will also work with the sector to identify additional opportunities that improve and promote accessibility for domestic and international visitors.

TOURISM 2030

Labor supports the development of an effective long-term tourism strategy for Australia that sets clear targets and is underpinned by evidence and collaboration with industry and stakeholders.

Labor will continue to work with the industry to develop a Tourism 2030 strategy that considers a broad range of issues raised by the Beyond Tourism 2020 Steering Committee including the Tourist Refund Scheme and Passenger Facilitation.

SPORTS TOURISM

Australia is internationally recognised as a sporting nation. Each year significant numbers of international and domestic tourists attend sporting events across regional Australia and in our major cities.

Labor will invest in sports infrastructure to make sure we are well placed to meet this growing demand. This includes in Brisbane where Labor has committed to invest in the Queensland Tennis Centre Upgrade.

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 aviation policy document.

CRUISE SHIPPING

Australia is the world's fifth-largest cruising nation, with cruise shipping delivering significant economic benefits to communities and businesses. A coordinated approach is needed to ensure Australia has the 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 also ensure that we maintain a strong Australian domestic shipping industry including cruise ships.

We will provide a share of funding for shore to ship power at White Bay.

Labor will also 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

A Shorten Labor Government will establish a High Speed Rail Authority to preserve the corridor and work through a process for gathering international expressions of interest over the construction of a High Speed Rail link between Brisbane and Melbourne via Sydney and Canberra.

Labor's push to advance this visionary project will end three years of Liberals and Nationals' inaction on High Speed Rail, revolutionising interstate travel and turbo charging regional development.

A feasibility study completed in 2013 found the project would be viable, with the Sydney to Melbourne leg expected to return more than \$2 in economic benefit for every dollar invested.

High Speed Rail would allow for travel between capital cities in as little as three hours and transform the visitor experience.

It would also drive economic development of regional communities on its route including the Gold Coast, Casino, Grafton, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Taree, Newcastle, the Central Coast, Southern Highlands, Wagga Wagga, Albury-Wodonga and Shepparton.

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 delivering 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 are accessible for all.

**We have put forward our positive plans.
We are united. We are ready.**



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