# •••••••• Tourism NT Operational Plan 2021-2022



# •••••••• Chairperson's Foreword

Probably more so now than at any time in our history, tourism is a critical sector to the Northern Territory as one of the largest employing industries and will play an important role in supporting the achievement of a \$40 billion economy by 2030.

The purpose of Tourism NT's 2021-22 Operational Plan is to guide the organisation to achieve the targets outlined in the NT's Tourism Industry Strategy 2030 and realise the priority objectives of government, the community and tourism industry.

Since the 2030 targets were set, the COVID-19 pandemic has created unparalleled challenges for the industry, both globally and locally. Our industry continues to face significant challenges and operating circumstances, with the lasting effects on the modern economy and tourism industry to be felt for many years.

Tourism NT is a key industry sector of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade, established in September 2020 as the coordinating agency for economic and industry development. The agency is working to deliver upon the recommendations of the Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission to prioritise the Territory's economic development. The 2021 Budget focuses on important initiatives to lead our rebound and bring more investment to the Territory, in which tourism will play a critical role.

The successful implementation of immediate support packages through the NT Government's \$2 million Immediate Tourism Resilience Plan in 2020-21 has resulted in further support for industry in the 2021 Budget. The Government has invested in additional rounds of key grant programs such as the Territory Tourism Voucher, Visitor Experience Enhancement Program, Roadhouse to Recovery and Aboriginal Tourism grant programs. In addition, a critical worker support package and further support programs for tourism businesses and to enhance businesses' digital and agent sales will be integral to support the rebound and development of our industry. Our 2030 targets of between 2.51 million and 3.03 million visitors and between \$3.01 billion and \$3.67 billion in visitor expenditure remain valid, and our strategy and annual operational plans will be adapted (if required), to ensure a solid foundation for the future of the industry. With international borders currently closed, Tourism NT's operations during the next 12 months will support recovery through activity with a domestic focus.

Guided by Tourism NT's Aboriginal Tourism Committee, the agency is making important steps to achieve the objectives of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020-2030. This includes important work in skills development in business and the workforce, encouraging private investment through targeted investment by Government and quarterly Aboriginal business forums for tourism operators.

There is much work to be done to build on the Northern Territory's strengths and facilitate the Territory's rebound through a strong and competitive tourism industry. Tourism NT will continue to work with industry and government to deliver a shared a vision, priorities, and accountability, while focusing on driving demand and increasing recognition of the value of tourism.

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**Michael Bridge** Chair of the Board of Commissioners, Tourism NT

Front cover Bitter Springs, Elsey National Park

> Back cover Berry Springs Nature Park

Our vision is to grow overnight holiday visitor expenditure in the Northern Territory to between \$1.46 billion and \$1.79 billion by 2030.

As one of the Territory's largest employing industries, estimated to employ directly and indirectly 15,600 Territorians or 11.8 per cent of the total NT workforce, growing the tourism industry is vital to building a bigger economy for the Territory.

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### The six key objectives identified in the NT's Tourism Industry Strategy 2030 are:

- grow investment in the Northern Territory's remarkable assets, product and regions
- strengthen and showcase the Northern Territory's distinctive Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences
- through strategic marketing activities grow the value of the holiday market in the Northern Territory
- leverage and build events to drive visitation
- develop ongoing access to and within the Northern Territory
- increase recognition of the value of tourism to the Northern Territory.

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To grow the industry, the 2030 strategic framework relies on industry and government working together towards sustainable growth of tourism in the Northern Territory.

### Tourism NT works with many partners and stakeholders to achieve its objectives, including:

- the Northern Territory Government
- the Australian Government
- Regional Tourism Organisations and key industry bodies
- the tourism industry and tourism operators (local and national)
- Northern Territory Land Councils
- Tourism NT Board of Commissioners
- Aboriginal Tourism Committee
- consumers and community.

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Grow investment in the Northern Territory's remarkable assets, product and regions

#### We will streamline and enhance the investor journey through collaboration between Land Councils, Traditional Owners, governments and investors, through:

- establishing a Project Control Group that will oversee implementation of Aboriginal tourism skills and job development, business mentoring support and provide advisory and services support, as identified in the Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020 - 2030
- implementing actions in the Destination Management Plans for the Big Rivers (Katherine and surrounds), Barkly, Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges, Lasseter, Greater Darwin and Arnhem Land regions, including regular Project Control Group and Project Implementation Team meetings
- delivery of new and aligned experiences and products, as identified in Destination Management Plans.

