



**TOURISM  
CENTRAL AUSTRALIA**

*Your Tourism Voice*

# FEDERAL BUDGET SUBMISSION

USING TOURISM FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE CENTRE OF  
NORTHERN AUSTRALIA



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Tourism Central Australia's wider operating area

Photograph courtesy of David Silva/Tourism NT

## OVERVIEW

**T**ourism Central Australia is the official Regional Tourism Organisation for the visitor economy in the #RedCentreNT.

As a business led organisation, we work in partnership with a wide variety of stakeholders including individuals, businesses and all levels of government, to benefit the visitor economy in the #RedCentreNT.

Tourism Central Australia recognises the importance of tourism to the Northern Territory and Australian economy and the huge potential of the industry to further contribute to the economic development of the NT. Tourism, contributes \$2.25 billion to the Territory economy, with \$851 million of this being generated in the #RedCentreNT<sup>1</sup>.

The #RedCentreNT's competitive strength as a leisure destination is in providing visitor experiences that deliver a unique blend of nature and culture. These remain powerful motivators for the #RedCentreNT's core visitor markets.

As Tourism Central Australia builds on the already significant performance of the region's tourism industry, our key foci are:

- Continuing to support the National Aboriginal Art Gallery and the National Indigenous Cultural Centre developments.
- Focusing on the development of the East MacDonnell Ranges, Plenty Region and the Barkly Region.



Tourism Central Australia's Northern Territory Government funded operating area

- Supporting the Northern Territory Government's Turbocharging Tourism Policy.
- Continuing to market the #RedCentreNT's niche trail opportunities and Outback Adventure Experiences.
- Expanding Tourism Central Australia's visitor information services.
- Increasing our organisation's revenue and income streams aiming for financial self-determination.
- Continuing to be a strong voice and lobby on behalf of our members for key projects.

<sup>1</sup> Tourism NT, Year ending December 2017 Visitor data



At Tourism Central Australia, we strive to be a best practice Regional Tourism Organisation. We have won many awards since our organisation was established in the 1950s. An overview of the most recent of these awards is as follows:

## • 2018

- o **Winner** – Northern Territory Tourism Awards, Visitor Services
- o **Winner** – DK Shifflet Award, International Tourism and Travel Research Association
- o **Finalist** – Australian Adventure Tourism Awards
- o **Green Destinations Global Top 100 Sustainable Destinations**

## • 2017

- o **Winner** – Northern Territory Tourism Awards, Visitor Services
- o **Winner** – Skai International Sustainable Destination Award
- o **Silver** – Australian Tourism Awards, Visitor Services
- o **Green Destinations Global Top 100 Sustainable Destinations**  
the first time an Australian destination has achieved Global Top 100 status.

## • 2016

- o **Winner** – Northern Territory Tourism Awards, Visitor Services
- o **Winner** – Northern Territory Tourism Awards, Destination Marketing
- o **Winner** – Australian Tourism Awards, Visitor Services

Tourism Central Australia continuously improves, and because of this we are an organisation that delivers positive outcomes. Our awards demonstrate our commitment to being the best we can be, and therefore Tourism Central Australia is a solid investment for Government and private enterprise.

'In this Budget Submission you will find over \$1.3 billion in proposed developments. The proposals cover infrastructure (such as roads, telecommunications and a museum of international significance), remote and regional area business capacity development (including mentoring programs, Indigenous business development and digital marketing upskilling) and workforce development. Please read the proposals, and if you would like further information, some references are included in the document, or you can contact Tourism Central Australia's CEO Stephen Schwer on +61 (0)437 091 666 or [Stephen.schwer@discoverca.com.au](mailto:Stephen.schwer@discoverca.com.au). These proposals will build Northern Australia and the nation's economy for the future.







**TOURISM  
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**TOURISM  
EMPLOYS  
16,300**

people in the NT, up 1.2%<sup>1</sup>



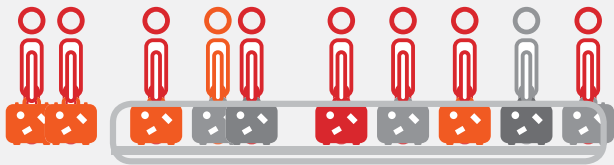
**9,100**

people directly employed



**7,200**

people indirectly employed



## PASSENGER MOVEMENTS AT #REDCENTRENT AIRPORTS

**ALICE SPRINGS AIRPORT 617,186<sup>2</sup> • AYERS ROCK AIRPORT 364,818<sup>2</sup>**



**TOURISM  
IS WORTH  
\$851m**

in visitor expenditure  
to the #RedCentreNT<sup>3</sup>



**419,000  
OVERNIGHT  
VISITORS**

come to the #RedCentreNT  
every year, with an average  
stay of 4.8 nights<sup>3</sup>



**\$1,599**  
is generated in the  
**VISITOR ECONOMY**

for every \$1 of Government  
funding provided to Tourism  
Central Australia (11% higher  
than like organisations)<sup>4</sup>



**ALICE SPRINGS VISITOR  
INFORMATION CENTRE SERVES**

**>90,000**

people each year, and a further  
>50,000 are serviced through our  
website, over the phone and by email.



