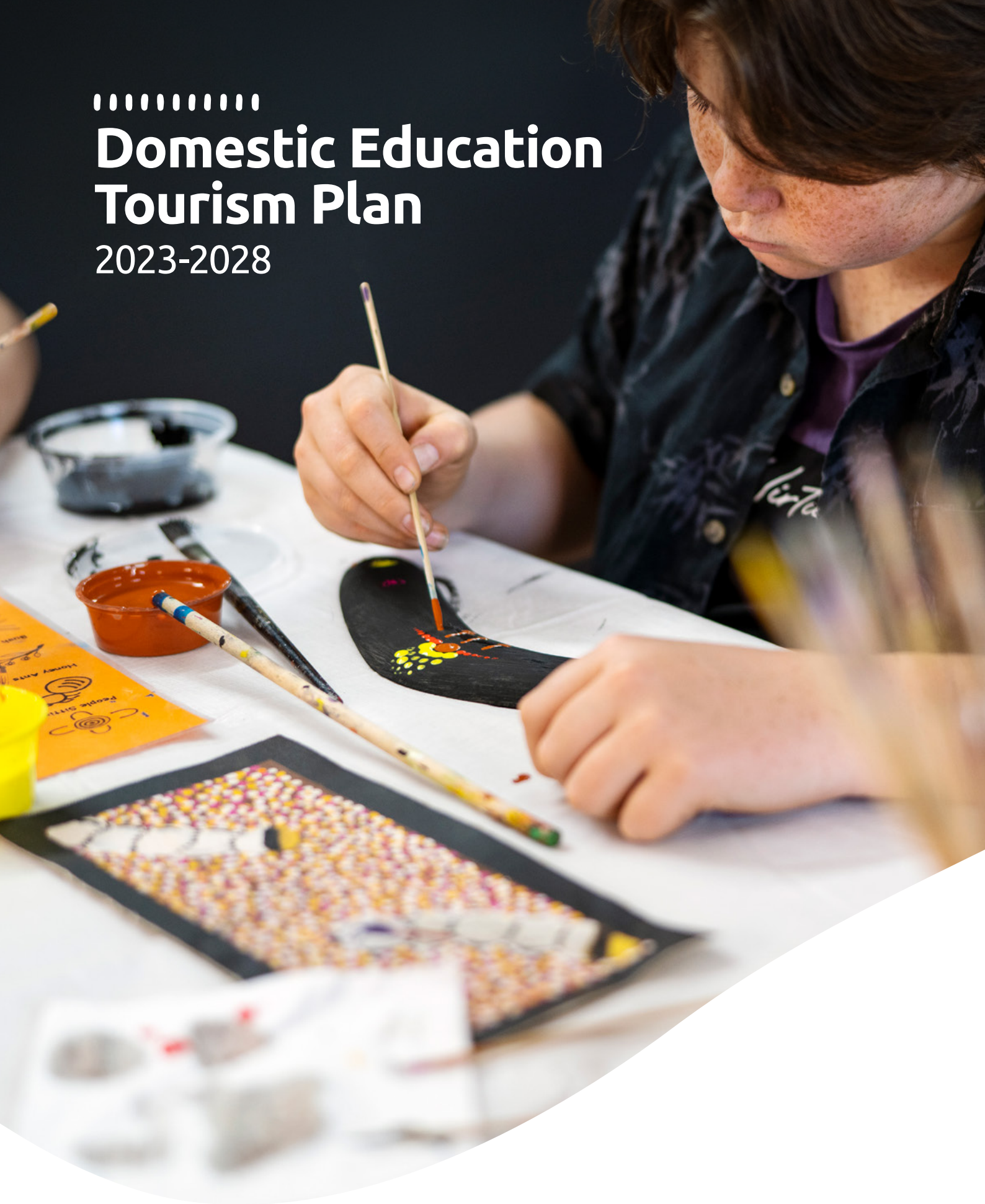


Domestic Education Tourism Plan

2023-2028



Contents

1. Summary	2
2. Current Australian education landscape	3
2.1 Jurisdictional comparison	4
2.2 NT Learning Adventures Save and Learn program data 2018 - 2023	5
3. Education tourism visitor profile	6
4. Action plan	8
5. Collaboration across government and opportunities for the domestic education sector	11
6. Reporting and review mechanisms	11



Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park

Cover image: Painting workshop, Standley Chasm

1. Summary

Visiting interstate school groups are an important market for the Northern Territory's tourism sector. Typically travelling across regions, engaging with multiple attractions and accommodation providers, school excursions support the tourism economy both now and into the future as students grow up and return in adulthood.

