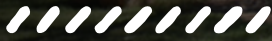


Pastoral tourism case study

Tobermorey Station Roadhouse and Caravan Park, NT



Location

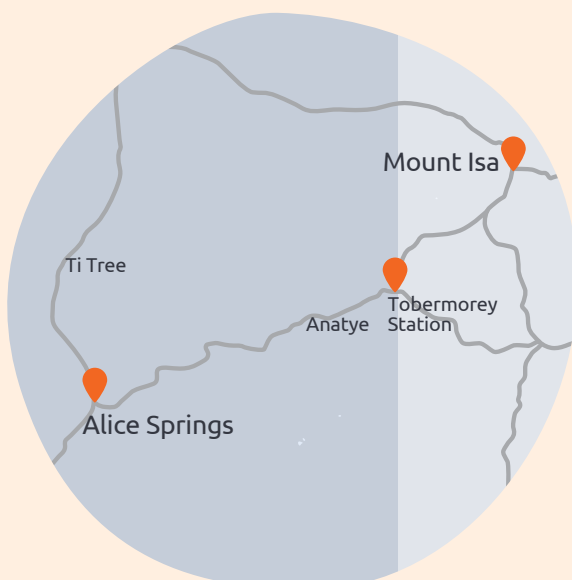
In the Northern Territory, near the Queensland border on the Plenty Highway.

Land tenure and primary business type

Perpetual pastoral lease with tourism offerings. A non-pastoral use permit is not required as tourism is solely pastoral-based, operated in conjunction with the day-to-day running of the pastoral enterprise.

Competitive advantage

Strategically located on the Outback Way which connects Laverton in Western Australia to Winton in Queensland, through the centre of Australia. Situated directly off the Plenty Highway, only 4km from the border and a main connection through to Boulia and Mt Isa in QLD.



Tourism offerings

- unpowered caravan and camping sites
- cabins
- station shop including fuel facilities
- bar



Growth journey

Visitors were stopping to look at the cattle station and were asking for accommodation and services. Rather than turning them away we decided to make a business out of the opportunity. We have grown significantly in the past two years, including:

- improved accommodation to suit overnight travellers (singles, families, backpackers, campers, grey nomads and the associated amenities)
- utilised a range of Tourism NT grants such as Roadhouse to Recovery and worked closely with a NT Small Business Champion on post flood and COVID recovery guidance
- established the 'Meathouse Bar' by converting the old meat house and obtaining a liquor licence, providing a communal space for station workers and travellers to share stories
- installed a new playground
- introduced basic mechanical services
- offer joy flights during muster time
- upgraded our food licence; now stock and sell BBQ packs, pizzas etc for self-cook or catered tours
- established a levee bank to mitigate future flood events; it also creates a natural safety barrier between visitors and working cattle station activities and a scenic walk.

Future growth plans

- implement a booking system
- develop the ability to sell homemade meat products
- potential to start aerial tours and packages for Running Man Rock, a natural feature made famous by Ray Martin
- developing food service to cater for drive rallies and tour operators
- establish larger roadhouse and more services to capitalise on the sealing of the Outback Way and increased traffic
- expand to target fly-ins via airstrip for people looking for a night away.

Viability and benefits

Tourism is viable, but only during peak season (May-Sept). For staff retention during quiet times, we provide extra duties e.g. seasonal mustering, gardening, maintenance etc.

Advice to others looking to start a tourism business

- recommend dedicated and ideally experienced tourism, hospitality and business staff; pastoral station managers cannot do it all!
- tourism isn't the 'easy fix', it's a seven day a week job that needs to be managed and resourced appropriately
- consider short-term travelling workers like grey nomads and youth; best to provide accommodation or a value add to encourage staff to stay longer
- understanding your scale – what you offer versus the actual cost of delivering
- consideration should be given to the proximity of tourist and station facilities
- draw on the strength of your location, be unique and don't do what everyone else is doing
- visitors want to come to the region, not just to your business – connect and work together with your 'neighbours'
- understanding the market - who is stopping and what are they looking for?
- membership with Regional Tourism Organisations will link the NT journey and experience
- if looking at renewable energy ensure what you install today will be sufficient for projected visitor growth.

In the past station workers needed experience and skills. Tourism can be a platform for young people interested in a pastoral career.

