

# REBUILDING TOURISM IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

## STRATEGIC PLAN

1 July 2022 to 30 June 2025

REBUILD





## Acknowledgement of country

Tourism Central Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians and caretakers of the land that is known as Central Australia and the Barkly. We value their rich cultural heritage and spiritual beliefs that connect them with country, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF TCA

**Covid-19 has challenged our tourism industry in Central Australia like no other time in our history. We have all weathered the most difficult time together. As we look to the future it is time to stand up, brush ourselves off and look forward.**

## And that future looks bright.

The region has seen a number of major announcements that are game changers for our industry and of course we are blessed by having such a unique and different part of the World, a committed industry and supportive Governments to back us.

Tourism Central Australia (TCA) is proud to be the voice of tourism. We have an amazing industry committed to protecting our region and its culture and landscape in sustainable way.

Now is the time we must come together more than ever behind a common purpose. A common purpose that will:

- Rebuild the viability of the tourism industry
- Rejuvenate products, experiences, and perceptions of Central Australia
- Renew our storytelling and marketing activations
- Restore our commercial services to industry through the Visitor Information Centre
- Re-ignite the enthusiasm and passion for tourism in Central Australia; and
- Build greater relationships that grow and support our industry



With my Board and all the team at TCA, we are committed to these important activities – we are not just focussed on getting our sector back to pre-pandemic levels, but to exceed these and get back on track to achieve our targets set in the 2030 Tourism Strategy.

This new strategic plan is a roadmap for TCA to ensure we work together as a collective to achieve new opportunities.

We all want to see the sustainable growth of our sector. I am calling on all our members to get behind your organisation currently as we all work together to rebuild tourism in Central Australia.

I commend this strategic plan to you.

Warm Regards

**Patrick Bedford**

**CHAIRPERSON**

Tourism Central Australia





# ABOUT US

**Tourism Central Australia is a non-profit, membership-based association that assists a wide variety of stakeholders including individuals, businesses and organisations with the growth of the tourism industry in the Red Centre. We service 61% of the Northern Territory including the local government areas of Barkly Region, MacDonnell Region, Central Deserts Region and Alice Springs Town Council.**

As the peak tourism authority for Central Australia and the Barkly, our primary role is to:

- Foster growth and development of Central Australia through tourism
- Increase awareness of member's tourism products
- Advocate and lobby for the needs of the tourism industry in Central Australia
- In partnership, market the region as the ultimate outback holiday destination
- To facilitate new tourism opportunities, infrastructure and product development
- Manage the Alice Springs Visitor Information Centre and the Tennant Creek Visitor Information Centre which provides consumers with booking capabilities, and essential visitor information to make their stay a memorable, enjoyable and safe experience.

Our vision is based on engaging our industry, strategic partners in government and allied industry organisations by:

- providing information on the region and selling member's products from our visitor information centres and through mobile technologies.



- promoting the dispersal of visitors across the region.
- providing industry leadership and representing our members and the tourism industry on tourism related issues.
- communicating openly with our members on matters affecting tourism.
- working closely with Tourism NT, Regional Tourism Organisations, Visitor Centre's, Government's at all levels and other tourism organisations.

The organisation is governed by a board of management made up of 10 elected directors, elected from the general membership of the organisation and then 4 'stakeholder' directors representing Alice Springs Town Council, Barkly Regional Council, Parks and Wildlife and Tourism Northern Territory.





facilitate new tourism opportunities



grow and develop Central Australia through tourism



Image - Tourism NT & Matt Glastonbury ©



Advocate and lobby for the needs of the tourism industry in Central Australia



Image - Kata Tjuta  
Tourism NT & Colby Brown ©

make tourists stay a memorable, enjoyable and safe experience







## Our Purpose

Tourism Central Australia is proactive in developing our destination, being a voice of our industry and to welcome visitors from right around the globe to our amazing destinations. Tourism Central Australia is respected as a progressive and passionate organisation supporting tourism businesses and stakeholders as we jointly rebuild tourism in Central Australia. Without TCA, our destination (which is broad and geographically diverse) would have no unifying voice.