In recognising this sector Tourism NT has developed NT Learning Adventures. The Domestic Education Tourism Plan (the Plan) summarises the aspirations for NT Learning Adventures and outlines an action plan of activities to deliver on those aims.

NT Learning Adventures aims to:

- drive sustained growth and diversification in the education tourism market
- increase collaboration and coordination between tourism operators, government, and education sectors
- market the Territory to education organisations, demonstrating the value proposition with a genuine voice
- enhance the skills and knowledge of tourism businesses in adapting and evolving their offering to meet changing visitor expectations
- foster an increasing consciousness with the tourism industry of environmental and social sustainability and encourage responsible travel.

The Plan aligns with the NT's Tourism Industry Strategy 2030, NT Destination Management Plans and a range of sector specific strategies including Aboriginal tourism and international education.



Kings Canyon Watarrka National Park



Wallaby encounter
Territory Wildlife Park



2. Current Australian education tourism landscape

The NT has a strong education tourism offering for domestic school groups, who become reliable, repeat visitors when experiences meet their educational and budget needs. Tourism NT has worked with industry and stakeholders to create NT Learning Adventures (NTLA), a program of activities which showcases the NT as an educational destination. NTLA program collateral features tourism experiences that deliver key learning outcomes (aligned with the Australian curriculum), together with operators who are committed to meeting the expectations of schools. Tourism NT has witnessed a growth in tourism operators and businesses who now service this lucrative domestic education market, represented in all jurisdictions.

The NTLA Save and Learn funding program supports the education sector by incentivising schools to choose the NT as a school excursion destination. This enables us to collect valuable data on travel behaviour such as which schools travel, how and where they originate from, group sizes, length of stay, spend per student, regions visited and experiences undertaken.

In 2022, Tourism NT supported 81 interstate school groups with their excursions to the Northern Territory. Over 2,290 students travelled to the Top End and Central Australia, exploring the outstanding natural and cultural assets in the Territory.

Feedback provided to Tourism NT by teachers and students after completion of excursions is consistently positive, describing their trips to the NT as a 'life changing experience'. A detailed report card including data and further feedback (for FY 2021-22) is available at Appendix A.

Targeted activities to build market awareness of the Territory's educational offering, making it easier to deliver NT learning adventures, is a priority. Growing industry knowledge of opportunities and supporting product development that meets the needs of schools is essential for expanding the capacity of the sector to increase market growth. A diversified market mix is also required to mitigate the reliance on Victoria as our current primary source market and grow visitation from other states.

Due to travel restrictions over the last few years, schools that would have traditionally travelled overseas explored destinations closer to home and the Territory benefited from this increased interest.

Furthermore, schools are highly interested in participating in cultural experiences and want to actively get involved in 'hands-on' community projects. This presents an opportunity for the Territory. Tourism NT will leverage these opportunities and work with businesses to convert this eagerness into excursions, as well as collaborate with operators to support more cultural immersion programs for students.

2.1 Jurisdictional comparison

The NT and Australian Capital Territory (ACT) are the only jurisdictions currently offering financial support for school groups visiting from interstate. Queensland (QLD) and Victoria (VIC) offer funding to students to travel within their own state. This is a competitive advantage for the NT, as parents and educators may choose a subsidised trip to help reduce travel costs.

Given living and travel expenses, Tourism NT increased financial support through the Save and Learn program from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per eligible school group, to assist schools and students with their travel costs to the NT. In February 2023, funding was further increased to \$3,000 per group, for travel undertaken during 2023.



ACT: The **Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) Program** provides a travel subsidy for Years 4–12 students across Australia to visit Canberra to participate in Civics and Citizenship excursions to Canberra.

Rates based on distance travelled.
(starting at \$20 - \$510 per student).

