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2022-23 Operational Plan



**NORTHERN
TERRITORY**
TOURISM NT

Chairperson's Foreword

After two challenging years, our sector is once again gaining momentum and our 2030 target of a \$3.01 billion visitor economy is still well within our sights. Encouragingly, the benefits of tourism recovery are starting to be felt across our industry and regions, and collectively the sector is working hard to ensure the Territory emerges from the economic hardship of COVID-19 as quickly as possible. It is apparent that some sectors and regions within the broader tourism economy will recover at differing rates and we need to remain responsive to specific needs to ensure that everyone enjoys the benefits of tourism recovery.

The purpose of Tourism NT's 2022-23 Operational Plan is to outline the annual activity that will deliver on the priority objectives and targets set by government, the tourism industry and the community in the NT's Tourism Industry Strategy 2030.

Tourism NT is a key division within the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade, with a remit to market the Territory as a desirable visitor destination and facilitate the sustainable growth of tourism in the NT. Budget 2022 recognises the importance of the tourism and hospitality sector in achieving the Territory's goal to deliver a \$40 billion economy by 2030, with a \$58.5 million budget commitment.

Tourism NT will invest an additional \$14.2 million in recovery funding to promote the Territory's domestic and global appeal through destination marketing and targeted activities that aim to support existing capacity with year-round demand, as well as drive the recovery of currently unserved airline routes and tourism inventory. In addition, Study NT and NT Business Events will invest a further \$1 million into international marketing activity, both being important segments for driving year round dispersal of visitors with high per capita spend outcomes.

In an effort to address the dire shortage of tourism and hospitality workers, \$1.3 million will be invested in workforce attraction and retention activities, building on the work delivered to date in partnership with industry.

\$1.9 million will be invested to support the continued implementation of the NT Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020-2030, recognised as a key priority of the Northern Territory's Tourism Industry Strategy 2030. Further, a third round of the popular Roadhouse to Recovery grant program will see \$2 million made available to be further leveraged by private sector investment. With drive visitors accounting for 40% of all visitation to the NT, this program is vital to supporting much needed upgrades to product and experiences along our drive routes¹.

While we have seen some encouraging signs of recovery in the sector, there is a significant way to go to ensure the Territory rebounds from this crisis with a strong and competitive industry. Tourism NT has established an excellent strategic framework in collaboration with industry. As recovery accelerates, it is important that stakeholders' efforts are united to deliver on our collective aims to rebuild the sector and deliver the growth required to meet our 2030 target.



Michael Bridge

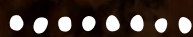
Chair of the Board of Commissioners,
Tourism NT



Vision

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

Tourism is a critical sector for the Northern Territory as it is one of the largest employing industries, employing approximately 15,600 Territorians or 11.8% of the NT workforce and contributing 9.2% to Territory Gross Value Added prior to COVID-19 impacts.² The tourism sector will be an important contributor to the achievement of a \$40 billion economy by 2030.



Objectives

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

- 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.

¹ Source: Northern Territory Drive Tourism Strategy 2021-2030, pg1.

² Source: Northern Territory Tourism Satellite Account 2018-2019.
<https://www.tourismnt.com.au/system/files/uploads/files/2020/Northern%20Territory%20Tourism%20Satellite%20Account%202018-19.pdf>