## HELP US ACHIEVE OUR 5 YEAR STRATEGIC VISION, 2018 – 2023

### ADVOCACY

- National Aboriginal Art Gallery and National Indigenous Cultural Centre
- East MacDonnell Ranges/Plenty Region Tourism Masterplan
- Improve Drive Access
- Leverage and Support the Turbocharging Tourism Policy
- Barkly Region Tourism Masterplan

### MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Niche Trails
- Outback Adventure Experiences

### VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

- Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre Operation and Location
- Visitor Information Delivery Expansion

### INCOME DEVELOPMENT

- Membership Review Implementation
- Sales Conversion Opportunities
- Leverage the Partnership Agreement With the Northern - Territory Government

### EVENTS

- #RedCentreNT Regional Events Strategy Implementation

### MEMBER CAPACITY BUILDING

- Digital capacity development



Your Tourism Voice

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## ADVOCACY

### National Aboriginal Art Gallery

The Northern Territory Labor Government is developing a National Aboriginal Art Gallery that will deliver significant economic, social and cultural benefits to the community of Alice Springs.

The National Aboriginal Art Gallery will be a world-class cultural and tourist destination. It will display the most significant, striking art from the world's oldest continuous culture in the first cultural institution of its kind, drawn from across the entire continent and representing all geographic regions and art genres. It will be dedicated to the celebration, display and interpretation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art and feature immersive cultural tours and educational experiences led by Indigenous artists to share the stories behind the art and the deep connection to culture and country. The Gallery will be a centre of curatorial excellence and Indigenous workforce participation best practice, with majority Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander governance and workforce. It will lead the nation in agency, access, development, participation, education and related cultural interpretation and cultural tourism.

Tourism Central Australia is a strong advocate of the National Aboriginal Art Gallery's development; it is of international significance for Alice Springs and the #RedCentreNT region. The National Aboriginal Art Gallery will positively change Alice Springs. It will be a beacon of hope for reconciliation and for a shared future for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and

a source of immense pride for all Australians. It will create jobs. It will be a hub for even bigger events, festivals and celebrations. The Gallery will be a major tourism asset, increasing travel demand and flow on effects into the regional economy.

In November 2018 the Australian Council for the Arts released the report *International Arts Tourism: Connecting Cultures*<sup>1</sup> which highlighted the increase in demand for cultural tourism experiences. Tourism Central Australia's members are clear that Alice Springs, as the cultural heart of Australia, needs the National Aboriginal Art Gallery for future economic, social and cultural growth.

Tourism Central Australia strongly supports the Gallery being built in the Alice Springs CBD as this will deliver the greatest economic benefit to the town. Anzac Hill Precinct has been identified by the Northern Territory Government as the site for the National Aboriginal Art Gallery, as it is the only CBD location that meets the criteria for such an important cultural institution in terms of size and scale, sense of place, connection to landscape and accessibility to name a few of those criteria.

The National Aboriginal Art Gallery in Alice Springs will be a game-changer for the town – economically, socially and culturally.

A business case for the development is currently being researched by Ernst and Young. This document will be released early in 2019. For this significant development to take place, investment is required from the Northern Territory Government, the Federal Government and philanthropists.

<sup>1</sup>Research available at <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/arts-and-tourism-report-pdf-5bf1f3c5079ac.pdf>





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Tourism Central Australia believes that an investment of at least \$100 million should be considered by the Federal Government given this nation building initiative that feeds into Brand Australia tourism objectives to draw the world to Australia for authentic First Nations arts and cultural experiences.

**Federal Government Investment = \$100+ million**

**Return On Investment =**

- **Cultural**
  - o Celebration of the cultures and art of our First Nations.
- **Economic**
  - o Increase in cultural tourist visitation.
  - o Increase in international tourist visitation.
  - o Increase in business activity.
  - o Increase in employment.
  - o Increase in economic return to remote Indigenous communities significantly assisting with Closing the Gap measures
- **Social**
  - o Creating a sense of pride in all Australians in our shared history with our First Nations

## National Indigenous Cultural Centre

The National Indigenous Cultural Centre is another exciting project for Alice Springs and is in the concept development phase. Once created, it will be the site for cultural research, education, and a meeting place for Indigenous people from across Australia. Tourism Central Australia mentions this development simply to advise the Federal Government and ask that open communication lines are kept with the Northern Territory Government so that you can keep informed of this project. Tourism Central Australia is advocating

for the co-location of the National Indigenous Cultural Centre with the National Aboriginal Art Gallery, to maximise the benefits of the two developments.

## East MacDonnell Ranges and Plenty Highway Region Tourism Masterplan

The East MacDonnell and Plenty Highway Region is



home to the spectacular East MacDonnell Ranges, Indigenous communities, unique sites, gem fossicking and noodling, visitor attractions and cattle stations. Located within close proximity to Alice Springs, the Stuart Highway to the west and the 'Outback Way' to the Queensland border in the east, the diversity of this area creates exceptional tourism opportunities for drive visitation.

