



Northern Territory's Drive Tourism Strategy 2021-2030

**ANNUAL REPORT CARD
Year Ending December 2024**

This is the third annual report card to the *Northern Territory's Drive Tourism Strategy 2021 – 2030 (the Drive Strategy)*, detailing outcomes to the year ending December 2024, towards developing the Northern Territory's (NT) offering as a drive destination for the holiday market.

“ To deliver self-drive outback adventure experiences that showcase the Territory’s iconic natural environments and unique cultural identity. ”



Tourism NT has developed a dedicated Drive Tourism Strategy to identify key product and marketing opportunities to develop the Northern Territory offering as a drive destination for the holiday market. Implementation of the Drive Strategy will increase coordination between regions and stakeholders for both infrastructure and marketing activities to improve length and quality of visitor stay, aligning with opportunities and initiatives identified in Tourism NT’s regional Destination Management Plans.

Key figures for the year ending December 2024

YE December 2024, self-drive visitors	620,000
YE December 2023, self-drive visitors	789,000
Change	-21%
Total expenditure YE December 2024 (\$m)	731
Total expenditure YE December 2023 (\$m)	866
Change	-16%

* Tourism Research Australia, National and International Visitor Surveys, Year Ending December

Note: Change is comparing YE December 2024 figures to YE December 2023.

The Drive Strategy has four key focus areas:



Attract new growth markets: increasing visitor numbers.



Improve the current visitor experience: increasing length of stay.



Increase regional dispersal: improving outcomes for regional areas.



Enhance brand reputation: attracting key visitor markets.

Achievements under the strategic pillars 2024



Enabling Infrastructure:

infrastructure that meets and exceeds the needs of the drive market.

- Mereenie Loop: detailed design awarded to GHD in March 2024, with a scope to deliver the design of 140 km of sealed road over 6 packages.
- Kakadu Roads: concept design for upgrades to major Kakadu tourism roads including Jim Jim Falls Road, Maguk Road, Gunlom Road and Gimbat Road presented to Traditional Owners May 2024. Detailed design is now underway.
- Savannah Way: completed sealing of a further 59km of the Carpentaria Highway.
- Outback Way: contract awarded to seal a further 27km, with an additional 58km under design.
- Gumil Campground in Judbarra/Gregory National Park completed construction and open to visitors.
- Through NRMA's Electric Fast Charger collaboration with the Federal Government, Alice Springs, Adelaide River, Mataranka, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Ghan had electric vehicle fast chargers installed.
- Coomalie Community Government Council developed a strategy for the Adelaide River Service Road upgrade and Katherine Town Council completed an RV service centre with support of the Tourism Town Asset Program.
- Round 4 of the Tourism Town Asset Program saw over \$340,000 in funding allocated to local governments throughout the NT undertaking projects that will enhance the drive experience.
- Ongoing improvements to visitor amenities, access and experiences across NT parks.



Better Together:

strengthen partnerships to deliver our vision.

- Stage one of the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Along Drive Routes project was completed which assessed the six key NT self-drive touring routes; and identified the Red Centre Way and Explorers Way to progress to stage two.
- Launch of the Million Dollar Road Trip. This initiative encouraged self-drive travellers to explore the NT for a chance to win \$1 million in cash from the Caravan Industry Association of Australia in partnership with Tourism NT, Tourism Top End and Tourism Central Australia.
- Updated Savannah Way trade brochure produced by Tourism Top End, Australia's North West and Tourism Tropical North Queensland.
- The Outback Way Action Plan 2024 was developed by the Outback Highway Development Council with contributions from representatives of NTG, industry and local councils at the Outback Way Forum held in Canberra.
- Tourism Central Australia in partnership with Tourism NT opened the NT's fifth Visitor Information Centre in Yulara.
- The Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Framework was developed, with a sector specific drive tourism module.





Digitally Enabled:

enhancing the visitor experience through digital technology will be a game changer for the Territory.

- Mobile coverage improvements in Kakadu with the Cooinda tower upgrade and new towers completed on the Arnhem Highway and Jim Jim Falls Ranger Station.
- New mobile services were completed at Avon Downs, Gemtree, Middle Point and Soudan Station.
- Telecommunications tower upgrade in Mataranka to reduce congestion during peak loading periods.
- The Centre for Appropriate Technology undertook maintenance on its mobile hotspots with support from NTG. Some of the locations included Palm Valley, Simpsons Gap and Aileron.
- Regional Telecommunications Review (RTR) was completed including face-to-face consultations and submissions provided by NTG and Tourism NT. The RTR recommended that the Australian Government should continue funding new terrestrial mobile coverage for critical areas like roads, and leverage strategically located Wi-Fi hotspots where needed.



Marketing:

enhancing the Territory's brand reputation and encouraging new visitor markets.

