**Tourism Industry Election Priorities
9/10/2020**The COVID-crisis has placed the tourism industry in the front line of one of the biggest challenges the world and this state has faced in decades.

The Queensland election comes at a critical time for Queensland and the tourism and hospitality industry is looking to the next Queensland Government to show strong commitment and leadership in supporting an industry that is vital to the recovery of regional communities across the state.

Queensland Tourism Industry Council, Chief Executive Daniel Gschwind said, “The impact of the crisis on tourism reverberated throughout the community. The role of the sector in contributing to the post-COVID recovery will be essential to every community and region in Queensland.  It will be critical that the next Queensland Government partners with the industry to drive the best possible tourism recovery for the betterment of the community and the state”.

In 2019 the tourism industry in Queensland contributed $28.3 billion to Queensland’s Gross State Product (GSP), representing 7.7% of total GSP1 and generated $7.9 billion in exports in the year ending June 2019, making it one of the state’s largest export industries.

Mr Gschwind continued, “Tourism is one of the largest private-sector employers with 236,000 Queenslanders directly and indirectly employed in the sector in 2019. The importance of tourism to regional economies in Queensland has been dramatically exposed during the COVID-crisis”.

Queensland has done very well in managing its health situation but the state’s tourism sectors was not spared from the economic devastation that has played out over the year, so the importance for a strong partnership between government and the industry is vital.

“The damage will be measured in the billions of dollars and the impact on jobs has been significant. The Queensland Government is an important partner for our industry and we would like to ensure that all members of the next Parliament are aware of our industry’s priorities for the next four years.

 “Some top priorities for the industry include a tourism portfolio allocated to a senior cabinet Minister as it is essential to generate the best outcomes for the economy and for the regional communities that depend on a strong tourism sector. Improved business regulation, public infrastructure investment and targeted relief of fees and charges for COVID-crisis-affected businesses will be essential for recovery.

“Given the current global disruption to the economy and to tourism, it is important to map out a clear, collaborative plan for the long-term recovery of tourism within Queensland, which should include a renewed tourism infrastructure grant program based on the ‘Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund’ (GTIF), the ‘Attracting Aviation Investment Fund’ (AAIF) and a continued industry capacity building program.

“We must also encourage visitation to Queensland through marketing and events, a continued First Nations tourism program and assisting the tourism industry to respond and adapt to climate change are all top priorities for our industry.”

A full list of election priorities for the tourism industry is attached.

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