

THE NATIONALS
for Regional Australia

OUR PLAN FOR
**AUSTRALIA'S
TOURISM
RECOVERY**

**GETTING
IT DONE** 
for Regional Australia

Key points

Over the last two years, our world-class tourism businesses have been doing it tough.

Border closures and the unpredictable nature of the pandemic put huge pressure on our \$166 billion visitor economy and the 600,000 people whose jobs relied on it before the pandemic.

Our Government's actions to save lives and livelihoods worked.

Our death rate from COVID is one of the lowest in the world, and tens of thousands of lives have been saved.

Australia's vaccination rates are among the highest in the world.

And **more than \$20 billion in assistance flowed to the tourism and hospitality industry** through JobKeeper, the Cash Flow Boost and targeted programs.

As we emerge from the pandemic, only a strong economy can continue to support the recovery of our iconic tourism sector and visitor economy.

Our multi-pronged plan will rejuvenate and grow the domestic and international tourism markets, creating more jobs for Australians:

- **Backing our tourism recovery** by delivering on our THRIVE 2030 Strategy. Our first target is **\$166 billion of visitor expenditure by 2024**. Our longer term goal is growth to **\$230 billion of visitor expenditure by 2030**, with \$100 billion of that in the regions.
 - Increasing funding for Tourism Australia including \$45 million to **accelerate international tourist and backpacker arrivals** through targeted marketing initiatives.
 - \$6.8 million for **increased data capture and analysis** to improve planning in the sector and to **establish an employment and skills platform to promote career opportunities** in tourism.
 - \$12.4 million for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to **extend fee relief to local tourism businesses** impacted by the pandemic.
 - Record investments in our **ports, airports, highways and roads** to get our visitors to destinations sooner and more safely.
 - \$100 million to **expand the Export Market Development Grant program for regional and rural exporters** to diversify and promote themselves in new markets. This is on top of the \$80 million for EMDG announced in December 2021.
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- **Promoting regional tourism** with \$20 million of tourism grants for small wineries, distilleries and breweries to **accelerate the development of tourism infrastructure**.
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- \$1 billion to **protect the Great Barrier Reef** and support the **64,000 jobs** that depend on our **\$6.4 billion Reef economy**.

- Investing \$26.8 million in the conservation of our **iconic national parks** to create jobs, attract more visitors and improve facilities.
- Attracting the **best of international sport** during our **green and gold decade** of **15 major international sporting events** – culminating in the **2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games**.
- Supporting our small and family tourism businesses with **lower taxes** and **record economic support** during the pandemic.
- Securing our **tourism workforce** by **boosting the number of Working Holiday Makers** through a one-off 30 per cent increase across all country caps in 2022-23.

Since March 2020, the Morrison Government's targeted programs have included:

- The \$1.2 billion **tourism and aviation package**, helping tourism rebound and saving jobs.
- **800,000 half-price domestic air fares** to attract Australian visitors to 13 regions reliant on international tourism.
- The COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Program, helping more than **3,200 travel agents** to continue to operate and process customer refunds.
- **\$139.6 million to support Australia's zoos, aquariums and wildlife parks** to care for their animals, and ensure these attractions remained viable and ready to welcome visitors back.

Our comprehensive plan is in stark contrast to **Labor who would put our tourism recovery at risk**.

More than **12,000 tourism businesses closed** under Labor's watch.

Under **Labor, Tourism Australia funding flatlined** between 2008 and 2013.

Over the last 30 years, **Labor** governments have, on average, delivered **higher unemployment, higher interest rates** and **higher electricity prices**.

And not a single balanced Budget.

Labor has already promised to **spend \$81 billion** more on thought bubbles throughout the pandemic.

But they can't say how they'll pay for their promises.

Labor can't manage money.

That always means higher deficits and higher taxes.

This election is a choice between the **Coalition Government that is delivering a strong economy and a stronger future for the tourism industry**, or Labor's team of union officials and political operatives who just don't get the tourism economy.

In uncertain times, Australia's tourism recovery can't risk Labor.

Our Plan

1. Backing the tourism recovery

Our world-class tourism sector needs a strong economy for a stronger future.

Before the pandemic, Australia's tourism and visitor economy was worth **\$166 billion** and directly **supported 600,000 Australian jobs**.

As our recovery continues, only the Coalition's long-term plan to build a stronger and more resilient economy will support, rebuild and grow this powerhouse industry.