QLD*: **Great Barrier Reef Education Program** provides a subsidy to primary and secondary school students in QLD. 3 year program until June 2024 paid directly to schools to go towards the cost of a school excursion including one curriculum-related reef experience.

\$150 per student.

QLD*: **Outback Queensland Education Experience Program** encourages teachers to take their students to Outback Queensland and integrate its rich history and heritage into school learning.

Subsidies available (per student) depending on the distance travelled from the school to the outback locations visited.

Distance travelled from school (round trip).	
500 - 900 km	\$55
1,000 - 1,499 km	\$85
1,500 - 1,999 km	\$115
2,000 km and over	\$150

VIC: **Camps, sports and excursion fund**

\$125 per year for eligible primary school students.

Victorian residents can apply for \$125-\$225 per child to attend a school excursion.

\$225 per year for eligible secondary school students.

* for QLD students only

2.2 NT Learning Adventures Save and Learn program data 2018 - 2022

The NTLA Save and Learn program offers funding to eligible interstate school groups, providing an incentive to book and travel to the NT with their students. The program aims to support tourism businesses and grow the sector by attracting more schools, encouraging them to stay longer, see, do and spend more.

The rebate is available to interstate schools who travel with a minimum of ten students, stay in the NT for a minimum of five nights and book with at least three NTLA operators. Historically, \$1,000 was offered per school group.

In 2022-23 the Save and Learn funding was increased to \$1,500 per eligible school group. On 21 February 2023 funding was further increased to \$3,000 for the 2023 calendar year only, highlighting the commitment by the NT Government to encourage more school groups to travel to the NT, allowing them to visit more attractions or to extend their stay. Previous efforts have also increased funding in the shoulder seasons to entice group travel outside of peak visitor season.

Figures and information on page 6 provides comparative insights based on data from participating schools in the Save and Learn program for financial years from 2018-19 to 2022-23.

FINANCIAL YEAR	Number of school groups travelled	Ave. number of students per group	Ave. number of adults per group	Ave. spend per student	Ave* total spend per excursion
2018-19	72	45	6	\$1,993	\$87,530
2019-20	32	38	5	\$2,252	\$84,446
2020-21	18	46	8	\$2,712	\$126,063
2021-22	31	40	5	\$2,592	\$99,470
2022-23**	58	42	5	\$2,384	\$94,271

* relates to total excursion spend including travel to/ from the NT

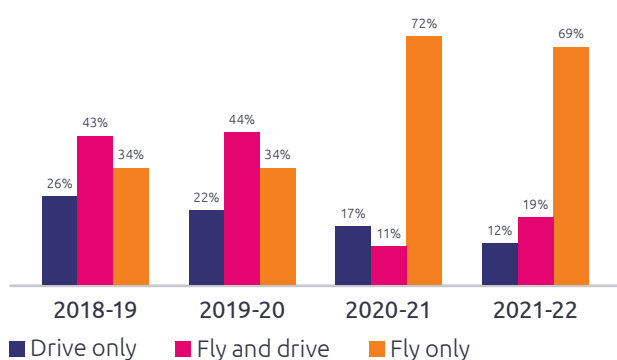
** data collected from 1 July 2022 – 11 May 2023

Prior to 2019 more than 70 school groups travelled to the Territory. Application figures for 2022-23 indicate that schools are keen and interested to travel to the NT.

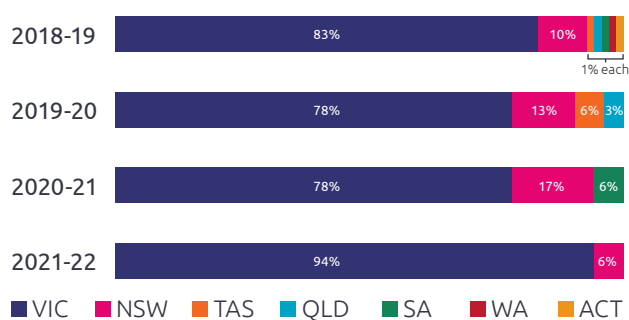
Current data for 2022-23 reveals 10 out of 58 school groups travelled to the NT during June – July 2022, 39 school groups visited during September and October 2022, with the remaining 9 groups travelling between March and May 2023.

