



# Let's shape a better future, together.

Federal election platform



April 2019

# Let's shape a better future, together.

The NRMA was built on a foundation of trust, community, discovery and safety. We are committed to advocating for initiatives and investments that deliver on these values.

The NRMA keeps communities moving by supporting the regions, investing in public transport, and investigating future transport solutions to support a dispersed and growing population.

Together with our sister clubs and the Australian Automobile Association, we work together with all levels of government to find solutions to Australia's transport and mobility needs, providing greater connectivity in our communities for employment and tourism.

## Regions

Half of our Members are based in regional NSW. Tight-knit regional communities are too familiar with seeing underinvestment in infrastructure and services. The NRMA wants these communities to flourish through connectivity, safer roads and tourism opportunities.

## Mobility

Remaining connected helps communities grow. We need integrated transport solutions that make journeys seamless, regardless of whether they are for work or leisure. We need to plan for future growth and ensure our infrastructure meets our needs, now and into the future. And we need to keep people safe as they travel, using data and technology to determine the best solutions to reduce the road toll.

## Future

We need to prepare for change. With technology the main catalyst, the world of mobility is being reimagined. The NRMA has commenced a transformative journey, spearheaded by the rollout of Australia's largest electric vehicle charging network. Governments need to advance support for new transport options that will improve safety and meet the future mobility needs of communities.

# What the NRMA wants

## In the regions

### Clear the backlog

- Conduct a review of the effectiveness of current road funding programs, giving consideration to the relationship with state-based programs in addressing the risk of fatality and serious injury across the entire road network.
- Accelerate funding of Roads to Recovery and Financial Assistance Grants to reduce the infrastructure backlog sooner.
- Dedicate a portion of fuel excise to local councils for road maintenance.

### Aid discovery

- Commit to the recommendations of Beyond 2020, funding the development of an action plan and initiatives to support the sector's future growth. Visitation targets must be set, including targets for regional Australia, with the sector's performance evaluated to make sure targets are achieved.
- Increase funding for Tourism Australia by \$100 million, focusing on key growth and emerging markets.
- Dedicate \$110 million over four years for tourism infrastructure development projects in regional Australia, including transformational (above \$10 million) and local projects.
- Freeze the Passenger Movement Charge over the next term of parliament.
- Conduct a review of the Passenger Movement Charge and encourage directing a greater proportion of the charge to the tourism industry to aid development and promotion.
- Provide additional resources through the Department of Home Affairs to significantly reduce visa processing times for Subclass 600 visitation visas.

## Supporting mobility

### Facilitating dispersal

- Expedite the completion and upgrade of critical infrastructure, including the Princes Highway, Barton Highway, Pacific Highway, Kings Highway, and F6 Extension.
- Audit and upgrade rest stop areas to include showers and wifi access for tourists and long-distance travellers.

### Transformative rail projects

- In collaboration with the NSW Government, progress planning and the delivery of an East-West Rail Link (extension of Sydney Metro West) via Western Sydney Airport to connect the precinct with Sydney's 'three cities' (Harbour, River and Parkland).
- Commit funding to progress planning and the delivery of faster rail between Sydney and Canberra, and explore additional fast rail connections to regional and gateway cities, including Newcastle, Gosford and Wollongong.

## Planning for the future

### The future is electric

- Establish a grant fund for enabling works to support the construction of privately-funded, non-proprietary electric vehicle charging infrastructure, particularly in regional locations.
- Commit to bolstering electricity network reliability and efficiency in readiness for electric and automated vehicles by part funding technology aimed at optimising energy capture, storage and utilisation within households.
- Prioritise electric vehicles and establish an inter-governmental electric vehicle working group to coordinate the transition to electric road transport.
- Commit to purchasing policies that mandate 10% of light passenger vehicles acquired or leased by government be electric by FY2020/21, and that 25% be electric by FY2025/26.
- Establish a grant fund for research and industry development associated with electric, connected or automated vehicles and key componentry.

