

Northern Territory Election Manifesto 2016

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Tourism & Transport Forum Australia

The Tourism & Transport Forum Australia (TTF) is the peak national body for the tourism, transport and aviation sectors across Australia. TTF is a CEO forum representing some of the leading institutions and corporations in the Australian visitor economy.

Our membership spans accommodation and transport providers, airlines and airports, cruise lines, restaurants and retailers, business and major events organisers, property developers, investors and land managers, amusement and cultural attractions, and professional services.

TTF utilises its expertise and networks to develop and advocate public policy for the sustainable long-term growth of the visitor economy and transport across the nation.

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Message from the CEO



Nothing encapsulates the quintessential visitor experience of Australia quite like the Northern Territory (NT). Home to some of the nation's most iconic natural wonders, including Uluru, Kings Canyon, Katherine Gorge, Litchfield and Kakadu, and a strong connection to the heritage and culture of Australia's first people, the Territory has so much to offer to millions of traveling Australians and the burgeoning numbers of international visitors in our immediate region.

With the continuing decline of sectors such as manufacturing and the wind down of the mining investment boom, the Territory must look to the sectors that can deliver sustainable growth and jobs into the future. Against the backdrop of this economic transition, the visitor economy, supported by a strong transport network, is emerging as one of the foundations of the Territory's future prosperity.

Tourism has been identified as one of five super-growth sectors that have the potential to collectively add \$250 billion to the Australian economy over the next 20 years. Positioned well to capture the demand of the emerging Asian middle class, tourism is an economic development strategy for Australia. Australian Governments have recognised this potential and are working to boost the capacity and competitiveness of the sector. Some of this work to improve the competitiveness of industry is already underway, with the Federal Government releasing the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia with a clear focus on tourism.

The NT's visitor economy performance has been mixed. On the domestic front, 1.4 million Australians visited the Territory – up an impressive 37 per cent – and they spent \$1.7 billion (up 14 per cent) in the 12 months to March 2016. Regrettably, the international visitor economy has seen a decline over the same period with 281,000 overseas tourists (down 3 per cent) and spending of \$401 million (down 15 per cent). Nearly all other States and Territories, barring the NT and Western Australia, have seen strong positive growth in international visitors and double digit growth in expenditure.

The priority of the next NT Government must be to continue to build on the domestic success story while working to turn around and grow the international visitor market. Industry believes this can be done and stands ready to work with the new Territory Government to make it happen.

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The next NT Government should have the ambition to set a target for the next decade that goes beyond \$2.2 billion in overnight visitor expenditure by 2020. With the strong growth in the Asia-Pacific – China alone is anticipated to have 200 million travellers heading overseas by 2020 – and their insatiable appetite for natural, cultural and heritage tourism, the Northern Territory can leverage its visitor assets with smart campaigns to drive more visitors and spending in the Territory.

Underpinning this great potential must be a strong transport network. If visitors cannot access the attractions and experiences on offer then the visitor economy will not reach its full potential. Investing in transport infrastructure such as key tourism roads, cruise ship access, bus and rail links and attracting more aviation services to key tourist markets will ensure the overall success of the visitor economy and must be a priority for the Northern Territory Government.

We have set out TTF's six point plan for backing the strengths of the NT visitor economy. The next Government must invest to grow demand, boost investment in tourism and transport infrastructure, and enhance the visitor experience to ensure the Territory can remain competitive and drive further economic activity and create thousands of new jobs.



Margy Osmond

Chief Executive Officer

Tourism & Transport Forum Australia (TTF)

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Six point plan for the next decade of tourism and transport in the Northern Territory

1. Destination marketing

- Increase Tourism NT's base funding by a minimum of \$8 million per annum and provide an additional funding boost to help stimulate international visitation
- Develop a new visitor economy vision and strategy looking beyond Tourism Vision 2020

2. Business events and major events

- Support Convention Centres in attracting strategic international markets
- Continue to support the delivery and acquisition of major events for the NT

3. Visitor infrastructure

- Develop a visitor infrastructure investment strategy
- Commit to an additional \$5 million per annum for NT Parks and Wildlife Commission
- Extend lease tenures and continue to leverage Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Parks

