



GARY HIGGINS
OPPOSITION LEADER

Media Release
12 February 2018

For immediate circulation

Tourism spend must convert to customers

The Top End, previously a jewel in Australia's tourism crown has declined rapidly under the Labor government. Previous reports indicate a decline of up to 35 per cent in tourist numbers, a decrease in airline passengers and a loss of vital airlines flying in and out of Darwin.

Leader of the Opposition, Gary Higgins said that tourism, as the Territory's second largest sector contributing to the economy, must be a key focus as the government attempts to fix the Territory's economy.

"For months now, tourism operators have been reporting a decline in business, across all aspects of the tourism sector.

"Tourism is vitally important to the Territory economy, however, as with all marketing spend, it is paramount there is a significant evaluation undertaken to understand what has worked previously and that any new dollars will be spent wisely with significant returns on investment.

"It's one thing to raise awareness through marketing, but it must convert to ticket sales, and people actually visiting and experiencing the Territory.

"The devil is in the detail of this plan and the Opposition looks forward to seeing the comprehensive strategy the government has put together.

"The development of product and the infrastructure spend must reflect what will be successful in attracting people to the Territory, not what the Tourism minister thinks will work.

"It is one thing to raise awareness, it is another to convert that to visitation," said Mr Higgins.

In addition, last week the Opposition called for a debate in Parliament to address:

- The fundamental importance of the tourism industry to the northern territory economy; and
- notes with concern the declining visitor numbers to the top end; and
- urges, increased investment in international and interstate marketing campaigns, increased efforts to secure more air links with Darwin and collaboration with the commonwealth government to revitalise Kakadu National Park, to arrest this decline

ENDS

Media contact: Georgina Murphy 0432 679 567