## Our Vision

We will grow tourism in the Central Australia and the Barkly through representing and supporting the needs of our members. Central Australia and the Barkly's tourism industry will be resilient, sustainable and globally recognised for authentic tourism and cultural experiences, inspiring visitors to experience everything we have to offer.

## Our Mission

Tourism Central Australia is a member led organisation, providing commitment to guide and support rebuilding a sustainable visitor economy in Central Australia and the Barkly. We lobby and advocate on our members behalf and work with our partners, to be proactive in delivering agreed outcomes of the Northern Territory Tourism 2030 tourism strategy, while remaining committed to being the regional voice of our industry and members.

## Our core values

- We act with integrity and consideration
- We are focussed on engagement in all our relationships
- We embrace change and are adaptable
- We are results driven

## Our Philosophy

- Share our knowledge and experience of the region and help visitors
- We ensure our partnerships are broad and deep and across all levels of government, community, and tourism stakeholders
- We see the glass as half full
- Link our members with opportunities
- Contribute passionately to the development of plans, strategies, and programs that impact tourism in Central Australia. Taking forward our members views and inputs
- Maintain strong and purposeful communication with our members
- Keep our ear to the ground regarding funding sources to assist TCA members and the region more broadly
- A whole of region approach – from Kulgera to Newcastle Waters and everywhere in between
- Strong governance and transparency

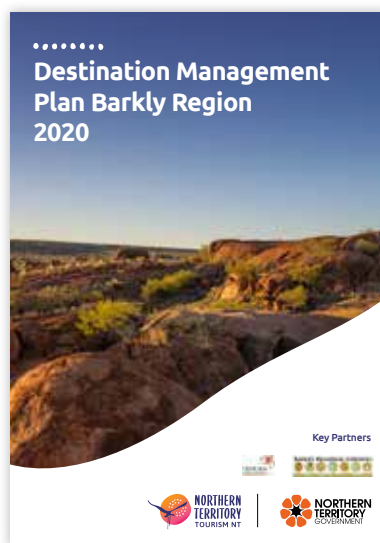
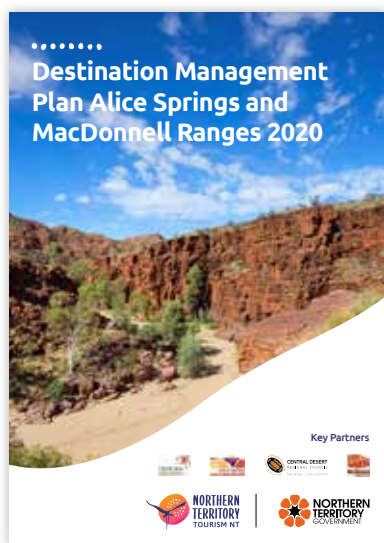


# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK & TOURISM 2030 STRATEGY

**Success is underpinned by a collaborative approach to destination development. This Strategic Plan is a part of framework interlinked by a number of other strategic documents that together aim to foster the growth and development of tourism and foster a commonality in purpose to grow the destination.**

In 2019, the Northern Territory Government, Tourism Northern Territory, Tourism Top End, Tourism Central Australia and the tourism industry came together to develop the roadmap for tourism in the Northern Territory for the next ten years. This roadmap is called Tourism 2030. Tourism Central Australia is a proud signatory of this strategy and is passionate about its implementation.

A key platform of the Tourism 2030 strategy was the development of three Destination Management Plans (DMPs) across multiple regions within Central Australia. Tourism Northern Territory and Tourism Central Australia has undertaken a range of consultations in the development of these plans. The DMPs are primarily information and sharing documents for regional stakeholders to guide in management and investment decisions within the Destination.







The DMPs seek to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increase visitor numbers and extend length of stay in the 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 visitor 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. In the Central Australian region, there are three DMPs – these being Barkly, Lasseter and Alice Springs/MacDonnell Ranges. The key approach to developing visitor experiences across the region in the DMPs can be summarised across the following key pillars;
- Strategic product packaging and marketing – to best leverage the value of the Region's assets and effectively engage target visitor markets;
- Facilitate Collaborative action – to maximise the efficient and effective use of resources in the region to advance tourism outcomes;
- Investment attraction Initiatives – to build the quality and quantity of tourism products in the region;
- Capacity building activities – to establish resilience and capability in the industry to deliver quality tourism experiences and support continuous improvement.

