

Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges region Destination Management Plan

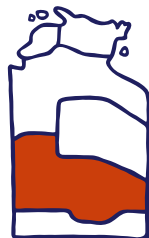
Two-Year Report Card: 2023-2024

The Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges 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 two-year 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 periodically reviewed to ensure the priority opportunities align with the region's growth and the DMPs remain relevant in the current tourism environment.

In 2024 the Lasseter, Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges, Barkly and Big Rivers region DMPs were refreshed to ensure currency and refocus priorities for the coming years. East Arnhem Land DMP, completed in November 2021 and the Greater Darwin region DMP, completed in May 2022 are both due to be refreshed in the 2025 calendar year.

Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges region

The Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges region makes up a significant portion of Central Australia and is characterised by unique desert environments.

Visitor experiences in the region focus on nature, Aboriginal culture, adventure, history and events.

The region includes the Northern Territory's second most populated centre of Alice Springs, which forms an important service point for communities and visitors across Central Australia. The visitor experiences are considered well aligned to the current demands in the visitor market. The region is an important connection for visitors to the neighbouring Lasseter region and draws visitors from other regions, making it an important contributor to tourism across the Territory.



Ormiston Gorge



Yeperenye / Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park

1. Visitation and expenditure

Two-year average: 2023 and 2024, with percentage changes compared to 2022 and 2023.*

1.1 Visitation snapshot

Visitors (000s) ↑ 5.8%

Expenditure ↑ 6.1%

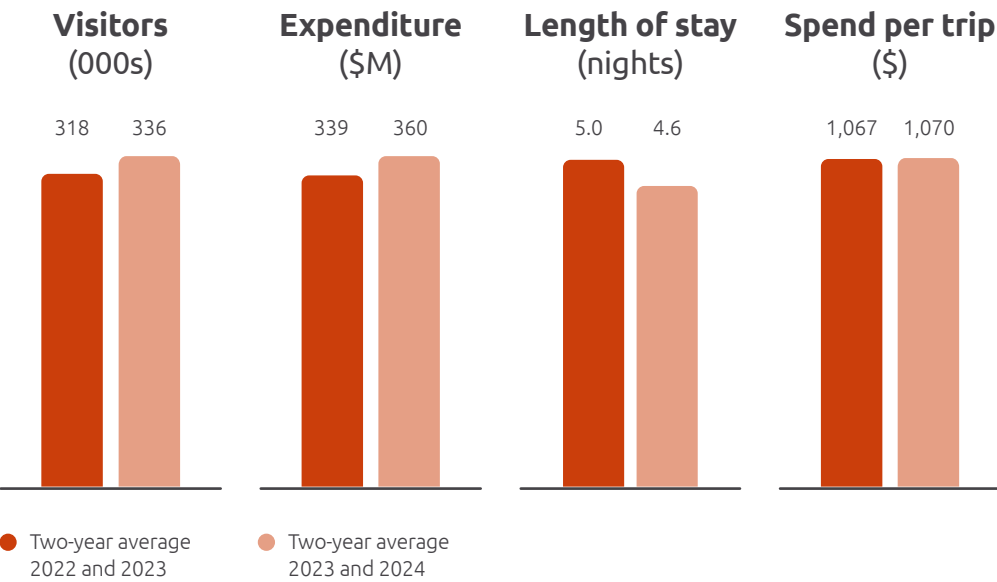


Remaining 18,000 visitors are other travellers.

VFR = "visiting friends and relatives".

Source: Tourism Research Australia (TRA), International and National Visitor Survey.

1.2 Visitation key data



Source: Tourism Research Australia (TRA), International and National Visitor Survey.

*Datasets using year ending December data.

2. Visitor satisfaction

Year ending (YE) December 2024 with percentage changes compared to YE December 2023.

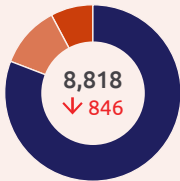
2.1 Visitor satisfaction data

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

Global review index*
88.3%
↓ 0.3%

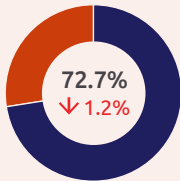
Management response
36.2%
↑ 13.8%

Reviews



● positive 6,742
● negative 847
● neutral 1,229
○ not rated 0

Semantic analysis



● positive 18,103
● negative 6,814

Positive reviews:

Location ↑ 1.3%

Negative reviews:

Service ↑ 4.0%

Value ↑ 2.2%

Entertainment ↑ 1.7%

Cleanliness ↑ 0.3%

The Global Review Index (GRI) saw a marginal decrease of 0.3%. Overall semantic analysis showed a decrease of 1.2% with mixed results for the top ten categories of mentions identified in visitor reviews. Positive mentions increased slightly for location, with negative mentions increasing for service, entertainment and value. The number of reviews decreased however management responses went up by 13.8%.