While we've overcome the biggest economic shock since the Great Depression, it hasn't been easy.

Border closures, lockdowns and event cancellations were necessary to save thousands of lives.

But the tourism and visitor economy was hit hard.

That's why the Morrison Government provided a more than \$20 billion lifeline for the tourism and hospitality sector – saving businesses and keeping workers in jobs – through JobKeeper, the Cash Flow Boost and targeted programs.

As international borders reopen, we're seizing the opportunity to not only rebuild our traditional tourism base, but to expand and diversify into new overseas markets.

A re-elected Coalition Government will work with Australia's tourism businesses and industries to grow and create more jobs by delivering our THRIVE 2030 tourism and visitor economy strategy.

Our THRIVE strategy is driven by three core themes:

1. **Collaboration** between all levels of government and industry to grow a stronger and more resilient sector, with relevant, robust and timely data and insights.
2. **Modernisation** of our tourism infrastructure, workforce skills and business practices.
3. **Diversification** of international target markets and visitor segments – and of Australia's visitor economy and tourism products.

Our long-term plan for tourism aims to increase the value of the visitor economy to **\$230 billion by 2030** and continue to **support the more than 300,000 businesses** and **more than one million Australian workers** directly and indirectly employed in the sector.

More than 95 per cent of these 300,000 tourism-related businesses have fewer than 20 employees.

The Coalition Government is committed to supporting these operations so they can focus on doing what they do best – **running their businesses, growing their businesses and creating jobs for Australians. We have cut taxes and will keep taxes at record lows so small businesses keep more of what they earn.**

Our strong economic management means we can make **record investments in our tourism recovery, including ports, airports, highways, roads, rail and other important infrastructure.**

Our nationwide \$120 billion, 10-year infrastructure investment program is helping Australians and tourists get where they're going sooner and safer. There's more than \$33 billion alone over the next four years for safer roads.

More and better transport infrastructure is encouraging business investment, improving productivity and connectivity, busting congestion and supporting resilient supply chains and freight movements that our tourism operators rely on.

We are also investing in digital infrastructure in our regions, including \$811 million towards improving regional telecommunications and addressing mobile blackspots on up to 8,000 km of regional roads and adjacent households, businesses and tourist hotspots.

Before the pandemic, tourism was our largest services export industry. International education and tourism accounted for more than 60 per cent of our services exports. Overall, they were Australia's fourth and fifth largest exports respectively.

Our Government has already been working with the tourism sector to ensure our attractions, natural wonders, national parks, zoos, aquariums and wildlife parks stayed viable and ready to welcome visitors back.

The key to an even stronger future is the stronger economy that will support the industry to diversify international markets, and increase the range and type of experiences we offer.

A re-elected Coalition Government will invest **an additional \$180 million in our successful Export Market Development Grants program** to help small to medium businesses market and promote their products globally into new markets. Of this, we will allocate \$100 million to **regional and rural exporters.**

We know that regional Australia, with more than 100,000 tourism-related businesses – and where around 44 cents of every visitor dollar is spent – has a massive role to play in our tourism recovery.

A re-elected Coalition Government will continue to **support the tourism sector's recovery** and **implement our THRIVE 2030 strategy** with:

- \$75 million for Round 3 of the \$258 million Consumer Travel Support Program to **support travel agents and tour arrangement service providers.**
- \$60 million to **accelerate international tourist and backpacker arrivals** through targeted marketing initiatives.
- \$6.8 million for **increased data capture and analysis** to improve planning in the sector and **establish an employment platform to promote career opportunities** in tourism.
- A target of **\$166 billion in visitor spending by 2024**, and **\$230 billion by 2030**, of which \$100 billion is regional.

- Record investments in **infrastructure** to get our visitors where they are going sooner and safer, including:
 - \$1.1 billion for **faster rail between Brisbane and the Gold Coast**.
 - \$132 million for the **Northern Territory's Central Australian Tourism Roads**.
 - \$100 million for **Tasmania's Great Eastern Drive**.
 - \$47.7 million for **Norfolk Island infrastructure**, including upgrades to the Kingston and Arthur's Vale Historic Area and to promote tourism.
- **Lower taxes** for our small and family tourism businesses.
- \$100 million to **expand the Export Market Development Grant program for regional and rural exporters** to diversify and promote in new markets. This is on top of the extra \$80 million for EMDG announced in December 2021.

2. Promoting regional tourism

The Coalition is backing regional tourism to grow further, create jobs and strengthen regional and rural economies.