### Achieving towards zero

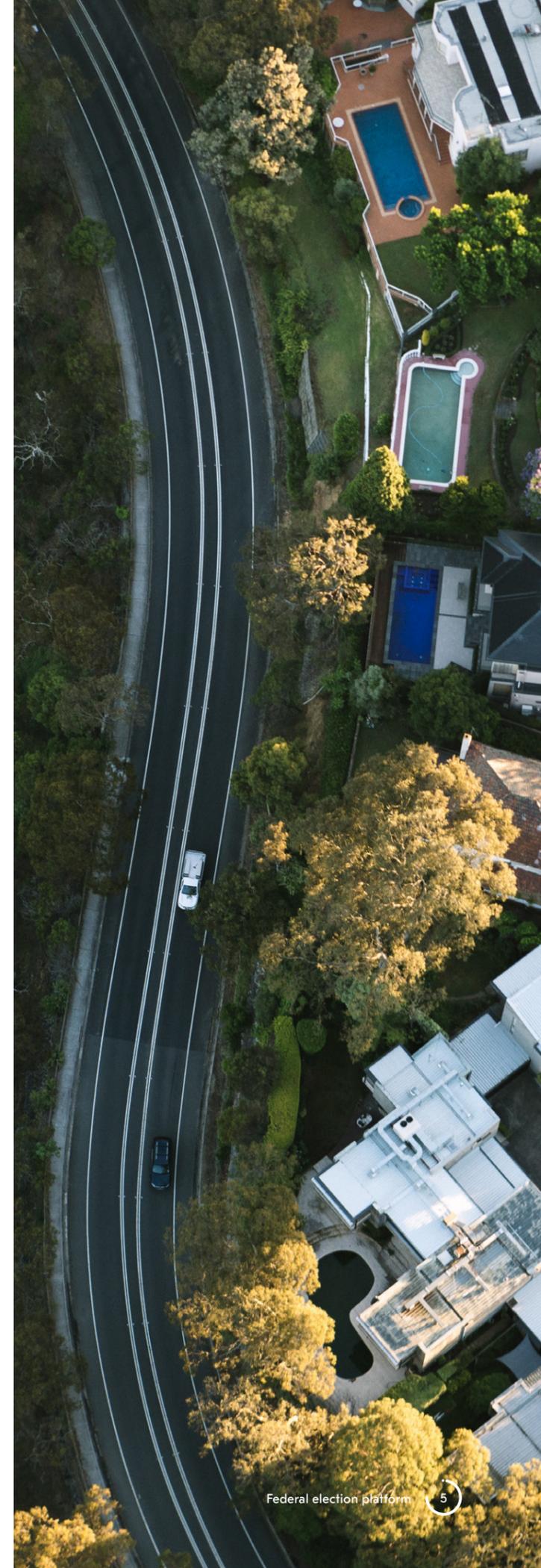
- Develop a national metric for measuring serious injuries.

### Australia's future workforce

- Reform the current visa framework, including visa processing times, tax arrangements and charges, and commit to an evaluation of the impact of these changes on visitation and labour shortages in Australia.
- Expand regional employment programs, including Indigenous and refugee employment programs, to greater parts of the tourism and hospitality industry to address chronic labour shortages affecting small businesses.

### Planning for future growth

- Investigate public transport and capacity improvements along Canberra's northern corridor and bus transit improvements connecting Belconnen and Queanbeyan in accordance with Infrastructure Australia's recommendations.



# Regions

## Clear the local road backlog

The NSW local road network is in a state of decline. Since 2014-15, the funding backlog has risen by almost 30% from \$1.73 billion in 2014-15, to \$2.2 billion in 2016-17. Of this backlog, approximately 75% is attributable to regional communities.

Poor regional roads and connections contribute to reduced national productivity and an overrepresentation of serious injuries and fatalities on our roads.

It is critical to upgrade local roads that fail to reach 'satisfactory' classification in regional areas, to support freight and logistics movements and reduce serious injuries and fatalities.

Without action from all levels of government, councils will continue to play catch-up when it comes to regional and local road upgrades.

The Australian Government has a role to play, making sure current government programs, including Financial Assistance Grants, Roads to Recovery and the Black Spot Funding program are effective in addressing the infrastructure backlog across the entire road network.

Motorists utilising our road network deserve quality infrastructure that supports local communities and encourages visitation and tourism.

### Commitment

Conduct a review of the effectiveness of current road funding programs, giving consideration to the relationship with state-based programs in addressing the risk of fatality and serious injury across the entire road network.