* 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

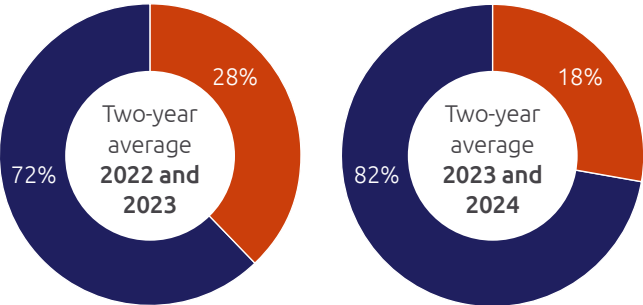


Source: Tourism NT Drive Tourism Study 2023.

3.3. Drive visitation performance

Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges	Two-year average 2022 and 2023	Two-year average 2023 and 2024	Change
Drive visitors (000s)	142	144	+ 1.1%
Percentage of total NT drive market visiting the region	19%	20%	+ 1pp*
Average length of stay (nights)	3.9	3.1	- 0.8
Average spend per trip (\$)	746	754	+ 1.0%

* pp = percentage points



- 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.



Simpsons Gap – Tjoritja/West MacDonnell National Park

4. Collective stakeholder progress on regional priorities

Locality and opportunity	Progress and regional achievements
Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges: deliver a refreshed Destination Management Plan for the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A refreshed plan was delivered.• Implementation of updated priorities began in 2024 under guidance of the Project Implementation Team.
Alice Springs: establish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Gallery of Australia (ATSIAGA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The gallery will be located within the ANZAC Oval Precinct in Alice Springs CBD. The design and approvals process is underway, with project completion expected late 2027.
Alice Springs: establish a new contemporary visitor information centre with commercial collaboration opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alternate site selected at the existing Alice Springs Town Council library. \$4.8 million allocated to redevelop the site to house the Tourism Central Australia headquarters and Visitor Information Centre.
Alice Springs: complete revitalisation of the Alice Springs CBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed July 2024. The Alice Springs CBD has been invigorated, creating a more vibrant space for locals and visitors. Works included lighting upgrades, a River Activation Space, landscaping shade structures and cooling initiatives.
Alice Springs: regenerating Alice Springs town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Detailed design for the project is 50% complete and released for public consultation in 2025.
Alice Springs: Alice Springs Aquatic and Leisure Centre Adventure Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed with the grand opening in November 2024. The Adventure Park expands the leisure facilities available at the Aquatic Centre. Suitable for all ages, activities include: basketball, mini golf, gym equipment and play equipment.
Alice Springs: enhance the visitor experience at Alice Springs Desert Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coolamon Café and Madigan's Function Centre was supported through the Visitor Experience Enhancement Program (VEEP) to upgrade bathrooms to an accessible standard, renovate service areas, replace blinds and carpet in Madigan's and install a large TV for online meetings.• \$2.6 million allocated to refurbish the Alice Springs Desert Park. The design consultancy is underway focusing on priority infrastructure development for the Nature Play outdoor area, Nocturnal House, Education Centre, Madigan's/Coolamon Café and Theatre.
Alice Springs: develop nighttime experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Illuminate Alice nighttime place-changing concept under development.• Red Centre Adventures established the Simpsons Gap Sunset E-Bike Tour.• New roller-shutter artwork continues to reinvigorate the CBD.
Alice Springs: : implement Alice Springs Telegraph Station Visitor Experience Development plan priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$2.6 million allocated to implement the Visitor Experience Development Plan. A scope of priority works, based on improving accessibility and upgrading infrastructure has been drafted with anticipated tender release late 2025.

4. Collective stakeholder progress on regional priorities cont.

Alice Springs: develop and implement strategic plan for Road Transport Hall of Fame

- \$3.5 million allocated to develop and implement a 10 year strategic plan, incorporating a collection audit, interpretation plan for visitors and capital works program.

Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges: establish and improve quality accommodation offerings

- Just under \$600,000 of funding was allocated to assist accommodation providers improve the quality of their accommodation through round 6, 7 and 8 of the VEEP.
- New accommodation: Athelle Outback Hideaway, Anmatjere, servicing the drive market.
- Planning approvals obtained to facilitate additional commercial short stay accommodation at the Gap View Hotel and Discovery Parks Alice Springs.

Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges: expand Aboriginal cultural experiences

- 100% Finke River Culture and Adventure established 2 tours: Simpsons Gap Aboriginal Cultural Guided Walk and Journey Through the Dreamtime.
- Aboriginal Cultural Tourism along Drive Routes – stage 1 completed, identifying the Explorers Way and Red Centre Way as key routes to support development of Aboriginal Cultural Tourism experiences. Stage 2 commenced.
- Activation of Palm Valley Culture Camp in Finke Gorge National Park - bringing together NTG, Traditional Owners and the commercial sector to operationalise the site ready for market.
- Over \$300,000 of funding allocated for the development of Aboriginal tourism experiences through round 6 and 7 of the Aboriginal Tourism Grant program.

Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges: strengthen and grow Aboriginal workforce in tourism

- The NTG Aboriginal Workforce Program pilot, in partnership with 100% Finke River Culture and Adventure, had 11 participants achieve a Certificate 1 in Tourism. Due to the success of the pilot, the program was funded for a further 3 years by NIAA.
- NTG Mentor Support Program commenced March 2024 with Angkerle Aboriginal Corporation, Standley Chasm supporting 12 participants with on the job cultural mentoring and support to complete Certificate 1 in Tourism with CDU.

Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges: install and upgrade tourism signage across the region

- Tourism Central Australia in conjunction with Alice Springs Town Council installed 20 new banner systems for tourism promotion.
- Tourism Central Australia, in conjunction with NT Parks and Wildlife produced the content and audio for four audio signs being installed across the East and West MacDonnell Ranges.

MacDonnell Ranges: ensure water security in the Tjoritja/ West MacDonnell National Park

- \$2 million allocated to ensure water security in the iconic National Park. A draft scope to undertake a desktop study of supply options, and the current and future water needs, has been developed. Subject to confirmation of funding, this will go to tender before the end of 2024/25 financial year.

MacDonnell Ranges: seal the Outback Way

- Tender awarded to seal a 27-kilometre section from 269 to 297 km of the Plenty Highway commencing in September 2024. Additional sections of the Plenty Highway between 170-209 km and 244-269 km are under design for upgrade to seal.

4. Collective stakeholder progress on regional priorities cont.

MacDonnell Ranges: seal the Mereenie Loop	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design consultancy awarded. Six construction packages of work tenders to be developed. First construction package to be released early 2025.
MacDonnell Ranges: develop a new walking trail experience in East MacDonnell Ranges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feasibility study completed and product opportunities identified.
MacDonnell Ranges: support Discovery Resorts Glen Helen redevelopment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redevelopment and water pipeline proposal progressing, approvals process underway.
Ntaria/Hermannsburg: finalise the redevelopment of the Hermannsburg Historic Precinct	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redevelopment and restoration work finalised in May 2024, seeing completion of the \$5.19 million project.
Ntaria/Hermannsburg: develop the Namatjira Art Gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concept progressing and site location under consideration with key stakeholders.

5. Future focus

- PIT members to continue to advocate for, and assist within their agencies to progress, major projects in the region such as sealing the Mereenie Loop, sealing the Outback Way and establishment of the ATSIAGA.
- Development and enhancement of Aboriginal cultural tourism opportunities in the Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges region, informed by workshops held along the Red Centre Way and the Explorers Way.
- Deliver the redeveloped Tourism Central Australia Headquarters and Visitor Information Centre.
- Support landowners in the East MacDonnell Ranges to investigate and progress walk and product opportunities identified in the Atnarpa Trail feasibility study.
- Develop the nighttime Gap to Gallery (ATSIAGA) place-changing concept 'Illuminate Alice' and other nighttime tourism product initiatives.
- Support the development and improvement of short stay accommodation.
- Activation of Hermannsburg as a key visitor destination along the Red Centre Way supporting existing product, growth and future developments such as the Art Gallery concept.
- Explore dark sky tourism opportunities in the region.
- Work with the military tourism steering committee to develop and enhance military history and heritage product in the region.
- Assist in future tourism infrastructure and service development required to cater to visitor traffic along what will become the fully sealed Outback Way.
- Ongoing improvements to visitor amenities, access and experiences in NT parks, a key component of the Northern Territory's tourism experience.
- Advocate for all water security projects and measures being undertaken in the region to ensure all existing and potential tourism ventures have access to sustainable water sources.
- Support tourism operators to develop new sustainable and accessible visitor experiences.
- Deliver workforce development through education, training, capacity building and business support.
- Ensure regional tourism signage is in good condition, properly maintained and contemporary.
- Advocate for telecommunications improvements to support business growth and an enhanced visitor experience.
- Address perception barriers of shoulder season travel through adaptive marketing strategies.
- Promote Central Australia light installation experiences, including Parrtjima, Wintjiri Wiru, Field of Light, Desert Awakenings and Kings Canyon Light Towers.



For further information please contact the Department of Tourism and Hospitality's Industry Development team on **tourism.development@nt.gov.au** or **08 8951 8584**

Read more about Destination Management Plans here:

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



Standley Chasm - Angkerle Atwatye