In 2018, the Visitor Experience Master Plan for the East MacDonnell and Plenty Highway Region was developed in collaboration with local communities, landholders, Traditional Owners, the tourism industry, local government and agency stakeholders for the





Central Desert Regional Council and its project partners Tourism Central Australia, the NT Department of Trade, Business & Innovation, and the Department of Tourism & Culture. The Plan identifies a vision and opportunities for developing distinctive, sustainable visitor experiences that showcase the region's natural and cultural features and provide opportunities for communities to engage in tourism that will bring economic and social benefits to both visitors and residents.

Priority projects identified include:

#### **Sealing of the Plenty Highway and Outback Way Marketing**

Through road upgrades and regional marketing, the quality of life for inland Australians will improve as service provisions and economic opportunities in communities increase. The upgrades will also enable visitor experiences that celebrate the nature and culture of inland Australia.

#### **Plenty Highway Campgrounds**

Increasing demand for caravan and camping travel opens possibilities for improved road trip experiences in the region. In recent years Australia has seen rises in caravan and campervan registrations and an increase in domestic caravan and camping trips which reached an estimated 11.8 million trips in 2017. A number of opportunities have been identified and, coupled with capacity building in communities and investment in infrastructure for campgrounds the length of stay by visitors on their journey will increase.

#### **Alcoota Fossil Site Activation**

The Alcoota fossil beds, located about 200km north of Alice Springs off the Plenty Highway, contain a rich concentration of unique, 6 to 8-million-year-old megafauna and other fossils. In conjunction with Megafauna Central (recently opened in Alice Springs) and the existing Dinosaur Trail from Queensland, the fossil site will provide a holistic visitor experience for those interested in megafauna and fossils. Visitor development at the Alcoota Scientific Reserve has the potential to provide an opportunity for the nearby Engawala Community to deliver linked visitor products, services and facilities. Engawala already has plans to develop a new museum, art gallery and interpretive/information centre and improved infrastructure to service visitors at the community.

#### **East MacDonnell Ranges Eco Accommodation**

Investment in a unique eco accommodation facility in the East MacDonnell Ranges combined with the development of experiences at Arltunga could attract new markets into this part of the region.

#### **Arltunga Experience Development**

Arltunga's colourful history and extensive physical assets offer an opportunity for an innovative and exciting new visitor experience that could attract visitors to the East MacDonnell Region. Arltunga is important in the history of Central Australia, as it was the region's first major European settlement. Significant investment is required to update the experience through contemporary approaches to interpretation, development of vibrant and innovative experiences, attraction of tour operators offering guided products, and potentially the provision of overnight accommodation in the area.





### Plenty Highway Enterprise Support

With growth in visitor numbers on the Plenty Highway and throughout the region, there remains limited capacity to deliver indigenous tourism experiences. Concerted effort and resources are required to support communities and individuals to understand tourism and how they can become involved, offer new products and generate jobs and income. A business enterprise support program and committed resources are required for an extended period of time.

Tourism Central Australia holds a pivotal role in the future marketing and promotion of the East MacDonnell and Plenty Highway Region. We will support regional promotion and representation, aid in the development of regional marketing strategies and new product development and packages.

### Federal Government Investment = \$10+ million Return On Investment =

- **Cultural**
  - o Celebration of the cultures and art of our First Nations.
- **Economic**
  - o Increase in drive travellers to the Region.
  - o Increase in business activity.
  - o Increase in employment opportunities.
- **Environmental**
  - o Preservation of significant fossil sites and natural areas, including facilitating controlled tourism experiences.

### Improve Drive Access

Changing travel patterns is critical to the future economic growth of the #RedCentreNT. Tourism Central Australia's aim is to extend length of stay so visitors spend more than one night in the region. To do this Tourism Central Australia has identified drive routes that require attention. These routes underpin the experience of the #RedCentreNT.

It should be noted that as outback roads improve, resulting in increases in tourism visitation, business activity and population growth, the already failing telecommunications system in these areas will not cope with demand. There are long distances on major highways with no mobile phone reception, patchy reception in built up areas, limited download allowances in remote areas, and unstable internet connections in towns. The immediate upgrading of remote area telecommunications is a critical need for business growth.

#### Outback Way

\$100 million of federal funding has most recently been committed to upgrading the Outback Way, which links Laverton in Western Australia with Winton in Queensland, via Alice Springs and the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in the Northern Territory. Once completed, there will be a sealed road from Perth to Cairns, right through the heart of Australia.

The route is approximately 2,720 kilometres long and varies in condition and standard, with sections of two-lane seal, single lane seal, gravel, and unformed roads. Approximately 52 per cent of the total length of the Outback Way is currently unsealed.

The sealing of the Outback Way has seen significant investment over a decade, and the Region now needs to see the final sections completed to realise the



benefits for the Australian economy. The Outback Way Investment Strategy (copies available on request) details the benefits to Australia upon completion of this project, including cost estimates and works prioritisations.

### **Federal Government Investment = \$1+ billion**

#### **Return On Investment =**

- **Economic**
  - o Reduced costs to freight operators and improved route reliability through a decrease in road closures and reduced vehicle operating costs.
  - o Reduced business costs to pastoralists along the route.
  - o Improved opportunities for all industries (such as mining and tourism) through improved access across the region.
- **Lifestyle**
  - o Reduced travel time for all road users.
- **Health**
  - o Reduction in accidents by improving the overall safety of the route.