4. Transport

- Develop cruise infrastructure and facilities to service expedition cruise ships
- Foster existing and new aviation services, especially regional and remote services
- Provide funding for key tourism roads
- Implement the bus network review and commit to reviewing existing transport security
- Timely consideration of emerging opportunities in point to point transport
- Work with the Federal Government to harmonise the regulation of the rental vehicle sector

5. Visitor experience

- Support reforms to allow private operators to manage the Tourist Refund Scheme
- Work with the Federal Government to improve telecommunications coverage in the NT
- Commit to a further roll-out of the Wi-Fi program in all tourism regions

6. Labour and skills

- Continue to strongly oppose the backpacker tax
- Build NT's focus on international education
- Assist in the transition of Jabiru from a mining town to a tourism centre
- Work with the Federal Government to develop a dedicated visa for Northern Australia
- Develop incentives to attract people to work, study and live in the NT

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Importance of the NT visitor economy

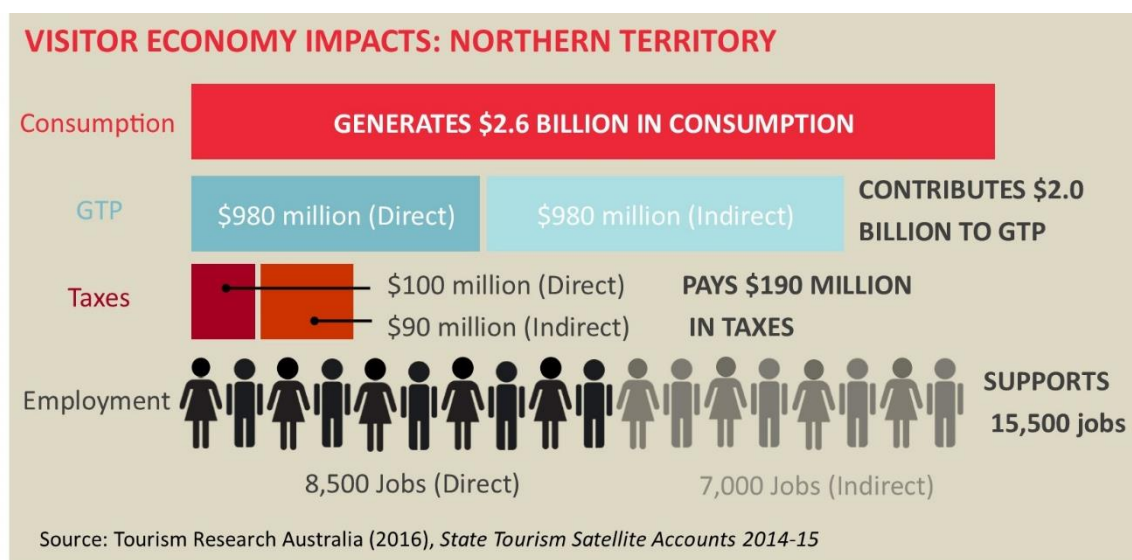
Tourism - Generating jobs and growth

Tourism is one of our future economy industries that has the potential to collectively add hundreds of billions of dollars to the Australian economy over the next 20 years. Tourism has the capacity to fill the jobs vacuum left by declining mining investment and the perennial slowdown in manufacturing and generate hundreds of millions of dollars in taxation revenue.

Like other future economy industries such as agribusiness, funds management, international education and technology-based services, tourism is well-positioned to take advantage of the incredible growth in demand from Asia's burgeoning middle-to-upper class.

The NT is well-positioned to take advantage of the enormous demand coming from the Asia-Pacific region. With its relative proximity to key markets, favourable time zones and growing aviation and cruise ship access, the Territory should be aiming to take a more competitive share of outbound travel occurring in our region and beyond.

Tourism is already a vital component of the NT economy, supporting 2,066 businesses, employing 15,500 people and contributing \$2 billion to Gross Territory Product. The tourism industry is a key driver of economic activity, export earnings and employment across the Territory, contributing up to a quarter of local economic output in some communities.





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In partnership with the private sector, strategic investment in tourism and transport by all political parties will provide a stronger foundation for the growth of the NT visitor economy. If supported and strengthened appropriately, the tourism and transport industries can broaden the Territory's economic base and deliver strong and sustainable growth. The Election is the prime time to make a commitment to support the industries of the NT's future.

Liveable and productive cities, accessible regions

Investing in public transport reduces the economic costs of congestion, increases social inclusion and delivers improved environmental outcomes. Efficient public transport also delivers an economic dividend in jobs growth and labour mobility.