School groups spend an average of nine days in the NT and are now primarily opting to fly in and fly out of their destination. As evident in the following data, most schools are travelling to the NT from Victoria, however interest from New South Wales (NSW) schools has increased over recent years with more Save and Learn applications being received.

Student group travel to the NT

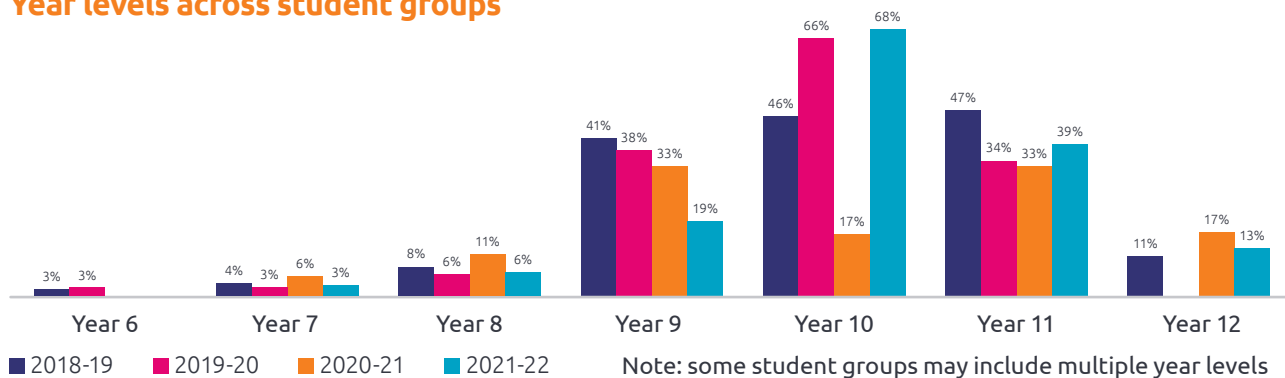


Origin of student groups



Note: figures may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Year levels across student groups



3. Education tourism visitor profile

Tourism NT engaged Tilma Group to identify the education tourism visitor profile in collaboration with tourism and education stakeholders. These profiles provide industry with an understanding and appreciation of available opportunities. The intent is to nurture and reinvigorate existing education markets and explore emerging opportunities. Domestic education schools and organisations have the potential to become repeat visitors, returning with family and friends.

Teachers seek immersive experiences for their students that go beyond the walls of the classroom and bring them face-to-face with Australia's rich history and diverse environment. They want to broaden students' understanding of themselves and connect them to their home country, expanding their future horizons to become more empathetic, curious and globally engaged human beings. Experiences that translate into learning outcomes aligned to the Australian curriculum are a key driver.

Personality

- Travelling at this age has the power to shift mindsets considerably.
- Fun and safe accommodation and experiences that encourage open mindedness and flexibility.
- Looking to build life skills to prepare them for the 'real' world, after school.

Travel behaviour and preferences

- Seeking educational experiences where creativity complements the traditional STEM model.
- Looking for awe-inspiring trips that provide incredible learning opportunities.

- Looking for the value proposition.
- Complete excursion packages centred on key learning areas of the Australian curriculum, personal growth and development, and budget requirements.

Alignment with brand and product offering

- Natural beauty, wildlife experiences, Aboriginal rock-art and hands-on learning opportunities.
- Strong linkages to the cross-curriculum priorities of sustainability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia.
- Cultural immersion programs and opportunities to richly engage with the local community.
- Authentic Aboriginal experiences are a key competitive strength.

Product gaps

- Limited school friendly accommodation and campground options in peak season.
- More sustainability-focused experiences highlighting climate change resilience and natural resource management.
- Growing demand for cultural immersion and 'giving back' community programs.
- More curriculum mapped product and experiences and quality teacher resources.

Barriers to visiting the NT

- Cost of travel and flight availability.
- A long-haul road destination for time poor trips.
- Accommodation supply issue (and high cost), especially during peak periods.
- Promotion of NT experiences and services that meet travel and learning needs is critical to raising knowledge and awareness.





4. Action plan

Annual activity plans will be developed and delivered by Tourism NT for the domestic school excursion market, including but not limited to the below action items, to ensure continued growth of the domestic school education sector in the Territory.