Our THRIVE 2030 tourism strategy aims for \$70 billion of regional visitor expenditure by 2024 and \$100 billion by 2030 in regional Australia.

Wineries, distillers and craft breweries are a big part of our tourism appeal, supporting more than 160,000 employees and contributing more than \$45 billion to the economy.

More than 60 per cent of distilleries are in rural and regional Australia and Australian wineries spread across 65 regions.

A re-elected Coalition Government will invest \$15 million in **Wine, Spirits and Craft Breweries Tourism Grants** and \$5 million for **Wine, Spirits and Craft Breweries Tourism Events**.

The grants will be open to small to medium-sized wineries, distilleries and beer producers with matching funding of up to \$100,000 provided for the construction or upgrade of cellar door or tourism-associated facilities (excluding accommodation) such as restaurants, tour facilities and viewing platforms.

The Wine, Spirits and Craft Breweries Tourism Events program will provide up to \$100,000 to tourism and local government organisations to create new events and experiences to attract tourists and showcase wineries, distilleries and craft beer makers.

These new measures complement the Coalition's ongoing \$10 million a year for the **Wine and Tourism Cellar Door Grants Program**. This allows wineries that exceed their Wine Equalisation Tax rebate cap to access a grant of up to \$100,000 for their cellar door sales.

To further promote the attractiveness of our regions as tourist destinations, a re-elected Coalition Government will invest an additional \$20 million in the successful Recreational Fishing and Camping Facilities Program.

About one in five Australians are active recreational fishers, with their activities generating more than \$1.8 billion of economic value every year.

We'll fund projects across Australia's coastal and regional communities to extend or upgrade boat ramps, jetties, cleaning stations, disability-accessible toilet blocks and campground facilities.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Invest \$20 million in our **Wine, Spirits and Craft Breweries Tourism Grants** and our **Wine, Spirits and Craft Breweries Tourism Events** program.
- Invest an additional \$20 million to extend our **recreational fishing program to build, upgrade, or maintain camping, boating and fishing infrastructure.**

3. Protecting the Great Barrier Reef and local economy

The Great Barrier Reef is one of the world's best managed reefs and only a re-elected Coalition Government will keep it that way.

Only the Coalition has a plan to protect the Reef and ensure our \$6.4 billion Reef economy stays strong and resilient for generations to come.

A re-elected Coalition Government will deliver:

- \$1 billion to **protect the Great Barrier Reef** and invest in improving water quality, Reef management and conservation, world-leading reef resilience science and projects including species protection, habitat restoration and marine debris reduction.
- \$15 million to **expand the Tourism Industry Activation and Reef Protection Initiative** for marine tourism operators to undertake water conservation and environmental and monitoring activities. In this way, they are ensuring tourism sites are well maintained and ready to welcome back guests.
- \$15 million for Tourism Tropical North Queensland to **attract tourists back to North Queensland** and to **promote the Great Barrier Reef.**
- \$12.4 million for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to **extend fee relief to local tourism businesses** impacted by the pandemic – around 650 operators won't have to collect these charges and 1,500 permit-holders can renew their Reef permits for free.
- \$45 million for Tourism Australia to target the **return of international tourists to regional destinations**, with:
 - \$15 million for advertising in overseas markets to **support regions most reliant on international tourists.**
 - \$25 million for Tourism Australia to work with partners including trade wholesalers, the airlines and the media to **drive international demand for key regions.**

- \$5 million to extend **Business Events Australia's highly successful bid fund** – which has already helped win 57 events for Australia.

4. Backing Indigenous tourism businesses

As we emerge from the pandemic, there is renewed opportunity for Indigenous businesses to make their mark on the Australian economy.

We are committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take full advantage of their economic opportunities. We are getting more Indigenous Australians job-ready, increasing entrepreneurship and employment, and providing opportunities for more Indigenous Australians to start and grow a business, especially in the tourism sector.