Public transport investment not only enhances the liveability of cities for its residents, it also makes cities more appealing to visitors. Efficient public transport systems with clear signage and simple fare structures are particularly important to attract visitors and to ensure they leave with a positive impression. Public transport services that can also connect with regions beyond urban centres can help disperse visitors more widely, spreading the benefits of the visitor economy.

Towards 2020 – And Beyond

The significant potential of Australia's tourism industry was highlighted in the Deloitte Access Economics report, *Positioning for Prosperity? Catching the next wave*. The report identified tourism as one of Australia's five super growth industries, capable of collectively delivering an additional \$250 billion to the national economy over the next 20 years. The report notes that the intersection of global opportunity and national advantage is crucial to prosperity – and that Australian tourism is well positioned to be part of the next wave of wealth creation.

Already, tourism is Australia's largest service export, employing almost twice as many people as the mining industry and generating more than \$100 billion in economic activity every year - more than all our primary industries combined. However, there is still significant room for improvement, driving the next generation of economic growth and better capturing the true potential of the industry.

Tourism Vision 2020: Northern Territory's Strategy for Growth sets the direction for the Northern Territory tourism sector; outlining a vision "To grow the visitor economy in the Northern Territory to \$2.2 billion by 2020 as measured by overnight visitor expenditure".



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The Northern Territory in particular, with its location and natural beauty, stands at the forefront of Australia's tourism potential to be a world leader in tourism. The Territory has a natural competitive advantage with its major natural assets, including Kakadu, Litchfield, Katherine Gorge, Kings Canyon and Uluru, and its wealth of Indigenous cultural experiences. For example, Uluru is one of the NT's most recognised drawcards both domestically and internationally. The next Government should better leverage Uluru's gravitas, promoting it as a gateway in addition to the two main centres of Darwin and Alice Springs, rather than just as a regional destination, and looking at opportunities to encourage dispersal from Uluru as a tourism hub.

The NT is also in a prime position to be recognised as *the* place to go in Australia for Indigenous experiences. The industry encourages all political parties to better focus on this as one of the Territory's key competitive advantages and sufficiently leverage the opportunities stemming from a growing domestic and international interest in engaging with Aboriginal culture, heritage and Indigenous experiences. There is a role for Government to play in supporting the development and sustainability of Indigenous businesses as well as delivering employment and training programs for these businesses and the broader tourism industry.

However, increased competition both domestically and abroad and high labour costs are all considerable challenges. As a result, to fully leverage the NT's potential, adequate funding for destination marketing as well as visitor and transport infrastructure, combined with a more competitive regulatory framework, will be critical.

Importantly, tourism also stands at the forefront to support the NT economy as large mining construction projects mature – for example, INPEX's Ichthys project transitions from construction to operation in early 2017, reducing the required workforce from 8,000 to just 300. As a service industry, tourism is able to provide more opportunities for some of these displaced workers and more importantly as an economic driver is able to support Darwin's economy. However, as with other Australian destinations that are experiencing a similar phenomenon, the political parties standing for election need to seriously invest in tourism marketing and adjust the investment and supply levers to ensure growth in visitation continues now and into the future.

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1. Destination marketing

What does industry want?

- Increase Tourism NT's base funding by a minimum of \$8 million per annum and provide an additional funding boost to help stimulate international visitation
- Develop a new visitor economy vision and strategy looking beyond Tourism Vision 2020

Why?

Tourism NT plays a critical role in driving demand and generating visitation to the Territory through destination marketing. In order to achieve the Territory's target of doubling overnight visitor expenditure to \$2.2 billion by 2020 as well as supporting the Territory's economy through its significant transition, funding needs to be increased to deliver campaigns already in market and build further exposure in emerging Asian markets as well as markets where NT operators are currently exporting to.

TTF commends the Government for maintaining its additional \$8 million injection into Tourism NT over the past four years and is now calling on all political parties to, at minimum, commit to permanently adding this additional \$8 million investment to Tourism NT's annual funding base. Further, TTF is calling for political parties to provide Tourism NT's funding over the four year forward estimates to remove the uncertainty for industry about the ongoing resource allocation for Tourism NT and leverage opportunities stemming from longer-term marketing and events planning.