Accelerate funding of Roads to Recovery and Financial Assistance Grants to reduce the infrastructure backlog sooner.

Dedicate a portion of fuel excise to local councils for road maintenance.

## Aid discovery

Our regions are home to many of the iconic, natural attractions that are synonymous with travel in Australia. These attractions encourage people to visit our shores and spend in our communities, stimulating the national and local economies.

We need to boost the promotion of Australia across the globe, invest in regional tourism infrastructure, and cease taxing tourism, which affects travel costs and the perception of Australia to potential visitors.

### Are we there yet?

Tourism is our largest services export, contributing more to GDP than wheat and beef combined. The sector employs nearly 600,000 Australians – more than mining, agriculture or banking. More than 50% of these jobs are concentrated in regional Australia.

A report from the NRMA revealed that the tourism industry could contribute \$150 billion to the Australian economy by 2029-30 if the right level of investment and promotion occurs.<sup>1</sup>

Despite these figures, the sector is still not recognised as the economic powerhouse it truly is – and the NRMA wants this to change.

The NRMA believes that sector reform and focus is long overdue. Tourism should be recognised as an 'Industry Growth Centre' with an action plan to increase collaboration and improve competitiveness.

As we approach our Tourism 2020 target, we need to evaluate our performance and set the next targets that will guide future growth. Encouraging international visitors beyond our major gateways must be a priority to support economic activity and renewal in our regions.

### Commitment

Commit to the recommendations of Beyond 2020, funding the development of an action plan and initiatives to support the sector's future growth. Visitation targets must be set, including targets for regional Australia, with the sector's performance evaluated to make sure targets are achieved.

# 598,200

people employed in tourism

# 181 million

visitors to regional Australia

# 290 million

nights in regional Australia

# \$110 billion

spent in the economy

Overnight visitors could spend 1 billion nights and **\$150 billion** by 2029-30 if the right level of investment and promotion occurs.<sup>2</sup>

## Promote the best of what we have to offer

For every dollar spent on tourism promotion, a further \$15 is generated in visitor expenditure.<sup>3</sup> Tourism Australia punches well above its weight in building awareness of the country as a holiday destination and encouraging visitation to Australia.

The successful Restaurant Australia campaign saw the international visitor spend on food and wine increase by 38% to \$5.8 billion, and the perception of Australia as a destination for food and wine among those who haven't travelled to Australia increase from 10th to 8th.

Chris Hemsworth's involvement in the coast and aquatic campaign generated \$55 million in media exposure, while the Crocodile Dundee campaign reached 890,000 potential travellers on social media, generating \$74 million in advertising value.

Yet as competition intensifies from neighbouring destinations, the buying power of the international tourism marketing spend diminishes.

Tourism Australia's budget has not been maintained in real terms over the past decade. Funding to promote Australia internationally is now lower than some state government allocations to promote their states domestically and internationally. Funding for Tourism Australia should be boosted to maintain the real value of tourism marketing overseas.

## Commitment

Increase funding for Tourism Australia by \$100 million, focusing on key growth and emerging markets.

## Create a compelling reason to visit

Our regions are home to many of the iconic, natural attractions that are synonymous with travel in Australia. We need to create opportunities for visitors to meaningfully engage with our local communities and natural environment in sustainable ways.

Our visitor infrastructure plays an important part in facilitating travel, aiding discovery and creating engagement while people are visiting Australia. But our visitor infrastructure is tired. This affects the experience and perception of the country as a great destination to visit.

Funding for tourism infrastructure under programs such as the Building Better Regions Fund and Regional Growth Fund need to be consistent and ongoing, providing greater certainty to operators and Destination Networks to plan and structure their grant applications appropriately.

Administrative support for businesses making applications is also required to guide operators through the process, which can often prove onerous and foreign to small business owners.

## Commitment

Dedicate \$110 million over four years for tourism infrastructure development projects in regional Australia, including transformational (above \$10 million) and local projects.

## Freeze the Passenger Movement Charge and reduce visa processing times

Australia is an expensive long-haul destination that features on the bucket list of many international visitors. Yet the cost of getting to Australia, prolonged visa processing times and increases in taxes and charges can deter travel to Australia.

