



Restaurant
& Catering

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IMMEDIATE

LABOR TOURISM POLICY BACKS SUPER GROWTH SECTOR

The release of Labor's tourism policy recognises the importance of Australia's visitor economy and the investment needed in tourism infrastructure to facilitate increased visitation, according to peak industry body, Restaurant & Catering Australia (R&CA).

Labor's tourism policy confirms \$1 billion for the Northern Australia Tourism Infrastructure Fund to capitalise on Australia's proximity to Asia, as well as commitments to support further investments in cruise shipping visitor infrastructure, high speed rail and regional airports.

R&CA CEO and Chair of the ACCI National Tourism Council, John Hart says Australia's proximity to Asia is a golden opportunity that will be lost if appropriate investment is not made in visitor infrastructure.

"Australia welcomed over 1 million Chinese visitors over the past year, injecting \$8.3 billion into the economy. The tyranny of distance will become a reality if we don't continually promote Australia to prospective visitors and make it easier for visitors to travel to, and around, Australia.

"The commitment to infrastructure investment is welcome but must be matched with appropriate funding to ensure it becomes a reality," Mr Hart says.

Labor's tourism plan also commits to formal training packages for hospitality staff as well as an audit of tourist visa fees and charges.

"Visa reform and labour and skills were identified as key priorities in the sector's *Serving a Strong Economy* election platform.

"Skills deficiencies affect 81 per cent of café and restaurant operators. This is higher than any other cohort in the tourism industry. Jobs growth in the café and restaurant industry is expected to be higher than any other sector at 14.9 per cent, requiring an additional 84,300 jobs by 2020.

"Training and skills packages developed in conjunction with industry will ensure workers have the right skills to do the job. The White Paper on Developing Northern Australia also provided common sense recommendations to address chronic labour shortages through the extension of visas in the region. We need to ensure these reforms remain on the agenda as a matter of priority.

"I'm pleased Labor has recognised the value of Australia's largest services export sector to the Australian economy and is willing to work with industry to ensure its continued growth," Mr Hart says.

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