Core to each DMP is the identification of key regional projects that will stimulate development. Tourism Central Australia endorses these initiatives and will also work with Government to see them to fruition.







# KEY PILLARS

## Governance and Organisational Sustainability

- Renewal of our 5 year funding agreement with the NTG
- The establishment of a new Visitor Information Centres in Alice Springs and Uluru (Yulara) and the growth of operations in Tennant Creek
- Establishment and implementation of MOU's with all local Governments in each of the regions
- Encouraging more diverse income streams in partnership with other agencies and funding partners
- Year on year growth in membership of the organisation
- A TCA internal workforce that is stable, skilled and adaptable to our changing environments

## Rebuilding our Destination

- To advocate for, and in partnership implement a raft of critical infrastructure and product development projects outlined in the Barkly, Lasseter and Alice Springs and MacDonnell Ranges Destination Management Plans and to be an active participant in the DMPs project implementation forums
- Openly encouraging investment in new or renewed experiences in Central Australia and the Barkly with high quality product aligned to the Destination Management Plan
- Support the attraction of funding and the project management delivery of initiatives
- Facilitate opportunities to strengthen Aboriginal Tourism experiences throughout the region

- Supporting existing and nurturing new events to drive visitation
- Recognise the role National Parks play as part of the visitor experience and support maintenance and development of these parks.

## Driving Opportunities for our Operators

- Linking opportunities to operators through our Business Enterprise program that delivers one on one support and showcasing industry best practice
- Supporting initiatives that overcome workforce issues affecting our industry
- Communicating to industry opportunities that strengthen member businesses
- Enhance revenue streams for member businesses through TCA's commercial operations
- Showcase best practice and the building of industry's capacity and capability as well as supporting tourism accreditation and tourism awards programs

## Strengthening Brand Red Centre

- Further enhance marketing efforts in collaboration
- Focus on driving world class service standards
- Target drive tourists through proactive marketing efforts
- Continue to build website visitation and destination awareness across social media mediums
- Support the funding of Tourism NT domestic and international marketing programs are critical budget items for the NTG





# STRATEGIC PRIORITY ONE

## Governance and Organisational Sustainability

A sustainable, transparent and effective organisation focused on making a difference and delivering results

### Strategic Focus

- Reviewing and strengthening governance structures and practices
- A financially responsible organisation that continues to deliver best practice financial management and building new innovative revenue streams and partnerships
- Focusing on contemporary and effective collaboration processes with our stakeholders
- Ensuring an internal workforce that is stable, skilled and adaptable to our changing environments

### Key Initiatives

- Renewal of our 5 year funding agreement with the NTG
- The establishment of a new Visitor Information Centre in Alice Springs and Uluru (Yulara) and the growth of operations in Tennant Creek
- Establishment and implementation of MOU's with all local Governments in each of the regions
- Encouraging more diverse income streams in partnership with other agencies and funding partners
- Year on year growth in membership of the organisation
- A TCA internal workforce that is stable, skilled and adaptable to our changing environments







## STRATEGIC PRIORITY TWO

### Rebuilding our Destination

**Facilitate investment in infrastructure, new products and experiences that rebuilds tourism in Central Australia and the Barkly**

#### Strategic Focus

- Encouraging investment in new or renewed experiences in Central Australia and the Barkly with high quality product as identified in the DMPs and TCA Priority Projects document
- Linking key product within the region to create world class tourism experiences
- Advocating for infrastructure needs
- Working collaboratively to ensure long term relationship Indigenous culture
- Supporting a balanced approach between sustainable natural landscape and tourism experiences in national parks