## Tourism NT will support further investment in NT regions and complementary experiences, by:

- working with Regional Tourism Organisations to engage industry and create strategic partnerships that will champion the Northern Territory as a desirable destination
- finalising round 4 of Visitor Experience Enhancement Program grants, and delivery of round 5 grants to support the enhancement of visitor offerings and attract positive reviews to drive bookings
- finalising round 2 of the Aboriginal Tourism Grant Program, and delivery of the round 3 program grants to continue to support the development of Aboriginal tourism
- supporting development and delivery of support programs to assist the industry to recover and prepare for the future
- providing operational support and funding to assist local tourism businesses through round 4 of the Territory Tourism Voucher scheme
- delivering round 2 of the Territory Roadhouse to Recovery grants
- continuing to support contemporary visitor information facilities
- investigating the potential development of state of the art visitor information facilities at the Battery Hill Mining Centre site
- utilising the tourism roads priority document to assist governments with planning of capital road projects

- establishing tourism working groups to coordinate infrastructure and product development associated with major cross border drive routes, as identified in the Drive Strategy
- developing tourism standards for Territory towns and roadside stops.

### We will develop and implement a facilitated investment process for priority projects, both government and private-led, through:

- commencing stage 2 of the overall \$5.1 million Turbocharging Tourism project at Hermannsburg Historic Precinct, with \$3.5 million already delivered towards upgrades, restoration of historic buildings and site landscaping. The stage 2 investment of \$1.6 million will finalise restorations of buildings, upgrade car parking and develop future opportunities for the precinct
- delivering the \$5.5 million Turbocharging Tourism project in Tennant Creek, including restoration of Kunjarra (The Pebbles) site, delivering on the street scape project upgrades and overseeing development through monthly Project Control Group meetings
- supporting the multi-day hike project in Watarrka National Park
- supporting development of the Red Centre Adventure Ride in the West MacDonnell Ranges
- delivering October Business month workshops in all identified regions
- supporting the process to select a preferred developer for a new luxury hotel at the Darwin Waterfront
- implementing tourism priorities and recommendations made by the Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission.

### We will provide industry development services to grow and improve tourism product in the Territory, by:

- continuing to support tourism operators through the Business Enterprise Development Program, with a renewed focus on industry engagement and business development
- implementing the Book Now Digital Support program
- in partnership with NT Major Events Company and industry, build distributable product packages to support low and shoulder season events.

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Strengthen and showcase the Northern Territory's distinctive Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences

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#### Tourism Wi will articulate the benefits of building and featuring the Territory's Aboriginal Cultural tourism experiences through:

- secretariat support and implementing action items raised by the Aboriginal Tourism Committee
- increasing online bookability of Aboriginal tourism operators
- articulating point of difference and consumer benefits of participating in cultural tourism in the NT for the domestic market
- creation of two Aboriginal tourism business case studies per annum to encourage and give confidence to Aboriginal entrepreneurs, as well as provide business ideas and information of where professional relationships can be established
- continuing to measure and report on the performance of the NT's Aboriginal tourism sector against outcomes identified in the Northern Territory's Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020 – 2030.

### We will identify gaps and encourage development in Aboriginal tourism product through:

- finalising round 2 of the Aboriginal Tourism grant program, and delivery of round 3 grants to continue to support the development of Aboriginal tourism
- regular Destination Management Plan (DMP) Project Control Group meetings to oversee implementation and sustainable advancement of Aboriginal tourism product
- partnering with NIAA to deliver an Aboriginal tourism pilot mentoring program, including industry placement
- supporting the establishment of an Aboriginal tourism skills training model for the NT to prioritise Aboriginal skills development and align with sector requirements
- establishment of a trial schools/skills training program at Ntaria to partner with Hermannsburg Historic Precinct requirements
- the inclusion of Tiwi Islands in the Greater Darwin DMP to identify product gaps, infrastructure requirements and development opportunities
- continuing to utilise and analyse data and recommendations from the Business Enterprise Program to inform skills and training requirements for the Aboriginal tourism sector
- developing an Aboriginal tourism sector report in ReviewPro
- delivering quarterly Aboriginal business forums to promote the sector to the NT's tourism industry
- working with Parks Australia and the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics to prioritise the timely delivery of Kakadu National Park Roads Strategy outcomes.