### **The Plenty Highway**

Currently an adventurous experience, the proposed sealing of the highway will enable this route to become suited to a broader range of markets, including travellers on the Outback Way route. It will also provide a new access route to the Red Centre from SE Queensland and Northern NSW markets. This is part of the Outback Way, please refer to the Outback Way information for how this project will benefit Australia.

### **The Outer Mereenie Loop**

In 2015, Tourism Central Australia successfully lobbied to have the Inner Mereenie Loop sealed. This loop, connecting Albert Namatjira's home town of Ntaria

(Hermannsburg) with Glen Helen and the spectacular gorges of the West MacDonnell Ranges, has seen a significant increase in traffic, with visitors and locals accessing the numerous attractions along the way.

The time has come for the Outer Mereenie Loop to be sealed. This 126 kilometre unsealed section of road connects Watarrka National Park (Kings Canyon) with Alice Springs. Not only is this a popular tourist route, but the route also links the Mereenie Gas Fields to the service centre of Alice Springs. There are also pastoralist enterprises along the road. Sealing this small section of road will increase tourism, decrease costs for mining and pastoral businesses and provide better access to remote Indigenous communities.

### **Federal Government Investment = \$150+ million**

#### **Return On Investment =**

- **Economic**
  - o Reduced costs to freight operators and improved route reliability through a decrease in road closures and reduced vehicle operating costs.
  - o Reduced business costs to pastoralists along the route.
  - o Improved opportunities for all industries (such as mining and tourism) through improved access across the region.
- **Lifestyle**
  - o Reduced travel time for all road users.
- **Health**
  - o Reduction in accidents by improving the overall safety of the route.
  - o Increased access to remote Indigenous communities.





### East MacDonnell Ranges route

Consisting of the Ross Highway from Emily and Jessie Gaps to Ross River Resort and access to Arltunga Historical Reserve, this route is the main way to access and experience the spectacular East MacDonnell Ranges landscape and reserves. The final section of the Ross Highway before Ross River Resort is a single strip of bitumen – widening of the seal to create a two-way highway is desirable to reduce risk and encourage visitation. Improvement of the access road to Arltunga is important to maximise the inclusion of this attraction in the journey.

### Binns Track

The Binns Track provides a 4WD route connecting Ross River through Ambalindum Station (passing the Hale River Homestead accommodation) to the Plenty Highway and north through MacDonald Downs Station to the Sandover Highway and the Barkly Region. Strategic improvements are required to increase recognition of the Binns Track as an iconic remote experience in the region, including upgraded signage and safety information.

### Stuart Highway

South and north of Alice Springs acts as a gateway for visitors entering the East MacDonnell and Plenty Highway Region from Alice Springs on the Ross Highway, Binns Track and Plenty Highway. Substantial investment is required for visitor interpretation, orientation, rest and facilities along the Highway that will encourage visitors to ‘get off the beaten track’ and explore the remote and unique communities, landscapes and stories the #RedCentreNT has to offer. This route is known internationally as the ‘Explorer’s Way’, and investment in marketing this route as well

as infrastructure upgrades and the development of experiences will facilitate greater visitor dispersal across Australia.

## Leverage and Support the Turbocharging Tourism Policy

The Northern Territory Labour Government through its Turbocharging Tourism Action Plan has released a \$103 million tourism stimulus package to attract more visitors to the Territory, create more local jobs and put more money into the pockets of Territorians.

Starting immediately and rolling out over the next two financial years, the Plan will deliver an additional:

- \$26.57 million for smarter and more targeted tourism marketing, allowing promotion of attractions, roll out of marketing campaigns with key airlines, target niche markets and luring lucrative business events to the Territory.
- \$56.24 million for new tourism infrastructure and related tourism programs creating more memorable experiences for visitors, particularly in the Northern Territory’s parks and reserves
- \$20.78 million to further enhance existing festivals, events and other tourism experiences to cement the Territory’s reputation as a vibrant and exciting place to live, work and visit.

The \$26.57 million stimulus injection for marketing the Northern Territory is anticipated to generate a \$345 million Return On Investment directly into the economy and support thousands of jobs. Tourism is a cornerstone of the NT economy, supporting thousands of small and medium size businesses. Tourism currently provides 16,300 direct and indirect jobs across a range of sectors



including tourism, hospitality, retail, arts and culture and transport.

The extra capital invested in the Northern Territory parks and cultural assets, festivals and events through the Turbocharging Tourism Action Plan will improve amenities for Territorians as well as ensuring the NT experience meets the expectations of visitors.

Whilst this policy is an initiative of the Northern Territory Government, it would be wise for the Federal Government to leverage this investment for the benefit of the Australian tourism industry. International visitation to Australia is greatest on the east coast, and this is expected to continue given the population bases there. However, it is when visitors travel further throughout the country that economic benefit is maximised, as it increases visitor spend and remote economic growth. The Federal Government should leverage the Northern Territory Government's tourism spending increase to generate greater visitor dispersal across Australia.

