

Tourism

ACT Labor knows the value of the contribution that tourism makes to our community.

Over the last term of Government, the tourism industry has become more confident and grown, contributing around \$1 billion to the ACT economy each year and employing around 13,000 Canberrans.

The ACT Labor Government supports our local industry by increasing tourism attractions in Canberra and improving the tourism experiences for visitors to our great city.

ACT Labor has developed the highly successful "*See yourself in Canberra*" campaign, invested over \$25 million to upgrade the National Convention Centre and worked with industry and the Commonwealth in a feasibility study for a new convention centre to meet future demand.

We have also provided additional funding to Floriade, developed Floriade Nightfest and backed the new event with a \$1 million marketing campaign to ensure the event continues to grow.

ACT Labor has made massive investments in sporting facilities such as the world-class Stromlo Forest Park, which will host the 2009 World Mountain Bike Championships.

We have invested more than \$8 million in 'Sanctuary @ Tidbinbilla', an eco-tourism draw-card, and invested in the Canberra Glassworks, which attracted over 80,000 visitors in its first 12 months.

By keeping our economy strong and managing the budget responsibly we have been able to deliver these policy initiatives and have a plan for the future to invest in attracting more tourists to Canberra and provide a strong local economy in which business can prosper.

Jon Stanhope
Chief Minister

Andrew Barr
Minister for Tourism

A Proud Record of Supporting our Tourism Industry

Tourism is an essential part of the fabric of our community. It contributes to our economy through employment and visitor expenditure. And more than that, it's about the positive images the tourism industry generates and the experiences that make Canberra an attractive place to visit, live, work, study and invest. Tourism provides employment for Canberrans allowing us to share experiences with visitors that express our sense of pride in our city and our community.

As the national capital, Canberra has a unique place in the Australian story. We are the home of the nation's government as well as many other national icons that attract millions of tourists every year.

We have much to offer as a tourism destination, with excellent restaurants, wineries, arts and crafts, sporting facilities and events as well as eco-tourism in the beautiful surrounds of the 'Bush Capital'.

In 2004, tourism contributed \$686 million to the ACT economy and supported 11,000 jobs. Since then, the industry has become more confident and grown, contributing around \$1 billion to the ACT economy each year and employing around 13,000 Canberrans.

The ACT Labor Government will continue to support our local industry through increasing the supply of tourism attractions in Canberra and improving the tourism experiences for visitors to our great city.

Importantly the responsible financial management of the ACT Labor Government has put the Territory's finances on a sustainable footing, allowing the Government to invest in attracting more tourists to Canberra and providing a strong local economy in which business can operate.

Our Record of Achievement

Since being elected the ACT Labor Government has helped the ACT tourism industry by:

- developing the highly successful "*See yourself in Canberra campaign*";
- investing over \$25 million to upgrade the National Convention Centre and investing with industry and the Commonwealth in a feasibility study for a new convention centre to meet future demand;
- expanding the Events Assistance Program - providing grants for events that attract more visitors and encourage them to stay longer;
- investing in airline partnerships to attract more flights from established carriers such as Qantas and Virgin Blue as well as new carriers such as Tiger Airways;

- providing additional funding to Floriade, developing Floriade Nightfest and backing the new event with a \$1 million marketing campaign to ensure the event continues to grow;
- ensuring the ACT's massive investments in sporting facilities, such as the world-class Stromlo Forest Park which will host the 2009 World Mountain Bike Championships, are coordinated to deliver maximum benefit to ACT tourism operators;
- investing more than \$8 million in 'Sanctuary @ Tidbinbilla', an eco-tourism draw-card;
- investing in the Canberra Glassworks, which attracted over 80,000 visitors in its first 12 months;
- investing \$300,000 in upgrading the visitcanberra.com.au website
- improving the ACT's presence at the Australian Tourism Exchange, the annual event which showcases Canberra to overseas travelers and trade buyers;
- investing in a new portable Tourism Information Booth to allow information to be provided to tourists at major events and across various locations in the city;
- establishing the Canberra Festival of Running and investing an extra \$200,000 to ensure its continued success.

Only Labor has a plan for the challenges ahead - the next five years

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will adopt a five-year strategic direction to respond to global, national and regional trends.