### We will showcase Aboriginal culture through events, experiences, and attractions, and support the maintenance of cultural practice by:

- establishing joint industry promotion, marketing, and sales to enhance awareness of Aboriginal tourism offerings in the NT
- showcasing Northern Territory Aboriginal tourism operators and tours at appropriate industry forums
- prioritising key Aboriginal tourism events, experiences, and attractions in all marketing activities.

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Through strategic marketing activities, grow the value of the holiday market in the Northern Territory

> Katherine Gorge, Nitmiluk National Park

# Tourism NT will strengthen the point of difference in the minds of consumers and support industry growth by:

- driving demand and interest for the Northern Territory's tourism experiences, attractions, and product in a constantly changing environment
- growing brand differentiation and awareness through promoting the Northern Territory's distinct attributes to our core target markets
- connecting and engaging with consumers to encourage sharing of Northern Territory messaging via bought, earned, and owned media
- creating and facilitating engaging content to inspire and motivate consumers to consider and book their holiday to the Northern Territory (both domestically and internationally – when favourable travel conditions return)
- managing key priority international market websites
- providing engaging, relevant and consistent updates to our international in-market representatives to keep them on top of experiences, brand pillars and themes while borders remain closed
- working with media partners that deliver the best return on investment in terms of awareness, engagement and conversion
- developing cooperative marketing activities with relevant trade, airline and wholesale partners that deliver the best return on investment, first party data delivery, support NT industry distribution and deliver consistent and transparent reporting
- featuring Northern Territory tourism products, services and events on Tourism NT's consumer website northernterritory.com



Desert Mob, Alice Springs

- personalising communications and improving the user experience to move through the marketing funnel using owned assets
- increasing traffic to northernterritory.com through search engine ranking and marketing efforts
- targeting relevant consumer segments through automated marketing systems
- continuing to grow first party data to adapt to a changing, 'cookieless' environment
- addressing expected low visitation due to seasonality and no international visitation by continuing to focus on messaging to stimulate travel outside of the peak season (including international markets when borders re-open)
- developing, launching, and reporting on round 4 of the Territory Tourism Voucher scheme.

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Leverage and build events to drive visitation



Parrtjima – A Festival in Light, Alice Springs

### Tourism NT will identify and pursue strategically significant business events which leverage the Northern Territory's strengths, by:

- attracting business events through targeted trade and market engagement activities from organisations that align to the growth and developing sectors identified in the NT Government's Economic Development Framework, including health, agribusiness, energy and minerals, tourism, education, creative industries and defence
- supporting Business Events planners to stage business events in the Territory through the NT Business Events Support Fund
- developing a delegate attraction program to increase delegate length of stay and encourage regional dispersal, increasing delegate expenditure into the Territory economy
- identifying barriers to attract business events to the NT through marketplace research activities including delegate surveying
- producing a satisfaction survey to improve services to industry partners
- promoting NTBE's activities, including successful bids, through Tourism NT's corporate communications channels to increase the profile and awareness of activities undertaken
- showcasing leading Aboriginal cultural events including Parrtjima – A Festival in Light, as part of familiarisation programs, as well as leveraging key NT major events to demonstrate capacity and capability
- delivering on the objectives of the Long-term Business Events Strategy.

# Develop ongoing access to and within the Northern Territory

### Work with domestic and international airlines to build a route network and capacity that prioritises the Territory's economic development by:

- implementing a short to medium term aviation plan to secure and retain essential flight networks, including direct connectivity with a key global aviation hub to maximise passenger flow from inbound markets into the Northern Territory aviation gateways of Alice Springs, Uluru (Ayers Rock Airport) and Darwin
- reviewing demand trends across tourism seasons to ensure sufficient capacity around key events and major new projects
- delivering domestic cooperative marketing campaigns with aviation partners to support Northern Territory air routes
- pursuing aviation opportunities that have benefits to business, education, healthcare, social (visiting friends and relatives) and freight sectors, in addition to tourism
- partnering with airlines to support demand, with a view to increase routes and load levels, through marketing efforts.

### Tourism NT will facilitate ongoing access to ensure visitation and encourage regional dispersion across the Territory, by:

- establishing a Project Implementation Team to deliver, monitor and evaluate the actions of the dedicated Drive Strategy
- prioritising and advocating for the delivery of required investments in key drive touring routes
- working with the trade industry to address new experiences, opportunities and product for visitors using rail to access the Northern Territory.