Tourism NT will continue to lead current activities and engage with stakeholders to achieve those outcomes. Reporting and review processes are outlined in section 6.

Actions	Current activities	Opportunities	Outcomes	Measures/KPIs
1. Retain the NTLA program's relevance to schools and education agents	<p>Annual review of NTLA guide in collaboration with NT operators.</p> <p>Quarterly distribution of EDMs to NT operators, including industry insights and upcoming opportunities.</p> <p>Post travel survey of school groups, including follow ups with operators if feedback is given / any issues or concerns raised.</p>	<p>Include new operators and attractions, and also promote through EDMs (i.e. operator spotlight).</p> <p>Development of tailored itineraries to feature current themes.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of the NT's school excursion offering.</p> <p>Expansion of product, tour operators and agents.</p> <p>Continued improvement within excursion offering.</p>	<p>Feedback received from schools and agents (include query in post trip surveys).</p> <p>➤ 70% of school groups to complete survey.</p>
2. Promotion of the NTLA program	<p>Bimonthly EDMs to interstate schools, teachers and education agents including operator spotlights, funding programs and information about attractions, itineraries and operators.</p> <p>Sector specific marketing activities including features with Education HQ, Walsh Media and Education Review.</p> <p>Conduct up to two familiarisation tours per year for teachers and agents.</p> <p>Distribute the NT Learning Adventures Guide to the NT Department of Education and schools.</p>	<p>Expand current marketing lists by contacting state and territory based teacher associations.</p> <p>Explore new education media opportunities directly with schools and through the NT Department of Education.</p>	<p>Educators are aware of education offering in the NT.</p> <p>Convert interest into bookings and increased visitation.</p>	<p>Analyse campaign results.</p> <p>Record newsletter subscription numbers.</p> <p>➤ Increase of 100 pax per FY</p> <p>Number of EOIs received to attend famil tours.</p> <p>➤ Increase of 10% yoy</p> <p>Post famil tour surveys.</p> <p>➤ 90% satisfaction and 100% response rate</p>
3. Review data from the NTLA Save and Learn program to inform future activity	<p>Annual report card analysing data received through Save and Learn registration process.</p>	<p>Identify regions less visited and focus on developing these areas, by contacting and working with businesses operating in these areas.</p> <p>Collaborate with Tourism NT Industry Development Team to identify gaps and new opportunities.</p>	<p>Inform NT operators of travel trends.</p> <p>New product developments.</p>	<p>Report card and post excursion surveys.</p> <p>➤ 70+ school groups applying for Save and Learn per year.</p>

4. Support operators to enhance products that reflect the Australian curriculum	<p>Connecting educators with individual operators to address learning outcomes.</p> <p>Opportunity to develop new touring products (see 5: Arnhem Space Centre, Sun Cable and First Nations Gallery of Australia projects).</p>	<p>Operators to develop curriculum based worksheets which can be added to websites, for teachers to download assisting their travel planning process. Engage with teachers to gain understanding of requirements.</p>	<p>NT products meet the needs of schools and educators.</p> <p>Increase in best practice product offering across the NT.</p>	<p>Workshops facilitated with teachers and /or operators.</p> <p>➤ 1 workshop per year.</p> <p>Resources created.</p>
5. Diversify the market mix of visiting schools from across the country	<p>Targeted participation in teacher/agent familiarisations from a broad geographical mix.</p>	<p>Expand marketing lists to include educators and agents in all jurisdictions.</p>	<p>Increase visitation and expenditure across the NT.</p> <p>A more stable sector.</p>	<p>Data received through Save and Learn program.</p> <p>➤ 15% of school groups from jurisdictions other than VIC.</p>
6. Encouraging shoulder season travel to address capacity issues during peak times	<p>Promoting the NT all year round without limitation to travel periods.</p>	<p>Offer additional support to schools travelling during shoulder seasons.</p>	<p>Increase value of education tourism market.</p> <p>Enhance attractiveness of experiences across the year.</p> <p>Build low season business.</p>	<p>Data received through Save and Learn program.</p> <p>➤ 10 school groups visiting during shoulder season.</p>
7. Support business development for NT operators	<p>Industry support and advice through Senior Project Officer.</p>	<p>Develop dedicated industry support programs.</p> <p>Inclusion in Tourism Business Development Program activity.</p>	<p>Increased quantity and quality of education tourism experiences in the NT.</p>	<p>Support programs (i.e. workshop, grant program) developed by Tourism NT per financial year to assist NT businesses to build their capability in the domestic education tourism sector.</p> <p>➤ 1 support program per year.</p>
8. Promote domestic education successes	<p>Case studies developed with visiting schools (i.e. Caulfield Grammar case study to improve product in Kakadu National Park).</p>	<p>Develop further case studies with NT operators, highlighting school excursion opportunities (i.e. cultural immersion, community projects).</p>	<p>Inform educators and influence decision makers to consider the Territory as a school excursion opportunity.</p> <p>Emphasise that the NT is a safe destination with two-way learning opportunities.</p>	<p>EDMs sent by Tourism NT.</p> <p>➤ Quarterly EDMs.</p> <p>External marketing activities.</p> <p>➤ Depending on FY budget available.</p>
9. Infrastructure analysis, identify product gaps	<p>Stakeholder consultations.</p>	<p>Tourism NT grant programs.</p>	<p>Enhance and expand accommodation options during peak travel periods.</p>	<p>Stakeholder consultations conducted during workshop (1) held per FY.</p>