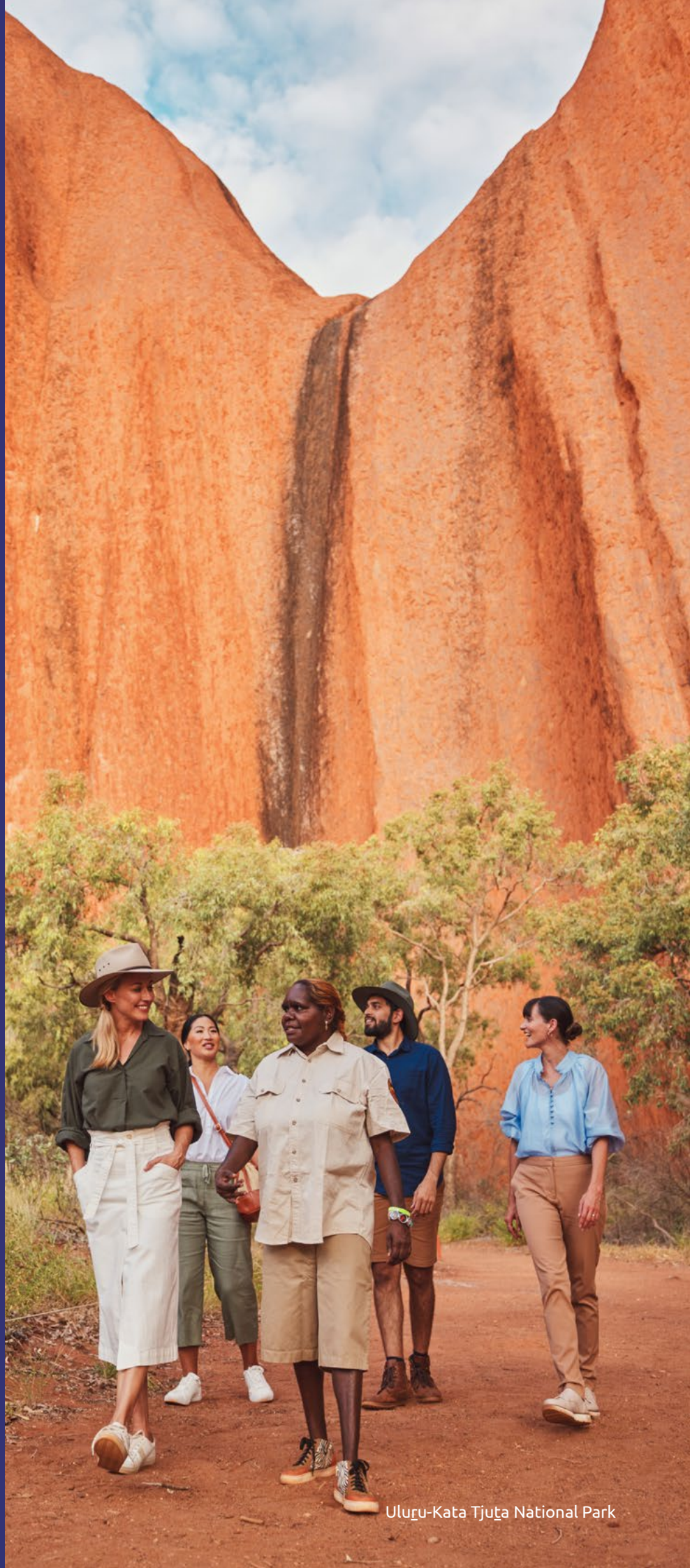


Partners

To grow the industry, the 2030 Strategy 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:

- Northern Territory Government
- Australian Government
- Local Government
- Regional Tourism Organisations and key industry bodies
- Tourism industry and tourism operators
- Northern Territory Land Councils
- Tourism NT Board of Commissioners
- Aboriginal Tourism Committee
- Consumers
- Territory community.



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

Tourism NT will promote coordination between business, government, the tourism industry and the community on tourism growth, future development and investment by:

- Reviewing and updating the NT's Tourism Industry Strategy 2030 to ensure it reflects the impacts and opportunities borne by COVID-19 as well as changes to Tourism NT's structure such as the inclusion of Study NT.
- Continuing implementation of the recommendations of the Territory Economic Reconstruction Commission report and the independent Turbocharging Tourism review.
- Supporting the implementation of tourism elements of the NT Infrastructure Plan and Pipeline 2022 including anticipated investment that will occur in the next five years that will impact the Territory's economy (Investment Portfolio), unfunded proposals that are in the planning phase or have been identified as enabling an outcome (Enabling Infrastructure Plan) and funded projects that will be delivered in the short term (Infrastructure Pipeline).
- Continuing to facilitate the coordinated delivery of the 10 year Destination Management Plans (DMPs) for the six tourism regions across the NT.
- Partnering with industry and key stakeholders to facilitate the funding and development of priority projects identified in DMPs, Drive Tourism Strategy, Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020-2030, Cruise Tourism Strategy 2022-2025 and Long-term Business Events Strategy.
- Working with NT Parks and Wildlife to support development and implementation of tourism objectives identified in the NT Parks Masterplan 2022-2050 and associated 10 year activation plan.
- Working with industry to build the Northern Territory's reputation as a compelling destination for sustainable travel through the delivery of practical support to tourism businesses that encourages the adoption of sustainable environmental practices and by looking inwards to ensure a culture of sustainability as a core value of Tourism NT.
- Working in partnership with Parks Australia on the delivery of the Kakadu National Park Tourism masterplan and the cultural centre and visitor sites within Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.
- Championing the outcomes of the Lasseter region industry forum to promote continued collaboration and partnerships to address common issues including labour shortages and regional access challenges.
- Working with industry to enhance the Territory's accessible product offering and to promote the Territory as an inclusive and accessible destination.
- Leading the coordination of cruise sector development and marketing for the Northern Territory including participation in the Australian Cruise Association and Cruise Lines International Association activities, and coordination of the cruise tourism working group and related on-ground activities.
- Working across government and with key stakeholders to address tourism workforce shortages, and implement initiatives that support increased Aboriginal engagement in the tourism and hospitality sector.
- Continuing to address tour guide shortages by providing tour operators with financial support to quickly upskill existing or new guides with intensive training courses required for Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and Kakadu National Park.