### **Barkly Region Tourism Masterplan**

The Barkly Region encompasses Tennant Creek and passes through Barrow Creek, Wycliffe Well, Elliott, Newcastle Waters and the Barkly Tablelands. Travellers can explore ancient sites of cultural significance within incredible landscapes in the Iytwelepenty/ Davenport Ranges National Park and the Karlu Karlu/ Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve. As well as the cultural heritage, the region shares stories about the construction of the old Telegraph line from Adelaide up to Darwin, gold mining, World War II history and the dusty cattle droving days.

The Barkly Regional Visitor Experience Master Plan developed in 2018, in collaboration with a broad and diverse group of stakeholders, has identified a vision for the region, opportunities for improving the visitor experience and new tourism initiatives that will provide local communities with opportunities to engage in tourism.

The Plan aims to:

- Extend visitor length of stay in the Barkly Region through consumer focus, attractive and safe experiences and more effective promotion.
- Strengthen relationships with neighbouring regions and states to enhance the existing road journeys.
- Encourage visitors to leave the highway and travel through some of the more remote and natural areas of the region.
- Ensure a coordinated approach to tourism between business, government, the tourism industry and communities.
- Provide business and employment opportunities for Indigenous communities and local businesses.

The following financial commitments have been made by the Northern Territory Government to the Barkly Region:

- \$10 million for refurbishment and re-opening of the Nyinkka Nyunyu Cultural Centre.
- \$5.5 million towards improving tourism and the visitor experiences in Tennant Creek.
- \$9 million for Perkiss Reserve upgrades including car and trailer parking suited to travellers and visitors close to the main business centre.
- \$1.45 million for aesthetic streetscaping works.
- \$2 million for town gateways/information signage.





Other commitments which the Region can potentially leverage include:

- \$100 million towards the NT Arts Trail.
- \$2.12 million to 'promote existing and iconic NT festivals and events'.
- \$12.1 million to 'enhance existing and develop new festivals and events'.
- NT Aboriginal Tourism Strategy and NT Strategic Plan 2030, currently in development phase.

To leverage this plan and the expenditure by the Northern Territory Government, the Federal Government can invest in a range of projects outlined in this plan, including experience development and business capacity building, amongst other projects .

**Federal Government Investment = \$10+ million**

**Return On Investment =**

- **Economic**
  - o Increased visitor expenditure in a disadvantaged region.
  - o Workforce development in a region known for its lack of skilled workers.
- **Cultural**
  - o Celebration of the cultures and art of our First Nations.
  - o Preservation and enhancement of heritage sites to increase tourism visitation.



## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

### Niche Trails

#RedCentreNT Art Trails, originally developed by Tourism Central Australia in 2015, and now in its fourth edition, enables artists, galleries and art experience operators throughout the region to showcase their products or services to visitors.

#RedCentreNT Art Trails consists of the Art Trails booklet, Red Centre Art Trails digital app, online marketing and social media marketing.

In 2018/19 Tourism Central Australia expanded the #RedCentreNT program to include northern outback South Australia. There are now four art trails:

- Alice Springs
- Road to the Rock (Alice Springs and Coober Pedy to Uluru)
- West MacDonnells to Papunya
- Tennant Creek and the Barkly Region

The positive feedback surrounding the project has been a great indicator that there is a demand for art tourism experiences. Anecdotal evidence revealed to Tourism Central Australia has been that some art organisations have had a 15% increase in foot traffic as a direct result of the project.

To continue this focus on niche trail tourism, Tourism Central Australia is planning a cycling/hiking guide and

app. The mountain biking, trekking, bush walking and scenic cycling trail options around the #RedCentreNT are endless, and with the advent of the Northern Territory Mountain Bike Masterplan<sup>1</sup>, there is a need to target cycling/hiking travellers.

### Outback Adventure Experiences

Adventure tourism is a large and fast-growing tourism sector. It has a very broad appeal, with motivation often being about enrichment rather than challenge. Globally, the adventure travel industry was worth USD \$444.8 billion in 2016 and is projected to grow to over \$1.3 trillion by 2023

Mountain biking tourism is a growth area in the #RedCentreNT and globally. Alice Springs is the only desert destination in Australia and the Southern Hemisphere offering developed mountain biking activities, and with its iconic landscapes the #RedCentreNT is poised to develop as a premier adventure mountain biking destination.

Tourism Central Australia will continue to advocate for further developments in mountain bike tourism products to enable the #RedCentreNT to increase its market profile and mountain bike visitation. The current value of mountain biking tourism in the NT is approximately \$45.3 million. If the Territory were to increase its mountain bike visitation, to the national average of 7% per annum, there is potential for

<sup>1</sup>Copies of this plan are available at [http://www.tourismnt.com.au/~media/files/corporate/marketing/mtb\\_master-plan\\_final\\_july16\\_northern-territory\\_australia.ashx](http://www.tourismnt.com.au/~media/files/corporate/marketing/mtb_master-plan_final_july16_northern-territory_australia.ashx)





mountain biking visitation to contribute expenditure of approximately \$66.8 million by 2020.

