

Big Rivers Region Destination Management Plan ANNUAL REPORT CARD 2021

Overview

The Big Rivers Region Destination Management Plan (DMP) is a plan for the region that focuses on development priorities for the sustainable growth of tourism over 10 years.

The DMP was released in 2020 and will be reviewed every two years to ensure action plans and the prioritisation of product development opportunities align within the context of the current environment, including demand.

The annual scorecard measures the progress of outcomes and includes key performance metrics for the region such as visitor numbers, expenditure, satisfaction rating, online feedback/ reviews and digital data.

Read more about Destination Management Plans here:

tourismnt.com.au/research-strategies/destination-management-plans



Northern Rockhole, Nitmiluk National Park



Top Didj
Cultural Experience

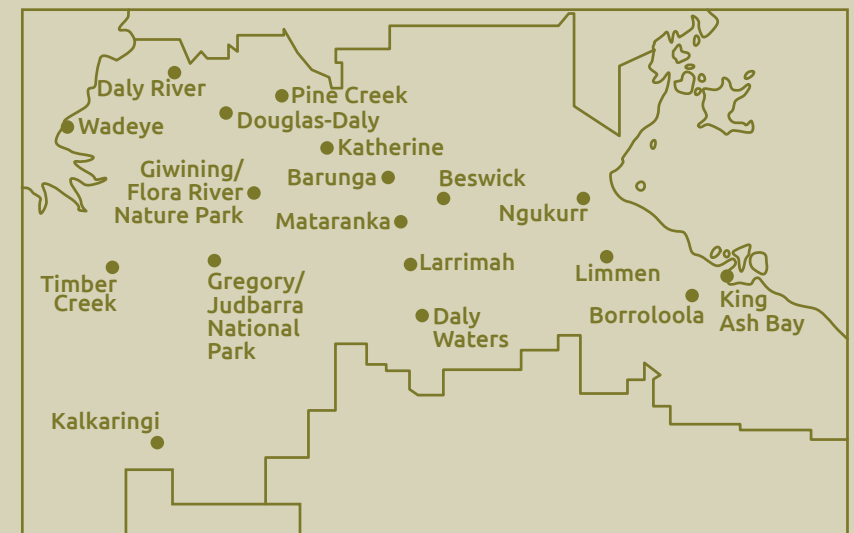


Judbarra/Gregory
National Park

Big Rivers Region

The Big Rivers region offers attractive tourism opportunities, including activities and attractions available through Nitmiluk National Park as well as many experiences built around unique natural environments, sporting and recreational activities, Aboriginal culture and pioneering history.

The tourism industry in the region is focusing its efforts on leveraging its natural, cultural and historical assets to maximise the benefits from current travel trends. Investment in festivals and relevant events also presents an opportunity to build value in the tourism market.





Website visitation statistics

<https://northernterritory.com/katherine-and-surrounds>

Katherine & surrounds Unique visitors
565,768 **222,792**
↑ 221% ↑ 176%

It is expected that in the short to medium term, increased digital traffic will have a delayed impact on actual visitation numbers, due to COVID-19 and movement restrictions that prevailed in the Northern Territory over the reporting period.

Baruwei Lookout, Nitmiluk National Park

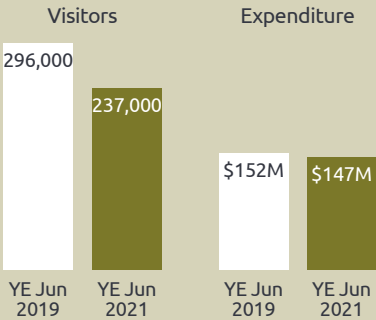
Achievements January - December 2021

- Developed town standards to set best-practice standards to cater for visitors.
- Aligned Tourism NT grant program outcomes with DMP priorities and accessibility criteria.
- 20km of shared walking and mountain bike trails and construction of the new Baruwei Lookout at Nitmiluk National Park complete, with improved stair access, interpretative signage and viewing platform.
- Upgrades to Nitmiluk National Park boat jetty complete.
- Delivered Book Now and Catch Every Booking grant programs to facilitate packaging of tourism experiences in the region.
- Developed a tourism roads priorities document articulating priority infrastructure works in the region that greatly impact tourism.
- Developed a regional identity position statement to inform future marketing and support destination awareness.
- Produced a history and heritage sector plan identifying 'hero products' for the region.
- Supported development of the Katherine accommodation project.
- Parks related product development priorities identified in the DMP provided to Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security (DEPWS) for consideration and inclusion in the NT Parks 2022-2052 year master plan.
- Advocated for increased investment in communications infrastructure in the region through the round 5A bid of the Australian Government's Mobile Black Spot program.
- Undertook an accessibility project to assist tourism operators on the steps required to become more inclusive and cater for a greater range of visitors.
- Supported industry in reviewing and understanding ReviewPro and other online visitor satisfaction reports.
- Delivered the Northern Territory Drive Tourism Strategy 2021-2030 to support investment in road infrastructure and linkage of tourism priorities.