Tourism NT must be in a position to compete with interstate and international destinations to create intention to travel, attract events, stimulate tourism investment, support the sustainability of existing aviation services to the Territory, and most importantly to be able to leverage the NT's competitive advantages to their full potential. This includes the Territory's natural assets and Indigenous experiences. The need for effective, well-resourced, evidence-based destination promotion is especially important given the Territory's visitor economy is dominated by small to medium sized businesses and a large number of Indigenous businesses that are dependent on Tourism NT to market the destination to potential visitors. The industry would like to see all political parties commit to providing an additional funding boost to help stimulate international visitation.

As we approach 2020, political parties should also commit to commencing the process of developing a new tourism vision and strategy to support growth of the industry into the next decade. Within the overarching strategy, major destinations within the NT, such as Kakadu, should have specific strategies and action plans that aim to raise the profile and awareness of the destination.

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2. Business events and major events

What does industry want?

- Support Convention Centres in attracting strategic international markets
- Continue to support the delivery and acquisition of major events for the NT

Why?

Major events and business events have the potential to add to the vibrancy of Darwin, Alice Springs, Uluru and the broader Territory as well as its visitor offering, in addition to contributing to the Territory's visitor economy. The impact of business events as well as major events provide consistent visitation to the Territory and have the potential to move a visitor from the 'awareness' stage into the 'purchase' stage of the travel lifecycle. Business events are the nexus between the visitor and knowledge economies, providing broader benefits in terms of skills, innovation and ideas sharing, whereas major events add to the vibrancy, liveability, 'loveability' and community of a destination – a great place to live is after all, a great place to visit.

Both major and business events attract high-yield domestic and international visitors who spend more and stay longer than the average leisure traveller. These visitors have the capacity to make an important contribution towards the Territory meeting its 2020 targets as well as supporting the NT economy during its transition. This is why it is important for the next Government to continue to support the delivery and acquisition of major events for the NT.

The Darwin Convention Centre and Alice Springs Convention Centre are well positioned to capitalise on increased activity from the Asia-Pacific region. Additional domestic business events can be won utilising the significant urban renewal that has occurred around the Darwin Convention Centre. Attracting business events to regional areas such as Katherine and Uluru can also assist regional centres in broadening their visitor mix beyond traditional leisure markets.

Ensuring that funding is not reduced in real terms, and certainty of the funding timeframe, is imperative for the Territory to attract, plan and develop both international business events and an annual calendar of major events.

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3. Visitor infrastructure

What does industry want?

- Develop a visitor infrastructure investment strategy
- Commit to an additional \$5 million per annum for NT Parks and Wildlife Commission
- Extend lease tenures and continue to leverage Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Parks

Why?

Visitor infrastructure is essential to supporting demand and improving the visitor experience. Investment in visitor infrastructure has largely been ad-hoc often resulting in a fragmented dispersal of Government funds without a broader strategic approach. This is why the industry is calling for a visitor infrastructure investment strategy for the Territory to map out the critical gaps and plan for funding and development, to ensure the NT has the necessary capacity to accommodate growing visitor numbers and is able to remain competitive against other destinations. The strategy needs to reflect the full spectrum of visitor experiences that cater to all visitors and markets.

It is important that the strategy includes larger-scale projects, similar to the \$20 million Skywalks investment, and allocates seed-funding to deliver projects and leverage investments from commercial operators that will help drive incremental visitors to the Territory. Key projects to include in the strategy would be the delivery and funding of the Visitor Hub in Alice Springs as well the development of an arts and culture precinct in the Darwin CBD, which encompasses the redevelopment of the currently underutilised historic Chan Building. Cultural visitors are a lucrative market as they stay longer and spend more than average leisure visitors, and projects like this will help cement the NT's position as a 'must do' arts, cultural and heritage destination.

Nature-based tourism is also a top motivator for overseas visitors to decide to come to Australia, and the Territory is a top attraction in this regard being home to some of the world's most recognisable natural landscapes. The next Government needs to maintain a close working relationship with the Federal Government and Traditional Owners on Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and Kakadu National Park, including collaboration on a strategic plan for tourism within Kakadu. Further, the industry is calling on political parties to commit to an additional \$5 million per annum for NT Parks and Wildlife Commission over the term of Government, to support maintenance and new infrastructure development in Northern Territory national parks, especially in tier 1 parks such as Litchfield National Park.