# We will advocate for additional investment in tourism related telecommunications infrastructure, by:

- developing a telecommunication infrastructure priority plan in support of the Mobile Blackspot Program
- working with telecommunications providers and the Australian Government to improve network access in remote and regional communities and tourism related telecommunications infrastructure
- commencing a process to turning off WiFi hotspots, transferring sites to local operators or moving to a user pays system, in recognition that alternate telecommunications have become available in recent years.





# Increase recognition of the value of tourism to the Northern Territory

# Tourism NT will ensure Governments, all industries and the general public recognise the value of tourism to the Northern Territory, through:

- articulating the importance of tourism to the Northern Territory, supported through the delivery of data relating to regional economic contribution
- investigating new technologies to measure and monitor travel patterns, visitor expenditure and visitor sentiment
- ensuring local governments understand their role in tourism and encouraging the development of supportive tourism policies
- working across government and with key stakeholders to address tourism workforce shortages
- ongoing commitment to maintain industry quality via marketing and public relations activities
- actively encouraging participation and support of the Brolga Northern Territory Tourism Awards.

# Increase community understanding of tourism's positive impact on liveability and prosperity, by:

- delivering the Tourism NT Annual Report 2020-21 to communicate primary functions and responsibilities, significant activities and achievements, and fiscal management and performance for the financial year
- producing the 2021 audit of the Northern Territory's Tourism Industry Strategy 2030 against a set of general and action specific metrics.

# Engage industry to create promoters of tourism and the Northern Territory, through:

- delivering the industry's annual Tourism: Towards 2030 Conference
- developing industry's digital sales and distribution capability
- maintaining industry engagement through key corporate channels, including Tourism NT's corporate website, Facebook and LinkedIn, industry update e-newsletter and targeted eDM's
- working with industry and Regional Tourism Organisations to maintain and feature user generated content from industry and visitors over Tourism NT's digital channels
- increasing ways for local organisations and operators to leverage and extend Tourism NT's marketing activities, thereby promoting further use of the NT brand.

# Measuring our success

Tourism NT aligns its resources and activities with specific targets, strategies and actions to achieve identified goals in the short, medium and long-term to attract more visitors to the Northern Territory, and help the tourism sector deliver increasingly diverse, quality tourism experiences.

Performance is tracked quarterly against key metrics, with results reported formally to our Board at each meeting. Information is made public via the NT'S Tourism Industry Strategy 2030 annual update and in the Tourism NT Annual Report.

Simpsons Gap, West MacDonnell Ranges

### Demand-Side Metrics

Metric	Baseline (June 2019)	Target (June 2030)
Total overnight arrivals	1.95 million	Grow total overnight arrivals to between 2.51 million and 3.303 million
Total overnight expenditure	\$2.54 billion	Grow total overnight expenditure to between \$3.01 billion and \$3.67 billion
Overnight holiday visitors	885,000	Grow overnight holiday visitors to between 1.18 million and 1.45 million
Overnight holiday expenditure	\$1.13 billion	Grow overnight holiday expenditure to between \$1.46 billion and \$1.79 billion

#### Supply-Side Metrics

Metric	Baseline (June 2019)	Outcome
Metho	Baseline (June 2019)	Ouccome
Hotel rooms available (10 or more rooms)	9,482	Increase private sector investment in all NT tourism regions
International and domestic inbound air seat capacity	43,428	Existing aviation routes sustained or increased, new carriers and routes introduced
Cruise and expedition ship arrivals <ul> <li>vessels</li> <li>passengers</li> </ul>	73 49,511	Increase cruise ship (including expedition vessels) visits and visitors The priority for 2021-22 is to move to a staged resumption of cruising aligned to health directives
Self-drive visitors	788,000	Increase number of visitors incorporating drive routes into holidays
Passengers arriving via rail	31,903	Increase the number of visitors using rail to access the Northern Territory

### **Direct Impact Metrics**

Metric	Baseline (June 2019)	Outcome
Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) listings	1,220	Increase distribution of NT tourism products
Visitor satisfaction (ReviewPro global review index score)	80.0	Increase visitor satisfaction with NT tourism experiences
<ul> <li>Aboriginal tourism</li> <li>ATDW listings</li> <li>domestic visitor participation</li> <li>international visitor participation</li> </ul>	157 16% 70%	Grow the Aboriginal tourism sector in the NT
Campaigns <ul> <li>domestic awareness</li> <li>domestic consideration</li> </ul>	41% 38%	Increase the number of leads in the marketing funnel to visit to the NT
Business events • events staged • leads • delegates • expenditure	103 275 18,000 \$44 million	Increase the return to the NT from the business events sector



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