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

- Delivering targeted grant programs to support delivery of product gaps and destination improvement opportunities across all regions including Tourism Town Assets, Tourism Evening Experiences, Roadhouse to Recovery, Sustainability and Accessibility grants.
- Supporting the development of contemporary visitor information centre facilities at the existing Battery Hill Mining Centre site in Tennant Creek, at the new Tourism Central Australia visitor information centre site (Lot 274) in Alice Springs, as well as undertaking a feasibility study for the development of suitable facilities at Yulara.
- Continuing to advocate for key tourism road priorities and related infrastructure funding including ensuring the Federal commitment to seal the Mereenie Loop Road is honoured in terms of timeframe and budget.
- Supporting the development of new product opportunities for cruise and expedition ship itineraries.

- Supporting the development of education tourism product and related industry opportunities across the NT.
- Increasing the support to interstate school excursions through the NT Save and Learn program.
- Developing and distributing a 'Sustainable Tourism Toolkit' and delivering educational programs to assist tourism businesses in their journey towards environmental sustainability.

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

- Continuing to support the development of a Qantas Embraer 190 aircraft staff-base in Darwin, delivering jobs and economic opportunity with incremental increases in aviation connectivity.
- Working with stakeholders to finalise delivery of stage two of the \$5 million Turbocharging Tourism project at



East Point Reserve, Darwin

Hermannsburg Historic Precinct, with the completion of upgrades and restoration of historic buildings and interpretation works.

- Working with Parks and Investment Territory to continue support of the delivery of a private sector operated multi-day hike experience in Watarrka National Park.
- Continuing to work with Parks to support the development of the Red Centre Adventure Ride in the West MacDonnell Ranges.
- Working across Government to promote an appropriate level of short-stay accommodation investment in all centres across the Territory, as identified in the DMPs.
- Working with Investment Territory on a public-private partnership model to deliver new hotel offerings as part of the Darwin Waterfront precinct to support the existing assets including the convention centre.

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

- Continuing to deliver the Book Now program, to support the implementation of booking systems for Northern Territory tourism businesses.
- Delivering a tiered program of support to assist operators to progress through distribution development opportunities for their business, from a local product sold through a visitor centre, to online bookable, to domestic trade ready and ultimately international distribution programs.
- Incentivising and educating new and existing education agents to sell the NT as a study destination to potential international students.
- In partnership with the NT Major Events Company (NTMEC) and industry, build distributable product packages to support low and shoulder season events.

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

Tourism NT will articulate the benefits of building and featuring the Territory's Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences, through:

- Providing secretariat support to the Aboriginal Tourism Committee (ATC).
- Delivering practical assistance for Aboriginal tourism operators to increase their consumer profile and maximise their participation in distribution (direct and third party).
- Producing two Aboriginal tourism business case studies to showcase and encourage Aboriginal entrepreneurs and communities to consider tourism opportunities, as well as provide business development information.
- Establishing a dedicated annual Aboriginal Tourism Forum.
- Developing an Aboriginal cultural knowledge awareness toolkit for the tourism industry.
- Continuing to explore, improve and report on research metrics and insights relating to the performance of the Aboriginal tourism sector.
- Working in partnership with the National Indigenous Australians Agency to progress identified Indigenous Tourism Fund co-investment opportunities.
- Continuing to work with Tourism Australia to strengthen the Northern Territory's representation of product in the *Discover Aboriginal Experiences* program.