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Appropriate private investment can facilitate innovation and provide high quality visitor infrastructure while also improving conservation outcomes in the face of a restricted fiscal environment faced by Government. Capitalising on the potential benefits of nature-based tourism, however requires a legislative and regulatory framework that supports private investment. The industry supports increasing certainty for investors over land tenures by working with relevant stakeholders to increase lease tenures for NT National Parks beyond the current five years. An increased lease period would enable investors to amortise their expenses and calculate their return on investment over a longer horizon, motivating them to invest in sustainable tourism infrastructure in and around national parks. The industry also encourages the next Government to advocate for Land Councils to develop best practice performance measures when determining land claims.

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4. Transport

What does industry want?

- Develop cruise infrastructure and facilities to service expedition cruise ships
- Foster existing and new aviation services, especially regional and remote services
- Provide funding for key tourism roads
- Implement the bus network review and commit to reviewing existing transport security
- Timely consideration of emerging opportunities in point to point transport
- Work with the Federal Government to harmonise the regulation of the rental vehicle sector

Why?

Cruise tourism in Australia continues to register double-digit annual growth, with more cruise itineraries including NT port calls each year. In addition to the rapid growth in cruise ship movements, the size of ships visiting the Territory is also increasing. In 2014-15, the cruise ship sector contributed approximately \$54 million to the NT economy, with \$14 million of this from direct passenger and crew expenditure.

The development of additional cruise, passenger and transport facilities at the Darwin Waterfront will be necessary to support the Territory's burgeoning harbour cruise market. Investment in berthing infrastructure in partnership with industry, including turnaround cruise infrastructure, will help ensure businesses can benefit from the influx of visitors in the Darwin area while complementing the significant urban renewal that has already occurred around the foreshore.

TTF also encourages the new Government to continue advocacy efforts to extend the ministerial exemption from the licensing provisions contained in the Coastal Trading Act issued by the Federal Government to the high-value expedition cruise ship market. These smaller vessels traditionally visit regional and more remote ports and coastal locations and the NT is an obvious destination for ships in this class. Bringing international tourists to regional areas, including developing facilities to service expedition cruise ships in regional coastal destinations in partnership with industry, should be actively supported by both the NT and Federal Governments.

As the NT continues to grow, demand for public transport will increase. A coherent public transport strategy will be required to ensure that both visitors and residents are able to move around easily and to avoid the traffic congestion problems seen in other Australian cities. While transport authorities understandably focus on the needs of domestic commuters, the visitor must also be a core part of their considerations and operation.



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In many jurisdictions, transport operators can do better and learn from world's-best practice. TTF therefore believes that each Government transport policy should also look at tourism and outline mechanisms to improve the holistic transport experience of visitors. This includes public transport networks, air transport networks and road networks. Such policies should consider the customer experience through the lens of international, interstate and intrastate visitors who may face baggage constraints, language barriers and have no familiarity with a particular transport system. It should also consider the travel patterns and preferences of visitors in transport planning and promotion, including time, cost, efficiency and convenience considerations.

As the Territory continues to look to attract visitors from the burgeoning Asian middle classes, encourage visitation from domestic hubs as well as promote regional dispersal, the need to create and promote a transport system that is accessible, legible and intuitive for both visitors and locals will increase in importance.

With a relatively sparse population, expansion of the existing Darwin bus network that operates in greater Darwin, Casuarina and Palmerston remains the most feasible mode of transport in the short and medium term. Longer term, the city has the opportunity to capitalise on its harbour to activate public and private ferries to the Cox Peninsula and Mandorah as well as the planned waterfront suburbs of Murrumujuk.

Given the importance of, and reliance on, bus connectivity in Darwin, the industry is calling on all political parties to expedite the implementation of recommendations from the review of the bus network. The review action plan should include priority measures to 'future proof' the network and ensure that efficiency savings identified as part of the review are reinvested back into the network to improve services. This includes investing into more frequent links to major attractions and community facilities to improve efficiency, accessibility and the customer experience.

Security is also a key issue on the public transport network. It is important that visitors feel safe, however anti-social behaviour and security concerns are a significant detractor to the use of public transport, casting a negative light on Darwin and the NT for both domestic and international visitors.