- Collaborated with influencers to promote NT road trips featuring 'hidden gems' reaching 1.1 million Instagram followers.
- 41,000 sessions to the NT drive page on northernterritory.com and 49,000 drive itineraries or road trip articles downloaded .
- 14,000 unique EDM sign ups for road trip content.
- Economic impact of \$5.4 million and 4,500 visitors booked NT road trips through trade partnerships.
- 99 trade agents attended a webinar for education on NT road trips.
- Brand partnerships launched with Toyota in Kakadu and Bonds in the Red Centre.
- Media famils and press releases delivered 667 pieces of earned road trip coverage with an audience reach of 140 million.



Drive market performance

Expenditure by drive visitors

Greater Darwin

\$304 M (↑ 10%)

Kakadu Arnhem

\$45 M (↓ 13%)

Katherine Daly

\$169M (↓ 7.6%)

Source: Tourism Research Australia, National and International Visitor Surveys, Year Ending December.
Note: Change is comparing YE December 2024 figures to YE December 2023.



Barkly

\$28M (↓ 20%)

Alice Springs MacDonnell

\$114 M (↑ 12%)

Lasseter*

\$70 M (↓ 67%)

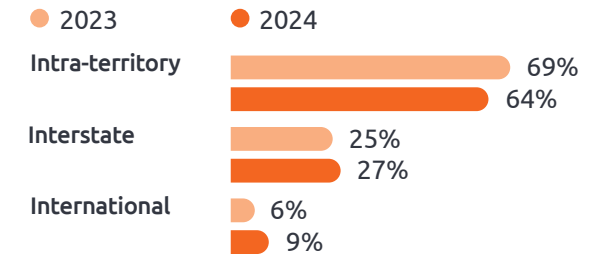
*Lasseter has a small sample size for domestic visitors, caution is required when interpreting the results.

Regional visitor numbers and nights of drive tourists*

Region		Total visitation 2024	Total visitation 2023	% Change	Average nights 2024	Average nights 2023	Change (Average Nights)
Greater Darwin	Domestic	208,000	335,000	-38%	3.8	2.8	1.0
	International	42,000	28,000	50%	32.5	37.4	-4.9
Kakadu Arnhem	Combined	62,000	77,000	-20%	2.7	3.8	-1.1
Katherine Daly	Domestic	201,000	229,000	-12%	2.6	3.1	-0.5
	International	15,000	11,000	37%	8.0	5.9	2.1
Barkly	Combined	76,000	46,000	65%	1.8	1.7	0.1
Alice Springs MacDonnell	Domestic	125,000	134,000	-6.7%	3.5	2.4	1.1
	International	13,000	15,000	-13%	3.4	5.8	-2.4
Lasseter	Combined	70,000	115,000	-39%	3.8	4.5	-0.7

* Tourism Research Australia, National and International Visitor Surveys, Year Ending December
Note: Change is comparing YE December 2024 figures to YE December 2023.

Drive source markets



Note: Change is comparing YE December 2024 figures to YE December 2023.

Top Domestic	2022-2024	2021-2023
Victoria	26%	26%
New South Wales	26%	25%
South Australia	19%	17%

Source market percentage may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Note: Change is comparing YE December 2022-2024 figures to YE December 2021-2023.

Top International	2022-2024	2021-2023
Germany	13%	13%
United Kingdom	7%	8%
New Zealand	7%	7%
France	6%	6%
United States of America	6%	6%
Netherlands	5%	6%
Switzerland	3%	3%
Scandinavia	3%	3%

pp = percentage points

Note: Change is comparing YE December 2022-2024 figures to YE December 2021-2023.

Future Focus

- Delivering drive holiday intenders more personalised itineraries and relevant deals based on their preferences.
- Collaborating with THL, Holidays of Australia and CamperMate to offer deals and packages to promote road trip holidays in the NT.
- Territory road trips to feature in broadcast programs, print publications, national newspapers and Uber advertising channels.
- Partnering with other STO's to run campaigns targeting the German and Swiss markets to promote our key drive routes incorporating the iconic landscapes of the Northern Territory, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia.
- Collaboration between Tourism Top End, Tourism Central Australia and Tourism NT to represent the NT at the 2025 caravan and camping shows.
- Develop Aboriginal tourism product and experiences and grow Aboriginal participation in the tourism sector along the Red Centre Way and Explorers Way through extensive consultation, community visits and business planning.
- Savannah Way Ltd to undergo website updates and review its strategic direction to align with future visitor markets.
- Continued support for Local Governments to enhance drive infrastructure.
- Continue to monitor advancements in telecommunications technology to enhance visitor safety, encourage user generated content and improve visitor information that can be accessed on the road.
- Undertake an audit of prioritised military heritage tourism sites accessible by the drive market, considering current visitor infrastructure.
- Drive Tourism Strategy refresh to ensure currency amongst current and travellers.



Further information

For further information please contact Tourism NT:
tourism.development@nt.gov.au
08 8999 5194

Read the Northern Territory Drive Tourism Strategy here:
tourismnt.com.au/research-strategies/strategies/drive-tourism-strategy