Visitation and expenditure in the Big Rivers Region

237,000 **\$147M**
Visitors ↓ 20% Expenditure ↓ 3%

Holiday ↓ 9%
Visiting friends and family ↓ 54%
Business ↓ 34%
Other (ie work/ study) ↓ 18%

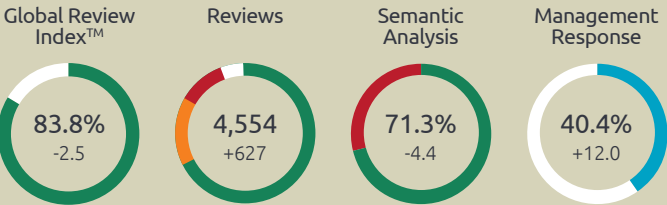


Visitation to the region has been greatly impacted by the pandemic, including the restriction to travel and low levels of consumer confidence.

Visitor satisfaction rating

Based on establishments – attractions, hotels, caravan parks and wayside inns (not food and hospitality providers) – ReviewPro data

Summary



Increase in positive reviews on:

- Service ↑ 1.6
- Camping ↑ 1.9
- Establishment ↑ 1.1
- Sustainability ↑ 6.1

Decrease in positive reviews on:

- Room ↓ 4.9
- Experience ↓ 3.1
- Cleanliness ↓ 1.0
- Staff ↓ 3.8

GRI has seen a decrease of -2.5% in the Big Rivers Region. The semantic analysis indicates a slight increase in service delivery but a larger increase in sustainability. Decreases indicated in staff and rooms along with cleanliness, likely due to the workforce shortages in accommodation across the region.

Comparisons are year on year, unless otherwise stated.

Progress on priority product development opportunities

Bitter Springs, Elsey National Park

	Product opportunity	Progress achieved
Katherine	Establish quality accommodation offerings.	EOI undertaken for Katherine 4 star accommodation project.
	Develop quality night time experiences.	Grant/ funding program developed.
Nitmiluk National Park	Develop multi-day high-end walking options (guided and fit) for Jatbula trail.	Work in progress, DEPWS and Jawoyn reviewing.
	Night time experiences in Nitmiluk National Park.	Baruwei Lookout and Biddlecombe Cascades glamping experiences progressing. Grant/ funding program developed.
	Implement Leliyn (Edith Falls) master plan developments.	Work in progress, discussions with Jawoyn underway to progress Leliyn campground redevelopment.
Limmen National Park	Develop additional infrastructure.	Inclusion in NT Parks 2022-2052 masterplan consultation paper as a tourism priority.
	Enhance access to additional natural attractions in the Park.	Consultation with Traditional Owners undertaken through DEPWS Visitor Experience Development Plan (VEDP).

	Product opportunity	Progress achieved
Mataranka	Implement Elsey master plan developments.	Prioritised in DEPWS' VEDP and scope of plan revisited.
Numbulwar	Develop tourist drive route linkage to East Arnhem Land.	South East Arnhem Land track identified as priority three drive in NT Drive Tourism Strategy.
Keep River National Park	Enhance access to Keep River National Park natural attractions.	Inclusion in NT Parks 2022-2052 master plan consultation paper as a tourism priority, prioritised in DEPWS Visitor Experience Development Plan.
Timber Creek	Establish a fishing tour operator.	Inclusion in NT Parks 2022-2052 masterplan consultation paper as a tourism priority.
Victoria River	Establish a river cruise near Victoria River Roadhouse.	Inclusion in NT Parks 2022-2052 masterplan consultation paper as a tourism priority.



Keep River National Park

Future focus

- Work with industry to build distributable product packages to support festivals and events such as Freedom Day Festival and Barunga Festival.
- Develop experience packages incorporating interstate products across potential product themes i.e. Savannah Way.
- Continue to support ongoing upgrades of wayside inns and services to cater to the drive market demand.
- Support regional councils and local government to enhance public facilities, amenities and roadside stop infrastructure in the region.
- Implement Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020 – 2030 actions relevant to the Big Rivers Region.
- Enhance Aboriginal tourism sector report in ReviewPro to compare progress nationally.
- Deliver, in partnership with Charles Darwin University, a Tour Guide Ready program.
- Build tourism operators' awareness of visitor experiences and satisfaction through dissemination of ReviewPro data.
- Deliver a grant funding opportunity to tourism operators to develop night time experiences.
- Improve online bookability of Aboriginal tourism businesses through their own and third party channels.
- Support the coordination of waste, signage and infrastructure as identified in the Drive Tourism Strategy action plan.

For further information please contact Tourism NT's Industry Development team on tourism.development@nt.gov.au or 08 8999 3859