The new Government should commit to a review of existing public transport security to develop a more efficient and effective system. The industry encourages the Government to take learnings from other jurisdictions as a best-practice guide to the provision of security investment to reduce anti-social behaviour and security incidents across public transport. This may include consideration of the benefits of privatising public transport security arrangements as well as opportunities to better develop synergies across different sectors of the visitor economy, such as hospitality venues, to leverage existing technology and improve monitoring and response measures.



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Aviation is also central to the Territory's economic and social development and has undergone significant overall growth in the past decade. As a result, the frequency and number of destinations available across the Territory's aviation network has expanded, unlocking new visitor markets and broadening existing ones. In order to see growth continue, the tourism industry is seeking commitment to continue cooperative marketing activities with domestic and international airlines, focused on key tourism hubs and gateways in the Territory such as Darwin, Alice Springs and Uluru, as well as better connections to Australia's other major international gateways, such as Cairns.

The new Government also needs to consider aviation supply, specifically providing funding for the ongoing maintenance of regional and remote aerodromes with a focus on those associated with major tourism destinations in the Territory. The NT is heavily reliant on air services, and aerodromes are significant pieces of infrastructure that assist in meeting the travel, freight and business needs of Territorians, especially in regional and remote communities. The new Government should continue to monitor demand for air services to identify opportunities for potential additional aviation activities as well as the sustainability of existing air services.

Given the smaller passenger levels at Darwin Airport and Alice Springs Airport, TTF also encourages the new NT Government to actively advocate to the Federal Government to implement a variable aviation pricing model for customs and immigration charges that is based on passenger numbers. This would facilitate a reduction in costs and help to increase the viability of new services and extension of current services to the Territory.

Visitor road access from the gateways of Darwin and Alice Springs to the Territory's natural attractions is crucial in delivering the greatest economic returns from visitor expenditure and brand resonance domestically and abroad. In particular, all-weather road access in and around Kakadu and to tourism assets along the Red Centre Way continues to be a significant concern, requiring upgrade funding to support visitation.

All political parties should commit to providing funding for key tourism roads, including Gimbat Road, Corroboree Creek Road, Arnhem Highway, Cahills Crossing, Central Arnhem Road, roads in the West MacDonnell National Park and Shady Camp Road/ Point Stuart Road. Further, it is paramount that the new Government maintains a two-year delivery timeframe of the Mereenie Loop Road, Litchfield National Park Road and Kambolgie Creek Crossing.

Also a consideration in terms of road access, is considering the emerging opportunities in point to point transport as well as working with the Federal Government to harmonise the regulation of the rental vehicle sector. The rental vehicle industry abides by a multitude of different State and Territory regulatory and tax regimes. Regulatory guidance and legislative instruments have been created without a clear national policy objective and lack the simplicity and flexibility required for a healthy operating environment.



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In the case of point to point transport, new developments have occurred that present both an economic and social opportunity for the NT that all political parties should positively consider in a timely manner within a holistic transport network approach.

For operators, the above circumstances have stymied industry growth, hindered innovation, reduced workforce efficiency, made it difficult to determine the compliance task, created a significant administrative burden, and led to cost inefficiencies. For regulatory agencies, they have fashioned a significant knowledge gap, limited national data on the size, value and economic contribution of the whole transport industry, and created cost inefficiencies. Most importantly, they have created a very confusing environment for customers, especially international visitors who may not be aware or accustomed to local operations or assume the regulations and legislation are the same as in their home country.

TTF is therefore calling all political parties to positively consider emerging opportunities in point to point transport, and work with the Federal Government to harmonise the regulation of the rental vehicle sector across all State and Territory jurisdictions. Both measures should occur in a timely fashion as not only will they ensure the industry has a framework that allows it to invest in the innovation required to drive the sector forward and is able to leverage the full potential from emerging opportunities, but also achieves some form of harmonisation with other jurisdictions across Australia.

5. Visitor experience

What does industry want?

- Support reforms to allow private operators to manage the Tourist Refund Scheme
- Work with the Federal Government to improve telecommunications coverage in the NT
- Commit to a further roll-out of the Wi-Fi program in all tourism regions

Why?

TTF is calling for a commitment from political parties to support reform of the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS), the program that allows visitors to claim a refund of GST paid on eligible purchases. The current system, administered by the Australian Border Force at international airports, is cumbersome and time consuming. This provides a negative impression of Australia to travellers as they depart, making them less likely to recommend Australia to their friends and also less likely for them to return. It has also emerged as a significant pressure point in passenger facilitation, with passengers stuck in queues at the TRS collection point made to run late for their flights.