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

- Identifying gaps to promote the development of Aboriginal tourism product as part of regular DMP meetings.
- Delivery of the Aboriginal Tourism Grant Program to enhance the offerings of Aboriginal tourism businesses.
- Supporting the development and implementation of the National Indigenous Australians Agency's National Indigenous Tourism Mentoring Program within the Northern Territory.
- Delivering and implementing an Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Framework to support the ongoing development and investment in Aboriginal tourism sector development.

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

- Continuing to showcase Aboriginal culture through marketing activities that position the NT as the premier destination for authentic Aboriginal tourism experiences.
- Continuing to support development of the National Aboriginal Art Gallery in Alice Springs.
- In collaboration with the ATC, leading a Northern Territory delegation to the 2023 World Indigenous Tourism Summit.





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

Tourism NT will strengthen the NT's point of difference in the minds of consumers, drive visitation growth and support industry development, by:

- Growing first party data and implementing a plan for activation.
- Creating always on and personalised communications to drive consumers through the marketing funnel.
- Growing brand and regional differentiation awareness by promoting the NT's distinct attributes to core target markets continuously throughout the year.
- Driving demand and interest for the Territory's tourism experiences, attractions and product in a highly competitive environment.
- Connecting and engaging with consumers to drive the sharing of the NT messaging via bought, earned and owned media.
- Addressing perception barriers of the low season and stimulating travel outside of peak season.
- Working with media partners that deliver the best return on investment (ROI) in terms of high impact awareness, engagement and conversion in a competitive market.
- Working with all relevant trade, airline and wholesale partners that deliver the best ROI and first party data delivery, support the NT industry in distribution, and deliver consistent and transparent reporting.
- Incentivising and educating new and existing travel agents to sell the NT effectively.
- Partnering with world leading marketing companies in the international education space, to promote the Northern Territory in key international student source markets including India, Nepal, Vietnam, the Philippines and China.
- Provision of international student support via Wellbeing

Grants and the Ambassador Program, plus an award program that recognises the Student of the Year to promote ongoing retention of students and on-ground advocacy for the destination.

- Continuing to promote the Northern Territory to the domestic education sector via the NT Learning Adventures program including an increased Save and Learn rebate and familiarisation program for teachers and agents.
- Monthly tracking research of the domestic leisure market with the objective of drawing insights to better target marketing activities to increase visitation to the NT.
- Working in partnership with industry to create consumer targeted tools and messaging that educates and promote sustainable travel practices, enticing eco-conscious consumers to the NT and enabling them to travel in meaningful, responsible and regenerative ways.





• Leverage and • build events to • drive visitation

In partnership with industry, Tourism NT will position the Northern Territory as a competitive, distinctive and meaningful business events destination to domestic and international audiences, by:

- Increased customisation of bidding activities to lure new business event opportunities to the NT in a highly competitive marketplace.
- Conducting targeted trade and market engagement activities with organisations that align to NT growth sectors.
- Developing strategic partnerships with organisations that will deliver access to new association, corporate and incentive audiences to drive lead generation.
- Continuing to attract new business events opportunities through the highly successful NT Business Events Support Fund.
- Developing an industry reporting framework to more accurately reflect the total value of the NT Business Events sector and contribution to the Northern Territory economy.
- Surveying delegates to measure economic contribution by regions along with identifying opportunities to improve and align business events offerings.
- Promoting Northern Territory Business Events' activities, including successful bids, through Tourism NT's corporate communications channels to increase the profile and awareness of activities undertaken.
- Continuing to deliver the objectives of the Long-term Business Events Strategy including increased activities in the international marketplace in partnership with Business Events Australia.

• Develop ongoing access to and • within the Northern Territory

We will work with domestic and international airlines to develop the NT's aviation route network to ensure sufficient and affordable domestic/ international passenger connectivity, not just for tourism, but for healthcare, education, social welfare, lifestyle and other commercial reasons, by:

- Assisting airline partners through cooperative marketing activities to rebound to pre-pandemic passenger levels, focusing on actions that deliver the best ROI.
- Encouraging competition on key routes to drive affordability and choice for consumers.
- Establishing solutions for tourism reliant routes, such as Alice Springs to Ayers Rock Airport, or other Australian gateways to Central Australia.
- Raising awareness of the Northern Territory's profile as an important leisure and business destination among senior airline network and commercial planners.
- Continuing to build NT traffic from and over Singapore to support existing direct services.
- Continuing to actively engage airline partners to establish and maintain a route development opportunity pipeline.

