



# The Coalition's Policy

## Key Commitments

Tourism is a vital part of the Australian economy.

Tourism contributes over \$120 billion to our economy.

Tourism is also critical to regional Australia, accounting for 14 per cent of the rural economy. More than 40 per cent of tourism spending occurs in regional Australia.

Tourism is particularly important to jobs and growth in the Dandenong Ranges.

Tourism Victoria estimates that tourism contributes around \$1.1 billion to the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges and employs approximately 10,500 people.

More than six million people visit the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges every year. Approximately four million visit the Dandenong Ranges.

The Coalition will support tourism, jobs and growth in the Dandenong Ranges.

We will:

- invest \$6.5 million to upgrade the Puffing Billy, including construction of all-weather facilities for passengers
- provide \$1 million for stage two of the Emerald to Gembrook multi-use trail
- deliver \$2.5 million for the Ridge Walk, which will connect Upwey/Tecoma to Montrose via Ferny Creek, Sassafras, Olinda, Mount Dandenong, and Kalorama
- invest \$10 million for the widening of the Mount Dandenong Tourist Road

In addition, the Coalition will deliver a corporate tax cut for the approximately 11,500 small businesses located around the Dandenong Ranges.

Our commitment will deliver \$20 million in infrastructure improvements for the Dandenong Ranges and help boost jobs and growth for the region.

## Our Plan to Boost Tourism, Jobs and Growth in the Dandenong Ranges

Tourism is an integral part of Australia’s economy, providing employment for around 600,000 Australians, and accounting for more than \$120 billion of economic activity.

Tourism Victoria estimates that tourism contributes around \$1.1 billion to the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges and employs approximately 10,500 people.

More than six million people visit the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges every year.

The Yarra Valley Ranges Council notes the importance of tourism to the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges:

*“Yarra Ranges is home to two major tourism regions – the Yarra Valley (Victoria’s premier food and wine region) and the Dandenongs. Tourism is a highly important industry for Yarra Ranges because of the number of businesses that rely on direct and indirect benefits from tourism.*

*Tourism encompasses a wide range of businesses, including accommodation, cafes, restaurants, wineries, breweries, travel agents, tour operators and major tourist attractions such as Puffing Billy, Healesville Sanctuary, and parks and gardens such as William Ricketts Sanctuary. It also includes a range of related businesses and activities including retailers, art galleries, bus companies, vehicle hire, photo processing labs, museums, balloon flights, health/spa resorts, hotels, conference centres, caterers, laundries, nurseries/flower growers, golf courses, state and national parks, and historic properties.”<sup>1</sup>*

The Coalition will support tourism, jobs and growth in the Dandenong Ranges.

We will deliver \$20 million in infrastructure improvements for the Dandenong Ranges and help boost jobs and growth for the region.

The Coalition will invest \$6.5 million to upgrade the Puffing Billy, including construction of all-weather facilities for passengers. The Puffing Billy is iconic to the Dandenong Ranges and improved facilities will enable it to attract more local and international tourists.

We will provide \$1 million for stage two of the Emerald to Gembrook multi-use trail. The Emerald to Gembrook trail is currently completed to Cockatoo. Our commitment will complete the trail all the way to Gembrook, adding an additional seven kilometres of multi-use trail. The trail will also connect with the Puffing Billy rail line.

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<sup>1</sup> Yarra Valley Ranges Council (2012) 2012-2022 Economic Development Strategy, p.33.

The Coalition will provide \$2.5 million for the Ridge Walk, which will connect Upwey/Tecoma to Montrose via Ferny Creek, Sassafras, Olinda, Mount Dandenong, and Kalorama. The Ridge Walk will provide an alternative walking path connecting many local communities and will ensure safe pedestrian access within the region.

We will also provide \$10 million for the widening of the Mount Dandenong Tourist Road.

The Mount Dandenong Tourist Road is under increasing strain due to greater tourist numbers. Our commitment will ensure the road is better able to accommodate tourist numbers and will ensure enhanced safety for visitors and local residents.

In addition to our \$20 million in infrastructure improvements for the Dandenong Ranges, the Coalition will deliver a corporate tax cut for the approximately 11,500 small businesses located around the Dandenong Ranges.

On 1 July 2016, the corporate tax rate for small businesses will fall to 27.5 per cent.

Our commitment will mean greater cash flow for small businesses, giving them more capacity to invest, grow their business, employ more, and push their products or services into new markets.

Our policy to boost tourism, jobs and growth will support small businesses in the Dandenong Ranges and Australia's broader tourism sector.

## The Choice

The Coalition delivered on its promises for Australia's tourism sector.

We removed the carbon tax, which slugged the tourism sector over \$115 million in its first year, and we froze the Passenger Movement Charge, which increased 45 per cent under Labor.

We built tourism for Australia in key markets, such as China, with over one million Chinese tourists visiting our shores last year.

We implemented air services agreements between Australia and China and opened up secondary airports between Australia and China.

We signed export trade agreements with Japan, China and Korea – agreements that will boost Australia's tourism industry.

Under the Coalition's pro-growth policies, the global competitiveness ranking of Australia's tourism sector has improved from 13th in the world under Labor in 2011 to 7<sup>th</sup> in the world in 2015, according to the World Economic Forum.

We have an aspiration to grow overnight expenditure for our tourism industry in Australia to between \$115 billion and \$140 billion per year by 2020. For the first time since 2009, we are on track to achieve this with expenditure reaching \$94.5 billion for the year ending December 2015.

The Coalition is focused on delivering a stronger economy with more jobs, higher real wages, more opportunities, and a greater standard of living for our children.

We are delivering.

Over 450,000 new jobs have been created since we came to Government.

Our economy is growing at 3 per cent – faster than every economy in the G7 and growing well above the OECD average. Our economy is growing faster than the United States and the United Kingdom, more than twice the pace of Canada – a comparable resource-rich advanced economy – and we're matching growth rates in economies like South Korea.

The Coalition inherited an economic mess from Labor.

We inherited a deficit of \$48 billion and cumulative budget deficits of \$123 billion.

Labor cut funding for Tourism Australia – the agency charged with marketing Australia overseas. By contrast, the Coalition is investing record funding of \$629 million over four years.

Labor didn't even have a tourism policy in the 2013 election.

Labor announced 43 new or increased taxes when they were in government.

## Costs

The Coalition will invest \$20 million in infrastructure improvements for the Dandenong Ranges and help boost tourism, jobs and growth for the region.



**THE NATIONALS**  
*for Regional Australia*

For further details of the Coalition's plan go to  
[www.liberal.org.au/our-plan](http://www.liberal.org.au/our-plan)  
[nationals.org.au/our-plan/](http://nationals.org.au/our-plan/)