MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND MAJOR EVENTS

LABOR CONTINUES TO NEGLECT TOURISM

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Minister for Tourism and Major Events Matt Conlan said Labor Leader Delia Lawrie continues to neglect the Territory’s important tourism industry – even now in Opposition.

Mr Conlan said Ms Lawrie recently made negative comments about the industry on a Darwin radio station, upsetting several local operators.

On the Mix 104.9 FM Breakfast program on 25 July 2013 Ms Lawrie was asked: “What’s the worst thing about the Territory?” The Labor Leader then replied: “Tourists.”

“A few weeks ago, I attended Tourism NT’s Roadshow in Darwin to present our new direction for tourism to around 120 local operators, when one operator told the room of her disgust upon hearing on the radio that according to the Opposition Leader, the worst thing about the Territory is tourists,” Mr Conlan said.

“I was stunned that the Opposition Leader could make such a remark and needless to say the rest of the room was too. Even the radio interviewer was shocked by Ms Lawrie’s answer saying: ‘You can’t say that’.

“But, not deterred Ms Lawrie went on saying: ‘Oh well, bunch of southerners’ to which the interviewer replied: ‘Oh right, true colours coming out, Delia’.

“So, according to the Labor Leader and former Treasurer the worst thing about the Territory isn’t the disgraceful mountain of $5.5 billion debt she lumped us with but rather the ‘Southerners’ who help employ over 14,000 Territorians. The tourists who contributed over $1.4 billion to our Gross State Product in 2010-11.

“It’s no wonder our Tourism Industry felt ignored for 11 years.

“Under Delia Lawrie and the former Labor Government our tourism industry took a big hit, with visitation now significantly lower than when they came into office in 2001. Last year, figures showed this trend continuing with a 12 per cent decrease in international visitors.

“Unfortunately, cleaning up Labor’s mess won’t happen overnight but this Government is investing an extra $8 million in our tourism industry to help put tourism back on the right track.

“We’ve also released our draft tourism strategy, which aims to deliver $2.2 billion in annual visitor spending to the Territory’s economy and create an extra 4,300 direct and indirect jobs by 2020.

“Unlike Labor, the Country Liberals Government doesn’t hate tourists – we love them and we want more.”

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