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

- Continuing investment in drive infrastructure through a range of grant programs.
- Prioritising and advocating for the delivery of required investments in key drive touring routes nominated in the Drive Tourism Strategy and associated tourism road infrastructure priorities.
- Participating in tourism working groups to coordinate infrastructure and product development on major cross border drive routes, such as Explorers Way and Savannah Way.
- Conducting drive tourism research to ascertain current drive visitor satisfaction and journey experience to inform product development; along with developing base line data to support implementation of the Drive Tourism Strategy with progress metrics.
- Working with the trade industry to address new experiences, opportunities and product for visitors using rail to access the Northern Territory.
- Implementing the Cruise Tourism Strategy with the aim of reactivating the cruise sector, nurturing the increased interest from expedition cruise lines and supporting the return of international cruising.

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

- Working with telecommunications providers, the Northern Territory Government Department of Corporate and Digital Development and the Australian Government to improve network access in remote and regional communities and tourism related telecommunications infrastructure.



Kings Canyon
Watarrka National Park

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

Tourism NT will ensure governments, 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 that is critical to measuring the visitor economy: international and domestic visitor surveys; state and regional tourism satellite accounts to measure regional economic contribution; tourism business data; accommodation data; and ad hoc research projects.
- Providing regular briefings to key stakeholders, including across-Government on current industry performance and insights.
- Working with the Local Government Association of the Northern Territory to promote tourism as an economic development opportunity for local governments and regional councils to champion.
- Exploring new technologies to enable better measurement, monitoring and communication of research outputs including visitor expenditure, travel patterns and sentiment.
- Providing an ongoing commitment to industry quality via focusing grants, marketing and public relations incentives to promote continuous improvement and innovation in the sector.
- Actively encouraging participation and support of the Brolga Tourism Awards.

We will increase community understanding of tourism's positive impact on liveability and prosperity, by:

- Delivering the Tourism NT Annual Report 2021-22 to communicate primary functions and responsibilities, significant activities and achievements, fiscal management and performance for the financial year.
- Producing annual report cards on key actions and outputs of the NT's Tourism Industry Strategy 2030, six Destination Management Plans, Drive Tourism Strategy, Cruise Tourism Strategy 2022-2025, Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020-2030 and Long term Business Events Strategy.
- Completing the review of the current five year funding agreements with the Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) and Katherine Town Council.

We will engage industry to create promoters of tourism and the Northern Territory, through:

- Continuing to deliver the Tourism Business Enterprise Program which provides facilitated support to individual businesses, enabling them to identify their goals and participate in a suite of programs aligned to business objectives and taking into consideration their ReviewPro results.
- Working with the RTOs in support of their accreditation program.
- Engaging with stakeholders via satisfaction surveys to gauge feedback on Tourism NT and overall sector performance to inform strategic goals and focus areas of the organisation into the future.
- Delivering the industry's annual Tourism: Towards 2030 conference in Darwin and Alice Springs.
- Improving industry engagement through upgrades to the CRM capability and our key corporate channels, including Tourism NT's corporate website, Facebook and LinkedIn.
- Working with industry and RTOs to maintain and promote user generated content from industry and visitors over digital channels.
- Working with the Australian Government on the implementation of Thrive 2030, the national long term strategy for tourism, via participation in working groups and continued advocacy in areas of national interest that will make a difference to the Northern Territory tourism sector.



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 formally reported to our Board at each meeting. Information is made public via the NT's Tourism Industry Strategy 2030 annual report card and in the Tourism NT annual report.

tourismnt.com.au/research-strategies/strategies/nts-tourism-industry-strategy-2030





2022-23 Key Performance Indicators

Holiday visitors	
- domestic ¹	702 000
- international	100 000
Holiday visitor expenditure	
- domestic ¹	\$1.194B
- international	\$120M
International student enrolments	5 000

¹ Includes intra-Territory and interstate visitation

Further Information

For further information please contact:
strategy.tourism@nt.gov.au or telephone **08 8999 3922**

A copy of this document is available at:
tourismnt.com.au/about-us/who-we-are/operational-plan

Back cover: Hot Air Ballooning, Alice Springs.



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