Australia's Passenger Movement Charge – the tax payable by any traveller departing Australia on an international flight – is now among the most expensive in the world at \$60. This charge raises \$1.1 billion in revenue, yet none of this funding is hypothecated back to the sector.

The industry is seeking commitment from the next Australian Government that the charge will not be increased over the next term of parliament. A review of the Passenger Movement Charge must be conducted with a greater proportion of the charge returned to the industry for development and promotion.

In addition, the processing times for Subclass 600 visitation visas need to be significantly reduced to remove a major tourism and visitation barrier. Uncompetitive processing times for these types of visas essentially makes Australia less desirable for potential travellers who have multiple travel options.

While eVisitor (Subclass 651) and Approved Destination Status (Subclass 600) visas can generally be obtained within a few days, other Subclass 600 visas, including the Tourist Stream Subclass 600, can take weeks or even months.

## Commitment

Freeze the Passenger Movement Charge over the next term of parliament.

Conduct a review of the Passenger Movement Charge and encourage directing a greater proportion of the charge to the tourism industry to aid development and promotion.

Provide additional resources through the Department of Home Affairs to significantly reduce visa processing times for Subclass 600 visitation visas.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 1

<sup>3</sup> Tourism Australia (2014) Submission to Productivity Commission Research Paper on Australia's International Tourism Industry, November 2014

# Mobility

## Facilitating dispersal

Our national highway network facilitates economic activity and dispersal beyond our major cities. Congestion and poorly maintained roads hinder productivity, commuter and visitor journeys, and the safety of motorists.

The NRMA, along with its sister clubs and the AAA, have identified upgrades to priority highway corridors, regional highway networks and public transport projects required to facilitate the mobility of the nation.

The Australian Government must come together with state and territory governments to fund critical upgrades to roads of strategic importance.

### Princes Highway south of Jervis Bay Road

In our 2014 audit of the Princes Highway, we identified 16 sections that are considered high risk to motorists.<sup>4</sup> Over the period 2013-17, 1,105 casualty crashes (including 37 fatalities) occurred on these sections of the road. The economic cost of these crashes is estimated at \$90.6 million per year.<sup>5</sup> The Princes Highway south of Jervis Bay Road to the Victorian border still requires significant upgrades.

### Barton Highway

The NRMA urges the Australian Government to work with the NSW Government to expedite a strategic business case and plan to deliver the full duplication of the Barton highway. The upgrade will improve journey reliability, ease congestion, improve driver safety and boost freight productivity.

Over the period 2013-17, 92 casualty crashes (including 4 fatalities) occurred on this section of the road. The economic cost of these crashes is estimated at \$7.6 million per year.<sup>6</sup>

### Pacific Motorway – Extension to Raymond terrace

The M1 Pacific Motorway and Pacific Highway are critical links in the National Land Transport Network and are among the busiest transport corridors in Australia. The NSW and Australian governments must fund the missing link between the M1 Pacific Motorway, south of John Renshaw Drive, and the Raymond Terrace Bypass. This upgrade should include an additional crossing of the Hunter River.

<sup>4</sup> The NRMA (2014), *The Princes Highway Audit* prepared by ARRB Group, pp i-iii.

<sup>5</sup> Numbers sourced from Centre for Road Safety using the methodology as used in the NRMA (2017) *The Cost of Crashes, An Analysis of lives lost and injuries on NSW roads*

<sup>6</sup> Ibid 5

### Kings Highway

The Kings Highway provides a critical link between the ACT and the south coast of NSW. Additional investment is required to address road capacity and safety issues at Bungendore, Braidwood and Nelligen Bridge. Mobile coverage black spots at Clyde Mountain and Braidwood create significant safety issues for motorists during extreme weather and throughout the holiday seasons.

### Mitchell Highway

The Mitchell Highway is an important route for freight and livestock transporters, local commuters, and holiday makers between Sydney and Dubbo.

The section between Bathurst to Nyngan via Dubbo forms part of the National Highway A32 Corridor, which stretches from Sydney to Adelaide via Dubbo and Broken Hill.

Additional overtaking lanes between Bathurst and Dubbo, as well as general improvements, are required to facilitate safer and more efficient travel movements along this corridor.