Mountain bike tourism has potential for employment and new business enterprises for Indigenous communities through track construction and maintenance work as well as tourism business associated with trail experiences. The establishment of new mountain biking events also has the potential to create business opportunities for local communities.

In addition to mountain biking, the #RedCentreNT has numerous adventurous activity opportunities. Current tourism products and experiences in the adventure sector in the region are:

- Skydiving
- Segway tours
- Camel riding tours
- Quad bike tours
- Hot air ballooning
- Gliding
- Hiking/trekking
- Four-wheel driving
- Camping
- Scenic flights
- Scenic helicopter flights
- Cycling/mountain biking
- Bird watching
- ATV tours
- Native animal encounters
- ...and many more options.

To capitalise on this, Tourism Central Australia pitches the #RedCentreNT as the 'Adventure Capital of Australia'. To this end, Tourism Central Australia asks for Tourism Australia to assist in promoting the #RedCentreNT in this way through its social media and online channels, to amplify this message.

**Federal Government investment = \$in kind through focus from Tourism Australia on marketing the #RedCentreNT to international travellers as the Adventure Capital of Australia.**

**Return on investment =**

- **Economic**
  - o Increased international visitation.
- **Lifestyle**
  - o Increase in remote area population due to understanding of the many adventurous activities, hobbies and pursuits in the #RedCentreNT.



## VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

### Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre Operation and Location and Visitor Information Delivery Expansion

**T**ourism Central Australia manages and operates the Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre. The multi award-winning Visitor Information Centre provides travel, cultural and historic information about the region and further afield to visitors, as well as offering unique merchandise to increase customer spend in the local economy. The Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre collaborates with other Visitor Information Centres (particularly Coober Pedy, Katherine, Darwin and Tennant Creek) to produce streamlined information services to tourists.

Tourism Central Australia wants to remain at the forefront of the tourism industry in servicing visitors and providing value for its members. Our fixed premises for the Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre is currently on the corner of Parsons Street and Todd Mall in Alice Springs, with the licence to occupy this premises expiring in 2021. This along with the traditional Visitor Servicing model no longer being relevant (businesses can be booked and have brochures displayed at many outlets other than Visitor Information Centres, businesses can advertise on many websites so are not as reliant on regional websites as they once were), planning for the future of Visitor Servicing in Alice Springs is crucial for Tourism Central Australia.

The Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre features four times in case studies of best practice Visitor

Information Centres in the newly released research 'A National Perspective on Visitor Information Servicing' (copies available on request). This document provides insight into the benefits of Visitor Information Centres, and the challenges they face. Tourism Central Australia continually adapts its business model to meet and exceed the needs of visitors, which is reflected in the income growth, positive feedback and multiple awards it receives.

In 2019, Tourism Central Australia will undertake a consultative process to understand what the ideal Visitor Servicing options for the organisation are. We aim to:

- Understand the needs and wants of members and stakeholders from Visitor Servicing and the potential impacts of an updated location.
- Consultation with the Board of Tourism Central Australia, staff and ambassadors to understand their needs and wants from Visitor Servicing and the potential impacts of an updated location.
- Provide a series of recommendations that the Board of Tourism Central Australia can use to inform their decision making around Visitor Servicing into the future, including:
  - o What constitutes a best practice Visitor Servicing model in Alice Springs
  - o Facilities provided by best practice Visitor Information Centres
  - o An informal review of locations in Alice Springs for the potential relocation of the Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre.





To remain a best practice, national award-winning Visitor Information Centre, new premises will be required. This may be a green fields site, or the substantial re-fit of an existing site. It may also be co-located with another attraction. The type of development is subject to the findings of the report.

**Federal Government investment = Consideration in future budgets (2020-2021 and 2021-2022) for the construction of a new Visitor Information Centre in Alice Springs. As a guide, the development cost could be \$10-\$20 million.**

**Return on investment =**

- **Economic**
  - o Increased visitor dispersal.
  - o Increased visitor spend.
  - o Increased length of stay.

Another visitor servicing project Tourism Central Australia has recently commenced is the opening of an Information Outlet at the Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park Cultural Centre. This unstaffed information outlet is the result of two years of planning and negotiation with the Federal Government (Parks Australia), the traditional owners of the area and members of Tourism Central Australia. The outlet features free Wi-Fi for visitors, brochures to browse and two digital touch screens locked down to the regional website ([discovercentralaustralia.com](http://discovercentralaustralia.com)). Future developments will include a heat map to determine the number of people accessing the site, and a free hotline service to our contact sales centre in Alice Springs to help travellers with their requirements.

It is the intention of Tourism Central Australia to eventually build a best practice Visitor Information Centre at Yulara, to service travellers more effectively than an unstaffed site at the Cultural Centre can. With adequate funding, this vision can be realised, and will see the first ever accredited Visitor Information Centre established near one of Australia's most famous icons; the Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Park.

**Federal Government investment = Consideration in future budgets (2020-2021 and 2021-2022) for the construction of a new Visitor Information Centre in Yulara. As a guide, the development could cost \$10-\$20 million.**

**Return on investment =**

- **Economic**
  - o Increased visitor dispersal.
  - o Increased visitor spend.
  - o Increased length of stay.
  - o Opportunities for Indigenous training and employment.
- **Cultural**
  - o Promotion of Indigenous businesses in and around a World Heritage listed site.