This will include building stronger partnerships with the industry and with other governments.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will continue to develop partnerships that deliver economic growth through tourism by:

- engaging with industry partners, other governments and Australian Capital Tourism staff in a shared vision and direction
- further developing our strong brand image to attract high-value visitors, and
- further developing Canberra as an innovative, sustainable and compelling destination.

Labor will also continue to support Australian Capital Tourism's role beyond marketing and will ensure continued involvement in destination management.

Figure 1: Summary of the first stage of Labor's five-year Tourism Strategy: 2009-2011

Brand Marketing	Increase funding for destination marketing and engage partners in the 'Brand Canberra' initiative
Digital marketing	Implement the e-strategy to ensure growth and improved internal communication. Expand digital direct marketing by growing the <i>Industry Link</i> newsletter database
Cooperative marketing	Increase role in cooperative marketing such as seasonal tactical campaigns in conjunction with industry partners targeting short breaks
Publicity, building links to tourism traders	Work with Tourism Australia, Tourism NSW and operators to host industry 'famils' and host media and public relations staff from key domestic markets
Regional Marketing	Work with Capital Country, Tourism NSW and Snowy Mountains on tactical and cooperative marketing campaigns through an MOU
Product Development	Continue to engage with Tourism NSW, Tourism Victoria and Tourism Australia on touring routes
Event Development/Attraction	Expand the events calendar – primary objective is a new major event in autumn
Regional Partnerships	Establish MOU with Tourism NSW for various segments building on current Educational Tourism MOU

Moving Forward

Building on the measures the Government already has in place, a re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- Invest an extra \$5 million to attract a major autumn event to Canberra and increase promotion of Canberra in the domestic market
- Increase our investment in business tourism by providing the Canberra Convention Bureau with \$1 million per year in funding from 2009/10
- Continue to support local events with an expanded Events Assistance Program
- Continue to seek opportunities to cross-promote specific market segments in the ACT and region with the Governments of other States and Territories
- Continue to invest in infrastructure and events to draw more tourism and international media attention to Canberra
- Continue to develop Airline Partnerships to bring more flights and visitors to the ACT; and
- Support the establishment of new hotels in Canberra

\$5 million to establish a new major event in autumn and enhance domestic marketing

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will invest \$5 million over four years to establish a major new annual event in the ACT in autumn and increase promotion of Canberra in the domestic market.

Establishing a new major event in autumn will ensure our tourism operators are supported by major events year round and ensure a substantial economic benefit and a significantly improved national and international profile for Canberra.

The ACT benefits greatly from major events such as Floriade, which in 2007 attracted a record-breaking 394,916 visitors and contributed more than \$20 million to the ACT economy.

Because the ACT Labor Government has invested more than \$9 million in making Stromlo Forest Park a world-class facility it has also been able to attract significant events, which are of enormous benefit to the ACT's tourism operators.

Round Six of the 2008 Mountain Bike World Cup, held in September 2008 was a huge success and attracted more than 20,000 spectators. The Mountain Bike World Championships to be held in 2009 is expected to attract 700 entrants, up to 40,000 spectators and an international television audience of around 25 million.

Given Canberra's unique status as the national capital, domestic tourism is a mainstay of the ACT tourism industry.

The \$23 million the ACT Labor Government has already invested in domestic and international marketing since 2004 has been instrumental in the continued growth of the industry. The Major Event Acquisition Program will provide extra promotion through TV, radio, press, and internet and particularly target Sydney, regional New South Wales and Victoria.

Support for Business Tourism

Business related tourism is important to the ACT tourism industry with around 30 per cent of domestic and about 15 per cent of international tourists coming here for business events.

Labor has supported growth in the high-value business tourism, conferences and events segment through our \$25.6 million investment in re-furbishing the Convention Centre and increases in base funding to the Canberra Convention Bureau.

ACT Labor has also committed \$250,000 for a feasibility study to examine the feasibility of a new convention centre for Canberra.

To further support ACT business tourism a re-elected ACT Labor Government will:

- guarantee funding of \$1 million per year to the Canberra Convention Bureau from 2009
- continue to provide funding to promote Canberra to the business market
- further investigate a location for a new convention centre in cooperation with the Commonwealth Government and the tourism industry.

Support for Education Tourism

Education related tourism is a major drawcard for the ACT, with approximately 100,000 school children each year travelling to Canberra to learn more about our national capital.