#### Key Initiatives

- To advocate for, and in partnership implement a raft of critical infrastructure and product development projects outlined in the Barkly, Lasseter and Alice Springs/MacDonnell Ranges Destination Management Plans and to be an active participant in the DMP's project implementation forums
- Openly encouraging investment in new or renewed experiences in Central Australia and the Barkly with high quality product aligned to the Destination Management Plans
- Support the attraction of funding and the project management delivery of initiatives
- Facilitate opportunities to strengthen Aboriginal Tourism experiences throughout the region
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## STRATEGIC PRIORITY THREE

### Drive Opportunities for Operators

Improving the quality of tourism experiences in the region through industry education and support as well as opening the door to greater commercial opportunities for our members

#### Strategic Focus

- Being seen by our industry as a driver of real and tangible revenue for their businesses
- Focusing on a region-wide educational programs
- Developing the leadership capacity of industry
- Identifying and assisting in overcoming issues and challenges faced by the sector
- Raising the awareness and understanding of tourism industry structures and pathways to markets
- Promoting relevant accreditation programs for the industry
- Maintaining a program of industry forums in key destinations across the region and linked sub-regions

#### Key Initiatives

- Linking opportunities to operators through our Business Enterprise program that delivers one on one support and showcasing industry best practice
- Supporting initiatives that overcome workforce issues affecting our industry
- Communicating to industry opportunities that strengthen member businesses
- Enhance revenue streams for member businesses through TCA's commercial operations
- Showcase best practice and the building of industry's capacity and capability as well as supporting tourism accreditation and tourism awards programs.







## STRATEGIC PRIORITY FOUR

### Strengthening Brand Red Centre

Lead and support the Red Centre in the development of collaborative marketing programs

#### Strategic Focus

- Managing and building the Red Centre brand
- Ensuring all marketing decisions are based on sound research
- Maximising return on investment
- Advocate and support Central Australia and the Barkly's inclusion in all Tourism Northern Territory marketing activities and to work collaboratively with Tourism Australia
- Developing key partnerships to promote the region
- Leveraging the use of best practice digital technology

#### Key Initiatives

- Further enhance marketing efforts in collaboration
- Focus on driving world class service standards
- Target drive tourists through proactive marketing efforts
- Continue to build website visitation and destination awareness across social media mediums
- Support the funding of Tourism NT domestic and international marketing programs are critical budget items for the NTG





# OUR STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

## Strengths

- Established membership base
- Diverse members
- Established brand
- Strong voice
- Engaged board
- Financially strong – short term funding, reserve fund
- Affordable membership
- Variety of support services
- Amazing staff
- Strong and accessible relationships with partners
- Accessible to members, visitors, staff, board
- Drive and passion of the industry sector
- Responsive
- Award-winning visitor services
- Political visibility
- Regional coverage
- Low portion of instant book activities
- Globally recognised destination
- Our landscapes and recreational offering, walking / hiking paths, mountain biking

## Opportunity

- Relocation of Visitor Information Centre
- Improved technology – ability to integrate technology into internal and external operations
- Improve partnership and operational model with other RTOs and VICs
- Improved use of technology to engage tourists while they are travelling and increase sales / length of stay, etc
- Supporting member business growth and development
- Advocacy and partnership TNT and TA around destination marketing for Central Australia and Barkly

- Growing the pride and advocacy from our town and local community reps
- Re-define / refresh who TCA is in the context of the region and the industry
- Reshaping and capturing the growth of the domestic market, including Mereenie Loop
- Growing the off-peak domestic tourism market
- Self-sufficient financially – increase revenue
- Leveraging off new tourism attractions and investment, like the NAAG and broader investment
- Improved packaging and sale of products
- Greater competition in the aviation space
- National focus on remote and regional travel and support
- Supporting Aboriginal Tourism Strategy
- Better delineation between tourism products and marketing
- Be the facilitator of networks – connect operators and members to networks and opportunities
- Advocate, support and partner with Local and NT Government to support improvements to Alice Springs and Tennant Creek
- Strengthening reporting to the Board on TCA engagement in strategic partnership projects
- Advocate for integration and showcasing Indigenous culture in our towns
- Recognise and advocate for the connection between investment into local sport and recreation investment, and the ability to increase visitor economy, or connection between visiting sport and recreational groups and the value that can be offered to local participation and involvement
- Local school market – when travel interstate is difficult