## INCOME DEVELOPMENT

### Membership Review

Tourism Central Australia is a best practice Regional Tourism Organisation. We continuously improve and continue to deliver significant outcomes for our funding partners. Part of this continuous improvement involved changing our membership structure.

As the traditional role of a Regional Tourism Organisation is outdated, Tourism Central Australia initiated a structural reform process in 2016. Whilst the organisation was successful and growing, we identified necessary changes to the membership structure that would reduce our heavy reliance on Government funding and increase our revenue from industry. Our Government funding reliance used to be almost 80% of our income, however we have now reduced it to less than 60% and continuing to reduce.

Tourism Central Australia commissioned MyTravelResearch to conduct a membership review and develop proposals for a re-structure that would take us into the future.

Across several workshops, stakeholder interviews and qualitative research, more than 300 members, stakeholders and potential members were consulted.

#### Outcomes

- Members agreed that Tourism Central Australia is an important organisation and has a mandate to exist.
- In 2018 the resolution to approve the new structure was approved and the membership structure implemented. The forecast increase in revenue was

an 8% overall lift in revenue from \$1.296 million to \$1.411 million in Year 1. More than 60% of this increase was directly from recommendations in the review. Whilst the forecast was an 8% increase, we are currently tracking at a 30% increase on previous income, of which a large portion is due to the membership review.

- There is a need to extend the footprint of the #RedCentreNT, especially into South Australia.
- The results of this review were provided to the Tourism and Travel Research Association, who awarded this project their International Shifflet Award for research that has positively influenced practice.

### Sales Conversion Opportunities

Tourism Central Australia understands the need for diversification in order to adapt public and private income streams and has implemented the following:

- A joint venture industry servicing and marketing agreement with the Flinders Ranges and Outback region of South Australia. The benefits of the joint venture have seen a 21% increase in South Australian membership of Tourism Central Australia and an initial \$26,000 addition of funds from the South Australian Tourism Commission to conduct a joint marketing campaign.
- An Information Outlet Oat Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park has been established to cover the broader region around Uluru/Ayers Rock.





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30 THINGS TO SEE IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA



ADD THIS CARD TO  
THE DO THE RED CENTRE  
TOP TRUMPS PACK!



COMING SOON!

## CURTIN SPRINGS



### TOP TRUMPS FILE

Curtin Springs is a multi-award winning diversified pastoral and tourism business, 360 km SW of Alice Springs. The Severin family, owners since 1956, were instrumental in the development of the tourism industry based around Uluru (Ayers Rock). Visitors have increased from just six intrepid travellers the first year to hundreds of thousands annually.

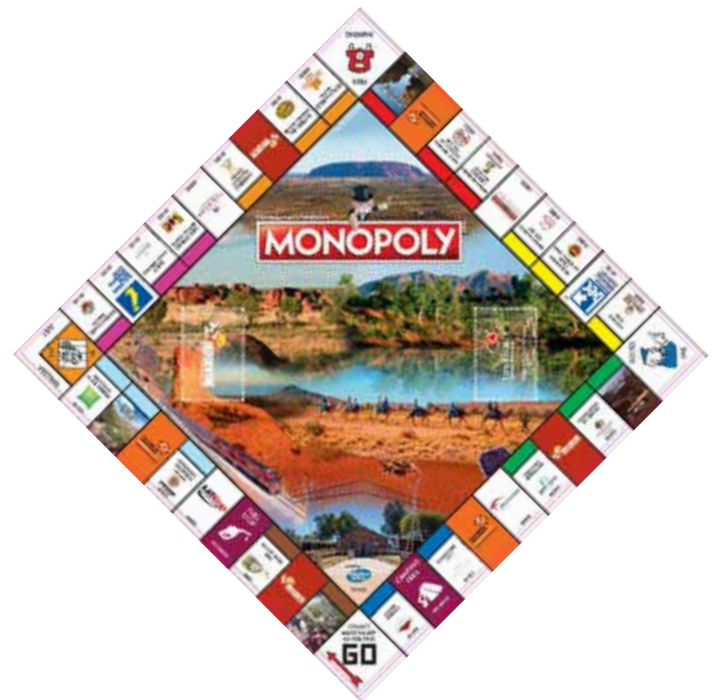
<b>ESTABLISHED</b> (Years before 2019)	<b>63</b>
<b>KMS FROM ALICE SPRINGS</b>	<b>360</b>
<b>KMS TO ULURU</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES</b> (Average)	<b>24</b>
<b>SIZE</b> (m <sup>2</sup> )	<b>4,160,000,000</b>

- In January 2018, Tourism Central Australia commenced development of an officially licensed #RedCentreNT custom edition of Monopoly, that features local tourism businesses and locations. It will be used as a promotional tool and sold throughout the region. This is Tourism Central Australia's most wide reaching cooperative marketing initiative, pulling together operators from across the #RedCentreNT region and from a diverse mix of businesses. This edition will be released in January 2019.