The ACT Labor Government has supported bringing school children to Canberra through a joint venture with the National Capital Educational Tourism Project and through support for publications such as the annual Excursion Planner.

ACT Labor will continue to support educational tourism through:

- Continuing to work with the Educational Tourism Project
- Target marketing to encourage school groups to extend their stay to bring more yield to the ACT industry
- Support the establishment of new hotels in Canberra, including budget accommodation for school groups

Regional Tourism Initiatives in Partnership with other Governments

Recently the ACT Labor Government signed a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) committing the New South Wales and ACT Governments to work more closely together to benefit tourism operators in the ACT and surrounding region.

This MOU builds on and strengthens the already close working relationship between the two governments which has already benefited tourism operators in the ACT and region through events such as the annual Fireside Festival.

As the gateway to the Snowy Mountains, the world famous Kosciuszko National Park and the Alpine National Park in Victoria, we have a unique opportunity to look for new ways to work with the New South Wales and Victorian Governments to cross-promote our region to specific consumer segments such as the skiing, nature tourism and educational tourism segments.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will seek to further strengthen relationships and develop MOUs with the Commonwealth, New South Wales and Victorian Governments.

Tourism Infrastructure

ACT Labor will continue to invest in tourism infrastructure. Tourist attractions like the Sanctuary @ Tidbinbilla, Canberra Glassworks and Stromlo Forest Park will be supported to enhance their tourism potential.

The ACT Tourism industry is already benefiting from the extra \$2.47 million we are investing to improve Stromlo Forest Park for the World Mountain Bike Championships in 2009 and beyond. This investment will see Stromlo become more spectator- and competitor-friendly with better access, new viewing areas and new areas for parking, event villages, team set-up and event camping.

The ACT Labor Government is also investigating the feasibility of commercial partnerships at Stromlo for a chairlift to the top of the mountain and a low-cost accommodation site, meeting the growing need for accommodation for traveling school groups, cycling groups, spectators and other visitors to Canberra.

This builds on the \$7.5 million investment already made in Stromlo by the ACT Labor Government.

Floriade Expansion

ACT Labor wants to see Floriade grow beyond Commonwealth Park. We believe the event could operate simultaneously at a number of permanent sites in order to help draw visitors to more areas of Canberra and extend their stay. These areas could include East Lake and the International Arboretum in addition to Commonwealth Park.

This ACT Labor Government initiative will make Floriade even more valuable, by reducing set-up and pull-down costs and ensuring visitors see more of Canberra and stay longer.

Airline Marketing Partnerships

The ACT Labor Government recognises that airlines provide access for visitors to the ACT and are vital for the future success of our tourism industry. Labor is investing \$320,000 in building airline partnerships to ensure more flights, from more destinations, by more carriers.

The program includes:

- co-operative marketing campaigns promoting Canberra the destination with airline, retail and wholesale partners;
- an increased presence of Canberra products and experiences featured in partner marketing; and
- greater cross-promotion of fly-drive offers for key events such as Floriade.

This investment is already delivering, with new Canberra-Melbourne services from Tiger Airways and Virgin Blue's decision to reinstate its Sydney-Canberra route.

The airline partnerships are also helping to drive the massive \$250 million investment in the ACT region's aerial gateway – Canberra International Airport.

This, along with a \$10 million investment by Qantas will provide even further and longer-lasting benefits to the tourism industry.

The Airport plays a key role in the Canberra community as the regional gateway into the Capital region. This substantial investment, which should see the terminal works completed around our Centenary celebrations, will ensure visitors have convenient access to our tourism operators well into the future.

Tourism E-Strategy

Few industries have been impacted by the internet in the way tourism has, with the net now being a significant source of information, planning and booking of holidays.

It's vital that ACT tourism businesses are available to potential visitors from around the country and around the world 24/7.

The ACT Labor Government recognises this and is currently investing \$300,000 in upgrading the visitcanberra.com.au website.

New Hotels for Canberra

The ACT experiences a seasonal shortage of affordable accommodation. This can place limits on the growth in some lucrative tourism sectors such as school and sporting groups.

The ACT Labor Government is already investing \$300,000 in a feasibility study for infrastructure to be built at Stromlo Forest Park including low-cost accommodation to house travelling school or cycling groups, event patrons and other visitors to Canberra.

A re-elected ACT Labor Government will also support the release of land for further hotel developments. This could include a 5-Star hotel in the city.