GROG BANS WILL HURT TOURISM

The Henderson Government must work with tourism officials and Traditional Owners to ensure bans on alcohol consumption in nine Central Australian parks and reserves are lifted.

Shadow Minister for Alcohol Policy, Matt Conlan, said the bans could seriously hurt the Centre’s tourism industry.

The bans were imposed after the parks were handed back to Traditional Owners, who in turn have leased them back to the Territory Government.

Although exemptions were sought by tourism operators, Traditional Owners rejected this request because they felt if it is illegal for Aborigines to drink on their own land, visitors should also be banned.

“In effect, Traditional Owners have pulled away the welcome mat,” Mr Conlan said.

“While not every tourist wants to drink when they visit Central Australia, those that do should be allowed to have a beer or glass of wine at the camp site as they enjoy the surrounds.

“The Country Liberals don’t want to see the wide-spread consumption of alcohol by people visiting the parks, but a wholesale ban could have serious implications on the tourism industry in the region.”

Mr Conlan said tourists who visit Alice Springs already express their frustration at restricted take-away licenses and at having to produce ID before they can make a purchase.
“Any further limitations on the access to alcohol could have very serious implications,” he said.

“Presumably the failure by the Territory and Commonwealth governments to secure access to alcohol by visitors to the area was an oversight.

“They must now fix the problem, before there is a serious impact on tourism in the region.”

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