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BY:.....

Leader of the Opposition

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Mr Nicholas Hunt
Chief Executive
Tourism Alliance Victoria Ltd
PO Box 18136 Collins St East
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

Dear Mr Hunt

Thank you for your election submission on achieving Victorian tourism's growth potential. The Liberal Party recognise the significant contribution tourism makes to Victoria's economy, particularly in regional Victoria and we look forward to working with Tourism Alliance Victoria to promote and grow this vital sector in Victoria.

The Liberal Party has released a policy that recognises that in order to grow the industry, Tourism Victoria must improve its ability to tap into the expertise of the tourism industry. Under the policy Tourism Victoria will be restructured into a new statutory authority with a Board of Directors who will be accountable to the Minister. The Board will have equal membership from Melbourne and country Victoria and Board members will be required to have proven private sector business management skills from tourism and allied industries. The Chair will have to have senior tourism industry experience with a business background.

Regional Tourism will also be restructured so that qualified and experienced management can develop a supporting team with the skills and expertise needed for future success.

Many attractions and regions have failed to gain recognition under Labor. We have created a new \$1.23 million fund to assist with marketing of these attractions and are committed to dedicating at least half of Tourism Victoria's marketing budget to the sustained promotion of country Victoria. Many Victorians are also spending too much of their tourism dollars interstate or overseas. The Liberal Party will require Tourism Victoria to broaden their approach to marketing and encourage Victorians to holiday and spend in Victoria.

International visitors are vital to the future of the industry as they provide high yields. Victoria needs to chase strongly more direct flights into Victoria, an issue which Labor has been negligent in pursuing. Melbourne has a significant advantage over Australia's other capital cities having two curfew free international airports. Other airlines, besides Jetstar will be encouraged to explore Avalon as an alternative for their flights into and out of Victoria. In addition a Liberal Government will more actively pursue additional cruise ships visits to Melbourne.

A Liberal Government will increase support for outdoor activities and adventure tourism by assisting with the development of long walk attractions, providing \$400,000 over four years to better market our national parks as tourist destinations and through practical public liability insurance reforms.

With infrastructure, a Liberal Government is committed to complete the 5,000 seat Melbourne Convention Centre and extension of the Melbourne Exhibition Centre on time and on budget. Feasibility studies for the proposed Geelong Convention Centre and the Maritime Museum at Docklands will be fast tracked. There will also be a one-off capital contribution of \$6 million to provide shore based infrastructure for the Mornington Peninsula (Stoney Point) to Phillip Island (Cowes) car ferry. This would provide the missing link in establishing the 'Great Southern Coastal Road' touring route from the Great Ocean Road to Southern Gippsland and the magnificent Wilson's Promontory.

A Liberal Government will restore the rights of country communities over planning and development of the wind farm industry. This includes a moratorium on the consideration of further applications for new wind farms until proper legislation and protections for the local environment and landscape are in place and establishing no-go zones based on clear standards to protect significant tourist areas and national and state parks.

The Liberal Party recognises that tourism and hospitality staff are the face of Victorian tourism. They represent not only the tourism industry but all Victorians and have the ability to influence lasting impressions of our great State. A positive experience may mean repeat visits or word of mouth recommendations. A Liberal Government will raise the standard of service and training for staff in the sector as a priority.

There is a great need to reduce compliance burdens for businesses. This year alone under Labor, an additional 1,400 pages of regulation and laws have been introduced, most of which adversely affect our small and medium businesses. A Liberal Government will establish the Victorian Regulatory Reform Commission (VRRC) to replace the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission as a truly independent regulatory body not subject to Ministerial direction in conducting inquiries, establishing clear targets for reducing business regulation and cutting unnecessary regulations.

Labor's continual increasing take from business taxes such as stamp duty, land tax, payroll tax, congestion and insurance taxes have had significant negative impact on all Victorian businesses. A Liberal Government will reduce the tax burden to the lowest of any State by 2014 to keep our businesses competitive and allow them to better invest in their future, particularly in the tourism industry.

A Liberal Government looks forward to working with Tourism Alliance Victoria to raise the standards for all those involved in the Victorian tourism industry, including improved recognition of the value of tourism by local government and business associations, through a stronger partnership with State Government. This includes improved industry representation on Tourism Victoria's Board and an increased level of industry influence over the direction of tourism marketing. In government, we will closely work with and consult Tourism Alliance to promote and grow tourism in Victoria.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ted Baillieu', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ted Baillieu