Simpsons Gap,
West MacDonnell Ranges



Pudakul Aboriginal
Cultural Tours Darwin



Crocosaurus Cove,
Darwin



5. Collaboration across government and opportunities for the domestic education sector

Cross-agency collaboration is important in delivering outcomes for the education tourism sector.

The Northern Territory Government is committed to a strong and sustainable future for Jabiru and is investing \$135.5 million to help it transition from a mining town to a vibrant and sustainable tourism hub and service centre for Kakadu National Park and the West Arnhem Land region. Led by the Department of Chief Minister and Cabinet, and in partnership with the Department of Education, Tourism NT is supporting development opportunities to build education tourism infrastructure in the region. This same group has supported the progress of Caulfield Grammar School in developing further education tourism programs and resources within Jabiru, and supports their ongoing aspirations.

Tourism NT also works with the Department of Education on opportunities in attracting international school students and building homestay capability.

New and exciting opportunities have emerged in East Arnhem Land and are being planned in Central Australia.

The Arnhem Space Centre (ASC), located near Nhulunbuy in East Arnhem Land, is Australia’s first and only commercial spaceport. It is owned by Equatorial Launch Australia and was the site of NASA’s first non-orbital sounding rocket launch from a commercial port outside the United States in June 2022. For students, this provides an opportunity to learn about space missions, experience a rocket launch first hand and to be part of Australia’s space story. Simultaneously, students are able to discover East Arnhem Land – one of Australia’s last strongholds of traditional Aboriginal culture with unique and pristine environments.

The proposed Sun Cable solar farm and battery storage facility in the Northern Territory near Tennant Creek, has a 5,000 km transmission system to supply Darwin and Singapore with reliable and competitively priced renewable electricity. The Australian curriculum places emphasis on sustainability as a priority for study; both the ASC and Sun Cable projects allow students to develop skills necessary to contribute to more sustainable patterns of living.

The curriculum is also working towards addressing needs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The construction of the First Nations Gallery of Australia is anticipated to go to tender in 2024. The Gallery will become a touchstone experience for Australians seeking to better understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.



6. Reporting and review mechanisms:



Annual NT Learning Adventures report card (Save and Learn insights)

Reporting to occur annually to track comparative insights based on data from participating schools of the Save and Learn program.



Flexible targets to measure success

To ensure an evolving response to the re-alignment of the sector, targets will be reviewed annually until stronger forward projections can be made.



Five year review

As a part of the annual report card in 2028, the plan will be reviewed to refresh priorities and identify additional actions (as needed) to continue achievement of the vision and outcomes.



Further information

For further information contact **education.tourismnt@nt.gov.au**
or telephone: **08 8999 6316**.

A copy of these guidelines is available at:

<https://www.tourismnt.com.au/research-strategies/sector-development/education-tourism>

Tourism NT's corporate website: www.tourismnt.com.au is a valuable resource for accessing information to support applications including tourism research and strategies.