There has been significant reform to the TRS process in recent years, notably with the introduction of online claim forms and through a revision of the rules for multiple purchases and the minimum claim amount. However, further reform is required. TTF believes that opening up the TRS to private providers to enable claims to be made both on and off international airports, would deliver benefits to Australian tourism.

This includes promotion of Australia as a shopping destination in key source markets and an improved visitor experience leading to increased visitor spending. This is the model adopted very successfully by other destinations in the Asia Pacific region, such as Singapore, and used in more than 40 countries worldwide.

Given the power of social media in driving demand in visiting a destination as well as the growing reliance on mobile-enabled connectivity to facilitate visitor wayfinding, all political parties should continue to advocate to the Federal Government for greater connectivity through the mobile network in the Territory, working in partnership with other stakeholders. The Government should also continue to provide funding support for free and publicly available Wi-Fi coverage across key tourism locations to improve the visitor experience, helping to support visitation and generate higher yield from visitors.

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6. Labour and skills

What does industry want?

- Continue to strongly oppose the backpacker tax
- Build NT's focus on international education
- Assist in the transition of Jabiru from a mining town to a tourism centre
- Work with the Federal Government to develop a dedicated visa for Northern Australia
- Develop incentives to attract people to work, study and live in the NT

Why?

The White Paper on Developing Northern Australia was released in June 2015 and sets out a plan to unlock the vast economic potential of the region. It provides one of the best opportunities to allow Northern Australia to vigorously compete with the southern States and includes over \$1.2 billion in investment commitments, spread across 50 policy initiatives and 15 Commonwealth agencies. The next Government should continue its proactive approach to implementing the recommendations arising from the White Paper.

TTF recommends that the next Government continues to work cooperatively with the Governments of Western Australia and Queensland as well as the Federal Government to implement the recommendations from the White Paper and identify ways to overcome the barriers to doubling visitation to Northern Australia by 2030. This includes developing a dedicated visa for Northern Australia by the end of 2017 as recommended in the White Paper.

The commencement of changes to the Working Holiday Maker visa program announced in the White Paper will also provide tourism operators in Northern Australia with significant benefits and help to alleviate some of the labour and skills challenges being experienced. However, these changes will be significantly hampered should the Federal Government proceed with its announced new tax treatment of Working Holiday Makers, or what the industry has dubbed as the 'backpacker tax'.

Industry is concerned that the removal of the tax-free threshold and increase in visa costs for Working Holiday Makers will result in backpackers visiting destinations other than Australia. While the industry was able to secure a six month reprieve and a commitment from the Federal Government to a visitor visa review, due to the NT's reliance on backpackers as a source of tourism labour, TTF encourages all political parties to continue to strongly oppose the 'backpacker tax'. Collectively we need to ensure Australia remains a globally competitive destination for backpackers, especially in jurisdictions such as the NT that rely on these workers as a valuable source of labour.



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Attracting people to work, study and live in the NT should have a multifaceted approach from Government. This should include development and promotion of employment, training and careers initiatives for residents, consideration of tax incentives as a population growth measure as well as marketing the Territory as an international education destination. Political parties should commit to strengthening their focus on building the NT's international education profile by funding Study NT, developing study tours, and working closely in partnership with universities. Political parties should also develop an education strategy that focuses on retention initiatives for both international and domestic students, encouraging them to continue working in the NT after they complete their studies.

The NT's challenge of transitioning away from the mining and resources boom is clearly showcased in the town of Jabiru located near Kakadu in the Kakadu National Park. Originally built in 1982 as a closed town to house the community living near the Ranger Uranium Mine, Jabiru is now faced with the conclusion of uranium mining at ERA's current lease and Rio Tinto's decision not to proceed with any additional activity in the area.

Kakadu and Jabiru are closely linked – Jabiru is a tourism and employment hub, and the location for various services for the local Indigenous community. Unlike many other mining towns in the Territory, Jabiru is ideally positioned for tourism to become the town's economic and employment generator, substituting mining and resources. However, this transition will require Government support. The industry is calling on all political parties to commit to working with key Traditional Owners, businesses and the Federal Government to develop a strategy to transition Jabiru into a tourism centre, given the town's significant potential to add to the tourism offering of Kakadu and the wider National Park.