### F6 Extension to the Illawarra

80% of trips between the Illawarra and Sydney occur by car. The NRMA and the Illawarra Business Chamber estimated that without intervention, travel times from the Illawarra to Greater Sydney will steadily increase, costing the economy \$640 million per annum by 2031.<sup>7</sup>

The most significant road bottlenecks on this journey are located on roads outside the Illawarra. It takes the same amount of time to travel the last third of the journey (Sutherland to Sydney) as it does to travel the first two-thirds (Illawarra to Sutherland).

Given the importance to national productivity, the NRMA remains a supporter of joint-funding arrangements to deliver this project. The F6 should be fully extended, including the progression of Stage 1 from planning to construction, the current scoping of Stages 2 and 3, and the eventual feasibility of progressing Stage 4 from Loftus to Waterfall.

The total economic benefit of completing Stages 1, 2 and 3 of the F6 Extension is estimated at \$677 million per year in 2031.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> IBC & the NRMA (2018) *Upgrading road connectivity between the Illawarra and Greater Sydney, Directed Research, May 2018*

<sup>8</sup> Ibid 7

## Revive and survive

The limited number of rest stops along our major highway corridors, particularly in regional and remote destinations, act as a barrier to encouraging driver revival.

Fatigue is one of the three biggest killers on NSW roads, contributing to 17% of crashes. Limited rest stops also contribute to competition between caravans, RVs and heavy vehicles at stops designated for long-haul freight.

Many remote rest areas and truck stops lack important features, including showers, male and female toilets, power, lighting, CCTV and wifi, making them uninviting places to stop. The amenity of these stops needs to be improved to aid discovery of our regions and address fatigue associated with long-distance travel.

The location of these stops, the amenities offered, and even the ability to book spaces for short breaks through app-based technology could offer solutions to encourage usage and manage capacity, improving the experience for tourists and long-distance travellers.

### Commitment

Expedite the completion and upgrade of critical infrastructure, including the Princes Highway, Barton Highway, Pacific Highway, Kings Highway, and F6 Extension.

Audit and upgrade rest stop areas to include showers and wifi access for tourists and long-distance travellers.

## Transformative rail connections

While a number of major transport and road projects are underway in the Greater Sydney Region, further investment in transformative mass transit projects will provide greater choice and accessibility for commuters and visitors, helping to ease congestion and encourage public transport use.

As the population grows, an ongoing and concerted effort to shift commuters to public transport is required.

The Greater Sydney Region is densifying and expanding, attracting commuters and visitors from around the state through the increasing provision of employment, events and attractions. With the Australian and NSW governments committed to developing Western Sydney Airport, now is the time to plan for the integration of new rail services to complement the Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan and support Future Transport 2056.

The NRMA seeks to ensure that Sydney's airports and major employment hubs are connected through the provision of fast and efficient multimodal transportation, and that options to improve access to key regional and gateway cities throughout NSW are progressed to support commuting and visitation.

### Commitment

In collaboration with the NSW Government, progress planning and the delivery of an East-West Rail Link (extension of Sydney Metro West) via Western Sydney Airport to connect the precinct with Sydney's 'three cities' (Harbour, River and Parkland).

Commit funding to progress planning and the delivery of faster rail between Sydney and Canberra, and explore additional fast rail connections to regional and gateway cities, including Newcastle, Gosford and Wollongong.



# The future

The nature of mobility is shifting drastically. Car share, ride share, electrification, connectivity and automation will change the way we move forever. Just as we transitioned from the horse and cart to the motor car, the transition to electrification and automation has begun and is set to accelerate.

## The future is electric

We need to make sure our road and energy infrastructure is ready to support an electric, connected and automated future, to make the transition for the community as seamless as possible. This includes infrastructure and incentives to aid the uptake of new, cleaner and safer vehicles.

Over the next few years, a range of electric and hybrid vehicle models will hit Australian shores, including models aimed at the midpoint of the market. With increasing investment and technology improvements, the initial purchase price of electric vehicles is expected to continue to fall quickly.

To negate any potential negative impacts on infrastructure, including energy and distribution assets, governments must proactively prepare for this imminent change. A pre-emptive approach will ensure community and government readiness, allowing the benefits of this transition to be fully realised.

