

‘Plan now for the future of regional tourism’

Former Chair of the Australian Regional Tourism Network and accommodation owner David Sheldon slams the Federal Government’s treatment and recognition to the importance of regional tourism as an economic driver.

“I wrote in 2015 that the Federal Government talks-the-talk but won’t walk-the-walk when it comes to the development of regional tourism, their ignorance to the reality that tourism is an economic driver for regional Australia has been again highlighted this year, firstly with Prime Ministers ‘whoopy do’ Regional Taskforce which omitted tourism as a priority, followed up by Senator Fiona Nash’s media blast about ‘Regions 2030’,” said Mr Sheldon.

“Who do these guys think they are kidding, where is the substance, where are the game changers for regional Australia?”

“I ask, what’s new with all these announcements, have you read previous budgets and what about the forward estimates?”

“We in regional tourism, and all national tourism associations, need to let this government know in no uncertain terms as Tourism 2020 is upon us, that they need to lift their game, work with Industry to develop policies and actions for the future that will enhance the Industry and not have ministers look for the easy wins or place all our eggs in one basket,” he continued.

“Internationally, we are witnessing the social fabric of some regions decaying due to increased visitation attempting to cope with a the lack of infrastructure. We in Australia, due to our vastness have the opportunity to plan and build infrastructure, be it communications or fixed infrastructure, the things that will not only enhance the tourism industry but our entire economy, improving the social fabric of regional and remote Australia.”

“I call on all politicians to look beyond the next election, work with industry to build a sustainable industry and leave a legacy for regional Australia,” concluded Mr Sheldon.

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