
Wednesday 4th September 2013

AFTA welcomes the leadership shown by the Federal Coalition on Tourism Policy

Today the Federal Coalition announced their Tourism Policy in advance of Saturday's Federal Election and the Travel and Tourism industry welcomes the leadership and commitment that this policy will bring to the industry.

The confirmation that the Passenger Movement Charge (PMC) will remain unchanged for the first term of Government, should the Coalition win this Saturday, is a vindication of the extensive efforts that AFTA and the Tourism and Transport Forum (TTF) have invested, in stopping the outrageous suggestion by the current government, to have the PMC indexed to inflation every year into the future.

AFTA Chief Executive Officer believes that this policy announcement demonstrates that should the Coalition win on Saturday they will be a government for Tourism and for the 500,000 Australians working within the industry.

"The PMC has been the current Government's budget "play thing" and they have used it to top up consolidated revenue for years. It is an anti Tourism tax and the industry can now have a level of certainty about the applicable level for the next three years", Westbury said

"Should the Coalition win on Saturday, we will then use the next three years to ensure that the PMC is appropriate and that collections are being used in the best interest of the industry and the nation", Westbury said.

In addition to this commitment to the PMC, the Coalition has escalated the importance of the Tourism industry by confirming that the Tourism department will become a part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This is perhaps a far more appropriate place for Tourism to be situated than the last 5 years as a poor cousin of the Department of Energy and Resources. This also means that Tourism will be represented in Cabinet by the Foreign Minister and should that be confirmed as Julie Bishop, the Deputy Leader of the Party, Tourism will have a very important place in the leadership team of the Coalition Cabinet, should they win on Saturday.

This is very good news for the Tourism and Travel industry and a most welcomed acknowledgement of the importance of Travel and Tourism in the services economy which is tipped to lead Australia to its next big boom.

"For far too long Tourism has lacked the attention of Government within the leadership team of both the Gillard and Rudd Governments and this has meant that the industry has had to do a great deal more lobbying and justifying to get outcomes, many of which never came under the current Government. This impressive change to how the industry will engage with a Coalition Government, with a Minister responsible, most likely to be Bob Baldwin if shadow ministerial portfolios are confirmed, is a welcome relief", said Westbury

“This policy shows the thoughtful insights of an opposition who has been listening and a Shadow Minister in Bob Baldwin who has been working with industry for many years to bring deliverable meaningful policy to the Travel and Tourism Industry, something we have been screaming out for over the past many years but with not response from the current Government.” Westbury Said

The policy also announced a number of important Tourism related issues that have remained impediments to growth. These include the scrapping of the carbon tax, never welcomed by the Tourism and Travel industry, increases to the EMDG, having trade and investment focused on delivering fresh investment in Tourism products in Australia, a focus on international relationship via Tourism being a part of the Foreign Affairs and Trade agenda and good outcomes for small business with red tape reduction commitments and simpler taxes.

In all a very considered and complete Tourism Policy for the nation to ensure growth, future investment and most importantly an acknowledgement of the importance that the travel and tourism industry plays in the Australian economy.

“Should the Coalition win the Federal Election this Saturday (September 7th) AFTA looks forward to working with the Coalition to bring these policies to reality and help build a better industry and a better nation for all concerned”, said Westbury.

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Notes to Editors:

The Australia Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) is the peak body in Australia representing the retail travel industry. Founded in 1957, AFTA represents the majority of travel agents in Australia and includes all of the major travel agency groups.

AFTA’s role is to uphold the interests of members in matters relating to the operation of all travel agencies in Australia. In broad terms these issues are ones that are not addressed by agent chain or corporate entities on behalf of their members, and are ones that involve the industry as a whole.

Further information about AFTA can be found at www.afta.com.au