

Greater Darwin region Destination Management Plan

ANNUAL REPORT CARD 2023

The Greater Darwin region Destination Management Plan (DMP) focuses on development priorities for the sustainable growth of tourism in the region over 10 years.

There are six DMPs that identify key strengths and assets across Northern Territory regions, and provide a comprehensive overview of comparative advantages, current product offerings and visitor profiles.

The six destinations are:

- Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges region
- Lasseter region
- Barkly region
- Big Rivers region
- East Arnhem Land region
- **Greater Darwin region**



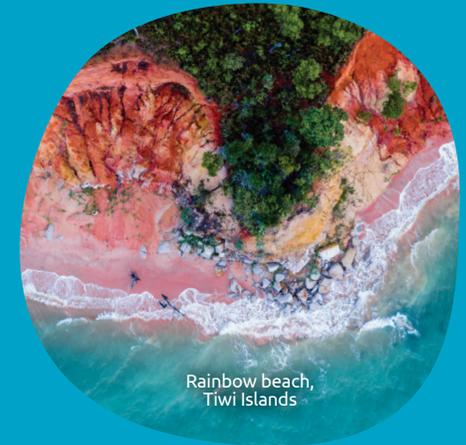
The Annual Report Card measures the progress of outcomes and includes key performance metrics for the region such as visitor numbers, expenditure, satisfaction rating, online feedback/ reviews and digital data.

The DMPs are 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.

DMPs for the Big Rivers and three Central Australia regions (Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges, Barkly and Lasseter) were completed in late 2020, with the East Arnhem Land DMP completed in November 2021. The final DMP, for the Greater Darwin region, was completed in May 2022.

Greater Darwin region

The Greater Darwin region covers over 30,000 square kilometres and includes the cities of Darwin and Palmerston, a number of regional centres and the Tiwi Islands across the Timor Sea. The region extends south to Adelaide River, east to Mount Bundy on the Arnhem Highway and follows the Mary River up to the Van Diemen Gulf. As a result of its northern proximity, Darwin is the closest Australian capital city to Asia, offering convenient air and sea travel routes for visitors. Darwin's international airport, cruise terminal and tourism experiences encourage travel via Asia and the Pacific.



1. Visitation and expenditure

1.1 Greater Darwin region key data | Year ending December 2023

With percentage changes compared to YE December 2022 data.



Source: Tourism Research Australia (TRA), International and National Visitor Survey.
Note: The Greater Darwin TRA region excludes Tiwi Islands



Source: TRA, International and National Visitor Survey.

2. Visitor satisfaction

2.1 YE December 2023 with percentage changes compared to previous 12 months

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

Global review index*

87.0%
+1.2%

Management response

41.6%
+6.0%

Reviews



- positive 22,798
- negative 2,634
- neutral 3,786
- not rated 113

Semantic analysis



- positive 56,577
- negative 21,734

Positive reviews:

Food and drinks	2.3%	Staff	1.9%
Location	1.4%	Cleanliness	5.7%
Room	5.7%	Value	4.3%
Experience	2.6%	Ambience	4.4%
Facilities	4.3%	Establishment	2.9%

The Global Review Index (GRI) saw a small increase of 1.2%, which can be attributed to strong review scores across leading tourism operators. Semantic analysis shows that for all the top ten categories of mentions identified in visitor reviews, positive mentions increased. The largest growth experienced was for cleanliness, room, ambience, facilities and value. Overall, positive mentions went up 3.8%. While the number of reviews decreased, management response to reviews increased 6.0%.

* The Global Review Index (GRI) is an online reputation index which is calculated by an algorithm that generates a numerical score from 0 to 100 and can be used for tracking historical performance and comparison purposes. The GRI is based on reviews from 140+ online travel agencies in more than 45 different languages. However, the GRI is not an average of all review scores and the algorithm considers several aspects to provide the most accurate picture of online reputation (e.g. it gives a higher weightage to the most recent reviews and a lower weightage to older reviews).

3. Drive Tourism

3.1 Most popular drive routes



3.2 Entry and exit points for drive visitors using their own car



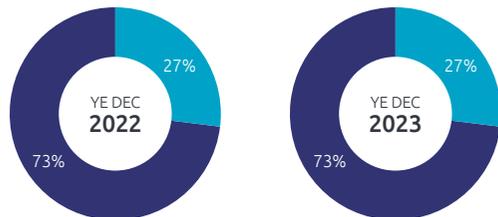
Source:
Tourism NT Drive
Tourism Study 2023

3.3 Visitation performance

Greater Darwin	YE Dec 2022	YE Dec 2023	Change
Drive visitors	335,000	367,000	9.4%
Percent of total NT drive market visiting the region	48%	46%	-2pp
Average length of stay (nights)	2.9	4.4	1.5
Average spend per trip	\$725	\$774	6.9%

pp = percentage points

Source:
TRA, International and
National Visitor Survey.



- Drive visitors
- Fly drive visitors

Note: Fly drive and drive visitors may have used other types of transport in addition to aircraft and/or self-drive vehicle (e.g. coach, bus, taxi etc.).

Source:
TRA, International and
National Visitor Survey.