## Commitment

### Energy infrastructure

Establish a grant fund for enabling works to support the construction of privately-funded, non-proprietary electric vehicle charging infrastructure, particularly in regional locations.

Commit to bolstering electricity network reliability and efficiency in readiness for electric and automated vehicles by part funding technology aimed at optimising energy capture, storage and utilisation within households.

### Sector development

Prioritise electric vehicles and establish an inter-governmental electric vehicle working group to coordinate the transition to electric road transport.

Commit to purchasing policies that mandate 10% of light passenger vehicles acquired or leased by government be electric by FY2020/21, and that 25% be electric by FY2025/26.

Establish a grant fund for research and industry development associated with electric, connected or automated vehicles and key componentry.



## Achieving towards zero

The NRMA strives for a future where the road toll is zero.

Our past tells us a lot about our future, and consistent data is critical in order for the industry and government to determine the main causes, locations and treatments to address trends in the road toll, and prevent future road trauma.

Significant work has already begun in NSW to improve road trauma data, with Transport for NSW matching data from NSW Health, the State Insurance Regulatory Authority, icare (Insurance & Care NSW) and the NSW Police Force to provide a more holistic picture of serious injuries on NSW roads.

However, it still remains that 45% of NSW crashes remain unmatched. This data anomaly means we only have half the NSW picture in determining trends and causes of serious injuries in the state. The same could be said of other state and territory counterparts.

Australia needs a national system for measuring serious road crash injuries to appropriately inform infrastructure investment and road safety initiatives.

### Commitment

Develop a national metric for measuring serious injuries.

## Future workforce

The tourism industry is a labour-intensive industry. The sector relies on its people to provide hospitality and meaningful experiences to travellers.

The tourism industry is facing some of the largest and most chronic labour shortages in its history, particularly in regional areas. These labour shortages reduce productivity and place significant strain on small business operators who are unable to find suitable staff to fill vacancies.

We must bolster our vocational education system to deliver the right staff for jobs and make sure our migration program can provide short-term assistance.

Considerable changes have occurred to migration programs in Australia, particularly for temporary skilled migration and working holiday markers. Further efficiencies are to be had in consolidating visa classes, improving visa processing times and providing multiple entry visas for low-risk visitors. Changes to these programs affect the ability of tourism operators to run their businesses effectively.

An evaluation of these changes, including the impact on current shortages, needs to occur within the next one to two years to ensure they have not had a detrimental impact on the productivity of the sector.

Expanding seasonal worker, refugee and Indigenous employment programs to greater parts of the tourism industry, particularly in regional communities, is necessary to address chronic labour shortages as the VET system delivers the industry's future workforce.

### Commitment

Reform the current visa framework, including visa processing times, tax arrangements and charges, and commit to an evaluation of the impact of these changes on visitation and labour shortages in Australia.

Expand regional employment programs, including Indigenous and refugee employment programs, to greater parts of the tourism and hospitality industry to address chronic labour shortages affecting small businesses.

## Planning for future growth

### Canberra CBD to north corridor

Governments must invest in road and transport infrastructure today to support the future growth of our communities tomorrow.

The current ACT Treasury population forecasts for the North Canberra region shows a 61.4% increase in population in Civic, 22.8% increase in Dickson, and 12.5% increase in Watson from 2017-2022. Over the period 2017-2037, the population of North Canberra is expected to grow by 46.6% from 55,810 to 81,835.<sup>9</sup>

Limited road and public transport options have resulted in growing congestion on the Canberra CBD to north corridor. This problem will only worsen as population density increases along this corridor.

Recent research shows average driving speeds along the two northern routes from Franklin to Civic and Franklin to Barton have increased for AM peak journeys.<sup>10</sup>

The NRMA supports calls from Infrastructure Australia to investigate bus connectivity and capacity improvements for a number of arterial roads. Further funding should also be provided for the development of bus transit corridors connecting Belconnen and Queanbeyan to central Canberra.

### Commitment

Investigate public transport and capacity improvements along Canberra's northern corridor and bus transit improvements connecting Belconnen and Queanbeyan in accordance with Infrastructure Australia's recommendations.

<sup>9</sup> ACT government (Treasury): ACT Population Projections 2018 to 2058

<sup>10</sup> Australian Automobile Association (2018) Road Congestion in Australia, October p.34



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