We are already prioritising Indigenous businesses through our THRIVE 2030 strategy and our \$40 million Indigenous Tourism Fund to respectfully embed Indigenous people and cultures in Australia's visitor economy.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- **Deliver \$6 million to restore and grow Indigenous tourism** through our \$12 million Tourism Grants for Indigenous Business Program to assist Indigenous-owned businesses and community organisations to increase their ability to offer exclusive and authentic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visitor experiences.
- **Develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander training programs** that create opportunities for participants to fully understand the industry and be able to advance their career and to develop new products or experiences in the sector.
- **Deliver the \$10 million National Indigenous Tourism Mentoring Program** to get Indigenous tourism businesses practical advice and support from industry experts.
- **Attract domestic and international visitors** to Australia's regional events and heritage offerings through the existing Regional Arts Fund, Festivals Australia, the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support Program, and the Culture, Heritage and Arts Regional Tourism Program.
- Leverage the \$17 million Strategic Indigenous Tourism co-investment projects to **increase the supply of Indigenous tourism experiences and create opportunities for Indigenous tourism businesses.**

5. Investing in our iconic national parks

Australia's iconic national parks include the red rocks of Uluru-Kata Tjuta, the wetlands of Kakadu and the pristine waters and white sandy beaches of Booderee.

Tourism supports many of the communities surrounding our national parks, creating economic activity and jobs.

The Coalition has already made record investments in national parks. A re-elected Coalition Government will build on this work to attract more visitors, create more jobs and improve facilities.

A re-elected Coalition Government will deliver:

- \$26.8 million to **enhance protection of Commonwealth National Parks:**
 - \$16.2 million for **management and environmental conservation**, including the monitoring and preservation of cultural and natural heritage.
 - \$10.6 million to **increase Traditional Owner engagement and employment**, and improve traditional knowledge conservation.
- \$636.4 million to **expand the Indigenous Rangers Program** and fund up to **1,089 new rangers by 2027 and 88 new ranger groups** across Australia for Indigenous Australians to undertake land and sea country management.

6. Attracting the best of international sport

Over the next decade, Australia will host more than **15 major international sporting events**, with huge opportunities for businesses and communities.

In 2032, the **Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games** will showcase Australia to the world.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Fund half the costs of critical infrastructure for the **2032 Brisbane Olympics and Paralympics**.
- Support the delivery of a range of major international sporting events, including the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022, FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, 2026 Commonwealth Games** and the **Netball World Cup 2027**.
- Support bids for the **2027 Men's Rugby World Cup** and **2029 Women's Rugby World Cup**.

7. Securing our tourism workforce

While the Coalition Government remains focused on getting as many Australians into work as possible, skilled migration and Working Holiday Makers have a role to play – particularly in supporting the international education and tourism sectors and to address workforce shortages.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Boost the number of Working Holiday Makers through a one-off 30 per cent increase across all country caps in 2022-23. This will **help our retail, hospitality, tourism and hotel operators tackle workforce shortages**.

- Ensure that skilled stream places account for around 70 per cent of the Migration program in 2022-23, **increasing the number of skilled workers** to around 110,000.
- Continue to deliver **faster, cheaper skills assessments** that will acknowledge the valuable skills migrants have brought with them, and their ability to contribute to the workforce.

Our Record

The Coalition is backing in Australia's world-class tourism sector and visitor economy and the more than **600,000 Australian jobs** that rely on it.

We have **cut the tax rate for small and medium businesses** – from 30 per cent in 2013-2014 to 25 per cent in 2021-2022.

360,000 small businesses have benefited from our instant asset write-off extension.

During the pandemic, more than 1 million businesses and 4 million workers were supported by **JobKeeper** – the largest economic support program in Australia's history.

We delivered a **\$50 million Tourism Icons Package** to support the development of five iconic tourism projects – creating new jobs and helping to diversify local economies:

- **Rottneet Island** sustainable visitor infrastructure and museum in Western Australia.
- **Sovereign Hill Museum Enhancement** in Victoria.
- **Wangetti Trail** construction in far north Queensland.
- **Freycinet National Park** in Tasmania for the visitor gateway hub and visitor centre.
- **Northern Rivers Rail Trail** development in northern New South Wales.

We are delivering **\$184 million for the Great Ocean Road and Geelong** to support tourism infrastructure and operators in the Shipwreck Coast and Great Ocean Road area.

We are delivering up to **\$216 million to upgrade Kakadu National Park and support the Jabiru township**. Improved walking tracks, viewing platforms, signage, mobile and Wi-Fi services in Kakadu National Park and an Indigenous-led World Heritage Kakadu Visitor Centre. Securing the long-term future of Jabiru township.

We are **supporting the growth of Indigenous tourism** as part of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy with a \$40 million Indigenous tourism fund.

We've delivered **record levels of economic support during the pandemic**, including \$20 billion to the tourism and hospitality sector.