Driving Past Termite Mounds, Litchfield National Park

4. Collective stakeholder progress on regional priorities

Locality and opportunity	Progress and regional achievements
Greater Darwin region: develop and promote Aboriginal cultural experiences	\$46,700 of funding allocated for the development of Aboriginal tourism experiences through round 6 of the Aboriginal Tourism Grant program.
Greater Darwin region: support delivery of product and destination improvements across the region	<p>\$1.8 million of funding allocated through round 6 and 7 of the Visitor Experience Enhancement Program (VEEP).</p> <p>\$98,782 of funding awarded to tourism businesses for accessibility improvements through the Tourism Accessibility Improvement Grant.</p> <p>\$61,818 of funding awarded to tourism businesses for projects undertaken with a focus on sustainability through the Sustainability for Tourism Industry Grant.</p>
Darwin: grow investment in the region	<p>Re-development of the Mercure and Novotel hotels at Darwin International Airport by the Airport Development Group, including new villas and a resort style pool.</p> <p>Darwin Convention Centre Hotel Expression of Interest progressing and negotiations being undertaken with shortlisted applicants. Note: Development Agreement in place between CEL and NTG as of May 2024.</p>
Darwin: develop ongoing access to the region	Introduction of the Territory Aviation Attraction Scheme (TAAS) in July 2023 to support new air access to Darwin, including Bonza's Sunshine Coast (commenced Nov 2023) and Gold Coast (commencing March 2024) routes and Qantas Darwin-Singapore service (on sale and commencing 9 December 2024). Note: Bonza entered voluntary administration on 1 May 2024 and suspended all flights across Australia. The Northern Territory Government continues to work with airlines to support new service development.

4. Collective stakeholder progress on regional priorities > cont.

Darwin: revitalise Darwin's city centre and support visitor economy growth

Significant progress on catalyst projects including the re-development of Civic and State Square, the Northern Territory Art Gallery and Danala, Charles Darwin University's Darwin campus.

Funding for the Larrakia Cultural Centre construction phase announced, early works demolition package completed.

Continued support for Darwin City initiatives including the installation of the new city parklet, re-development of Chapel Street and the installation of the public art project, mirragma gunugurr-wa (bamboo raft) at Bicentennial Park.

Darwin: enhance visitor attraction and market diversification through festivals and events

Marketing promotion for key events including BASSINTHEGRASS and the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair.

Darwin Waterfront Corporation showcased the 'Liquid Lights' multimedia experience with three different light shows drawing crowds to the Darwin Waterfront during the low season.

City of Darwin hosted the Darwin International Dragon Boat Festival welcoming delegates from Sister and Friendship Cities.

Continued the Darwin Street Art Festival through Activate Darwin and Proper Creative featuring 23 new works by local talent, national and international artists.

Darwin: enhance accessible tourism offerings

Further improvements to accessible offerings through the construction of a new fully accessible public amenities building, 'Changing Places' at the Darwin Waterfront.

Development of accessibility guides for restaurants and cafes at the Darwin Waterfront in collaboration with Hospitality NT and Flare Access.

Dedicated accessible marketing shoot to promote Darwin as an accessible and inclusive city.

4. Collective stakeholder progress on regional priorities > cont.

Darwin: enhance visitor experience through diversity of recreational opportunities

Development of the Rapid Creek walks, Gurumbai Trail and Rapid Creek reserve by the Airport Development Group.
Upgrades to the Creek to Creek trail at Casuarina Coastal Reserve at Lee Point improving access to the area.

Litchfield National Park: implement NT Parks 10 Year Activation Plan developments

New campsites complete at Surprise Creek Falls in Litchfield National Park.
Litchfield National Park Visitor Experience Development Plan in development to manage tourism visitation.

Mandorah: maximise tourism outcomes through infrastructure

Design and construct contract awarded for Stage 1 of the Mandorah Marine Facilities project.

Dundee: maximise tourism outcomes through infrastructure

Dundee Beach Tavern extension complete and opened to the public.
Engineering design for Dundee boat ramp upgrades have commenced.
Projects undertaken to improve the visitor experience at The Lodge of Dundee, Dundee Beach Holiday Park and Skippers at Dundee.

Coomalie: maximise tourism outcomes through infrastructure

Support Coomalie Community Government Council to undertake land use planning for the northern end of Adelaide River Service road.

5. Future focus

- Support opportunities to expand the quality and quantity of tourism offerings that increase visitation in the shoulder and low seasons.
- Provide resources to help build unique and quality experiences that showcase the Northern Territory's Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences.
- Work with trade, distribution and industry partners to maximise tourism outcomes of the infrastructure investment in the region, including the Northern Territory Art Gallery, Larrakia Cultural Centre and the Darwin Convention Centre Hotel.
- Increase market awareness of the experiences in shoulder and low seasons, and continue to promote Aboriginal tourism experiences through marketing campaigns, publicity and social media.
- Assist in growing the expedition cruise market to the Tiwi Islands.
- Continue work on the revitalisation of Bundilla Beach.
- Continue to support the cruise sector by increasing product available via shore excursions on the ships visiting throughout the traditional low season.
- Proactively address the challenges of workforce skilling and development in response to changes in tourism and workforce participation.
- Encourage tour operators in taking practical actions towards providing sustainable and inclusive tourism product and experiences.
- Darwin Convention Centre hotel project begins construction during 2024.
- Work with trade, distribution and industry partners to maximise tourism outcomes through infrastructure investment in the region, including the Northern Territory Art Gallery, Larrakia Cultural Centre and the Darwin Convention Centre Hotel.

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

Read more about Destination Management Plans here:

[tourismnt.com.au/
research-strategies/
destination-management-plans](https://tourismnt.com.au/research-strategies/destination-management-plans)