## Leverage the Partnership Agreement with the Northern Territory Government

As the peak tourism body in the region, Tourism Central Australia provides services and facilities to visitors at the Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre, the Alice Springs Airport, the Ghan Railway Station, a travelling mobile Visitor Information trailer, touchscreens linked to our website at two locations in Alice Springs, an Audio Sign with regional information in the Alice Springs CBD and our website [www.discovercentralaustralia.com](http://www.discovercentralaustralia.com). Our services and facilities disseminate destination information and we provide consumers with a one-stop shop for their visit to the region.

Tourism Central Australia responds to the needs of the tourism industry in the region and works closely with Tourism Northern Territory on marketing the #RedCentreNT as the ultimate outback holiday



destination, with our primary role being intra-territory marketing whilst Tourism Northern Territory markets nationally and internationally.

Significantly Tourism Central Australia has signed a five-year funding agreement with the Northern Territory Government and the Department of Tourism & Culture. This historic agreement provides stability for the organisation and allows the organisation to look at a longer term strategic position and picture whilst pursuing further revenue streams to enable the sustainability of the organisation and the tourism industry in the region.



Photograph courtesy of Imparja/Tourism NT

## EVENTS

#RedCentreNT is famous for its distinct events that celebrate the region's iconic location and culture.

Festivals and events play a key role in showcasing the #RedCentreNT, driving regional dispersal, increasing length of stay and creating conversion.

Regionally, events such as the Field of Light have had a major contribution to the economy. From a destination perspective, events such as the Henley on Todd Regatta, Uluru Camel Cup, Alice Springs Beanie Festival and Parrtjima Festival are part of the colour of the #RedCentreNT and contribute greatly to the region's destination positioning.

Tourism Central Australia has developed a Regional Events Strategy<sup>1</sup> providing a focus for the development and promotion of tourism leisure events for the #RedCentreNT, specifically aiming to increase visitor numbers, yield and dispersal. The Strategy has identified events that contribute to the triple bottom line, that deliver social, environmental and economic benefit to the region by:

- Raising awareness of the #RedCentreNT, contributing to the destination image.
- Attracting visitation from outside the region and increasing length of stay.
- Contributing to the regional economy by attracting a higher yield visitor and visitor dispersal.
- Fostering community pride.

Tourism Central Australia's role is to:

- Provide strategic direction for tourism and events in the #RedCentreNT.

- Leverage and participate in Tourism Northern Territory and Tourism Australia opportunities to include #RedCentreNT event content and experiences marketing.
- Partner with the tourism industry and key stakeholders to help profile and support #RedCentreNT events.
- Provide capacity building opportunities in partnership with key stakeholders for event operators to create sustainable events and develop distinctive #RedCentreNT event experiences.

To grow the value of the events industry for the #RedCentreNT will require long-term commitment, partnerships and secure investment to create an event friendly environment.

**Federal Government investment = \$1+ million for three year program**

**Return on investment =**

- **Economic**
  - o Increased visitor dispersal.
  - o Increased visitor spend.
  - o Increased length of stay.
- **Cultural**
  - o Promotion of regional events.
  - o Expansion of the #RedCentreNT events offerings, such as growing arts, community, cultural and music events.

<sup>1</sup> Copies of the #RedCentreNT Regional Events Strategy are available at [https://www.discovercentralaustralia.com/images/Resources/RedCentreNT\\_Regional\\_Events\\_Strategy.pdf](https://www.discovercentralaustralia.com/images/Resources/RedCentreNT_Regional_Events_Strategy.pdf).





## MEMBER CAPACITY BUILDING

### Digital Capacity Development

**T**ourism Central Australia acknowledges there is a need for industry development, particularly in helping the tourism industry increase their digital marketing capacity.

In 2018 Tourism Central Australia received funding from the Northern Territory Government for a Tourism Industry Development Officer, who will work with tourism business owners and managers to build their digital capabilities and enhance their online presence and connectivity with customers. Tourism Central Australia will assist #RedCentreNT tourism operators to focus on digital capacity development in the following areas:

- International readiness
- China readiness
- Business sustainability
- Business Excellence
- Digital marketing
- Social media
- Online reputation management
- Industry connectivity

Tourism Central Australia believes that participating businesses will have a better understanding of their target markets, how to promote and provide higher quality information to potential customers online and develop positive communication with consumers which will benefit all the #RedCentreNT visitor economy.

The program is flexible, and allows for one-on-one mentoring of operators, as well as providing a linking service to all sources of grant funding, workshops and other learning opportunities.

This program has been funded for one year, with 150 businesses to be mentored in that time. However, Tourism Central Australia believes this program will require ongoing support to ensure the tourism industry in this remote area is resilient, focussed and competitive. This program needs to be not only continued, but expanded to a multi-year, all of Northern Australia program, that Tourism Central Australia can manage on the Federal Government's behalf, given our experience, specialist knowledge and capacity to deliver.

**Federal Government investment = \$9 million for a three year, all of Northern Australia program**

**Return on investment =**

- **Economic**
  - o Increased tourism business activity.
  - o Capacity development for tourism business owners and managers.
  - o Increase in international ready (including China ready) tourism businesses.
  - o Increase in employment opportunities across Northern Australia.



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