This has sustained hundreds of thousands of tourism and travel businesses.

- **800,000 half-price domestic air fares** to attract domestic visitors to 13 regions most reliant on international tourism including the Gold Coast, Tropical North Queensland, Adelaide, Alice Springs, Darwin, Merimbula, northern Tasmania, Broome, the Whitsundays and Mackay region, the Great Ocean Road and Kangaroo Island.
- The COVID-19 Consumer Travel Support Program for **more than 3,200 travel agents**. Helping them continue to operate and process refunds for consumers.
- \$139.6 million to **support Australia's zoos, aquariums and wildlife parks** to care for their animals and ensure attractions remained viable and ready to welcome visitors back.

- More than 1,600 applicants shared in \$56 million in support of the **business events industry**.
- **\$185.3 million to Tourism Australia for 2021-22 to ramp up marketing campaigns** to attract international visitors.
- **298 projects** have shared in **\$300 million in tourism and infrastructure support** under Round 5 of the Building Better Regions Fund.
- Under the Tourism Industry Activation and Reef Protection Initiative, **17 marine tourism operators** have undertaken **thousands of hours of Reef conservation activities**:
 - more than **690 days of activity** on the Reef and more than **4,800 days of employment** for staff.
 - more than **22,000 coral fragments planted**, more than **63,000 pest snails removed** and more than **1,000 crown-of-thorns starfish removed**.
- Launching the largest support package for the **tourism and aviation industry** in Australia's history.
- \$50 million for the Recovery for Regional Tourism program to support regions reliant on international tourism, funding **projects to keep and create jobs, improve tourism offers, increase demand and attract visitors**.
- \$33.5 million for the Sustaining Tourism at Australia's Iconic World and National Heritage Sites Initiative. This **supports heritage upgrades, conservation work and infrastructure upgrades** at national and world heritage sites.
- Renewing the **Reef HQ Aquarium in Townsville** with more than \$80 million invested since 2019 to upgrade and maintain aquarium equipment and renovate Reef HQ.
- The \$1 billion International Freight Assistance Mechanism **kept airfreight supply chains open, maintained critical links between businesses and their international customers, and ensured the flow of imports**.
- Reopening to fully vaccinated visa holders and **welcoming the return of tourists, business travellers, visitors and cruises while protecting the health of Australians and continuing to secure our economic recovery**.

The Risk of Labor

This election provides a clear choice, with real consequences for Australia.

The pandemic has been very tough for our country.

Australia's tourism sector and visitor economy has been hit particularly hard.

However, on almost every measure – economic growth, jobs growth, debt levels, fatality rates or vaccine rates – Australia's recovery is leading the world.

Our country – and our world-class tourism industry – still face many challenges.

There is much more to do.

Labor would put our tourism recovery at risk.

Labor doesn't back small businesses that are the backbone of our tourism economy.

And because **Labor can't manage money**, they hit the tourism sector with **higher taxes, fees and charges** when they were last in government.

More than **12,000 tourism businesses closed** under Labor's watch.

Tourism Australia **funding flatlined under Labor** – from \$137.6 million in 2008-09 to just \$138.2 million in 2012-13.

In uncertain times, Australia's tourism recovery can't risk Labor.

COALITION	LABOR
More than \$20 billion in COVID assistance to the tourism and hospitality industry. A target of \$166 billion in visitor spending by 2024 and \$230 billion by 2030.	Labor has no policies to support Australia's tourism recovery and no plan to back our visitor economy.
We are increasing Tourism Australia funding to support our tourism recovery (\$155.3 million in 2021-22 and providing \$186.7 million in 2022-23).	Under Labor, Tourism Australia funding flatlined (from \$137.6 million in 2008-09 to just \$138.2 million in 2012-13).
Before the pandemic, the number of tourism businesses grew nearly 17 per cent from 267,000 in 2013 to 312,000 in 2019.	More than 12,000 tourism businesses closed under Labor's watch.

Cost

As part of the Plan for Australia's Tourism Recovery, the Coalition is investing an additional \$20 million for tourism grants for small wineries, distilleries and breweries.

The Coalition's Plan for Australia's Tourism Recovery also includes funding for previously announced election commitments.

Funding for all other policies in the Coalition's Plan for Australia's Tourism Recovery is already provided for within budget estimates.

THE NATIONALS *for Regional Australia*

 For further details of The Nationals' Plan go to: **www.nationals.org.au**