

Saturday 23 August 2008

## SECOND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT FOR VICTORIA

The Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition today announced a major boost for regional and rural Victoria by committing to the development of a new international airport at Avalon.

A new international terminal at Avalon will see up to 2 million passengers per annum through the airport, 400 extra jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in tourism and other benefits to the region.

The Brumby Government abandoned Avalon and it has made it almost impossible to develop a sustainable international airport under its current planning regime.

Labor's failure to support improvements and development at Avalon has seen the airport lose opportunities for new airlines.

This week AirAsia X announced the commencement of low cost long haul operations between Victoria's Tullamarine airport and Malaysia. However, AirAsia's preference and initial plan was to have Avalon as its base in Victoria. Labor ensured that did not happen.

Geelong and Western Victoria residents are the biggest losers and the opportunities for jobs, local and regional development, and in particular tourism have all been lost to the area because of Labor.

The development of Avalon Airport is a huge opportunity for growth and an opportunity that stretches far beyond Geelong, to the Bellarine Peninsula, Barwon, and throughout Western Victoria.

It is important for the future of Geelong for Avalon to become a major well-serviced international airport, supporting integrated transport, industry, tourism and greater access to the region.

We want to see Geelong unshackled and allowed to become a thriving well-serviced community with real opportunity to flow to regional Victoria, not just the lip service and excuses that Labor has provided.

If we are to be serious about developing tourism and infrastructure in Victoria it is time for a second international gateway to our state.