## Weaknesses

- Dependent on external funding and government policy
- Geographical distance to service
- Impacts of isolation
- Variable internet and telecommunications connectivity
- Technology and platform limitations
- Staff retention and change-over
- Diverse inventory – supporting all members, when customers have specific requests
- Can only do land packaging
- Location of the current Visitor Information Centre
- Lack of Indigenous engagement and representation in TCA and tourism industry
- We've lost confidence in our region being good enough to capture the market between Uluru and Darwin
- Lack of focus on NT local tourism opportunities – local travel, regional travel, sporting / recreation travel
- Strained Territory economy
- Cost to recover
- Social issues in Central Australia and Barkly impacting on marketing
- Lost opportunity of educating and engaging people in activities between Uluru and Darwin – reduced length of stay
- Destination marketing plan missing the mark in engaging people on the journey and history
- Unwelcoming destination – when you drive into Alice Springs or Tennant Creek there is not a lot of mechanisms to guide and welcome tourists, need to look at improve
- Lack of visibility of activity of TCAs involvement in strategic tourism groups (TNT / TA)
- Indigenous culture isn't showcased and celebrated effectively in major centers
- Negative impact of Crime in the news and for Travellers

## Threat

- Industry is contracting / decreasing – can't flex to changing visitor demand
- Industry and members are in survival mode post pandemic
- Vulnerability of the industry has been exposed
- Attracting staff
- Staff shortages
- Border requirements, air and road access
- Diminishing funding



# KEY ORGANISATIONAL RISKS

Description of Risk	Consequence rating	Likelihood rating	Overall grade of risk	Risk treatment
Significant budget cuts to the organisation or changes to the funding model	Extreme	Medium	Medium	Secure additional funding partners Strong governance and reporting structures Transparent operations Focus on commercial outcomes of TCA Management of expenses Clear strategies and support from members and industry
Financial fraud	High	Medium	High	Management practises in place Board lead management and risk committee Audit procedures Transparency to members
Issues with digital assets of the organisation – hacking of website, loss of data, social media, booking engine	High	Medium	Medium	Regular backups undertaken Strong firewalls and anti-virus protections in place Process and procedure in place to manage issues
Issues relating to timelines in the development of the new information centre	High	High	High	Strict project management protocols Identify red flags early Allow for cross over in the lease agreement in existing premises Develop a contingency plan
Inability to secure and keep staff to manage core programs and roles	Medium	High	Medium	Cross training of staff Whole team can work in the Information Centre Positive work environment and culture Relationships with range of employment service providers across Central Australia Strong recruitment practises







Description of Risk	Consequence rating	Likelihood rating	Overall grade of risk	Risk treatment
Loss of revenue through booking channels due to reluctance of industry to integrate or lack of availability	Medium	Medium	Medium	Continued focus on securing Gold Status Securing foot traffic Increased digital footprint and traffic to website Focus on sales and revenue targets for staff Strong benefits of selling through the information centre Maintain commission levels
Reduced usage of the Visitor Information Centre by visitors	Medium	Medium	Medium	Increased availability online Service provision Sell items not available elsewhere Promotion of VIC services in key traffic locations Secure last-minute availability Strategies to increase foot traffic Industry participate in the activities of the VIC
Visitors prefer to book on-line	Medium	Medium	Medium	Increase of gold bookable product Content and information available online Ensure industry understand market needs
Accidents and incidents at Battery Hill Mining Centre and the Alice Springs Information Centre	Medium	Medium	Medium	Safety Plans in place in both locations Focus on workplace health and safety Regular and ongoing maintenance
Incidents in relation to staff travel and driving	Medium	Medium	Medium	Safety plan in place for all staff travel Appropriate equipment in all TCA cars Upkeep and maintenance of all vehicles
Cyber security attacks on TCA Systems	Medium	Medium	Medium	To ensure TCA maintains strong insurance cover; To put in place necessary cyber protection policies and procedures



# KEY ORGANISATIONAL RISKS

Description of Risk	Consequence rating	Likelihood rating	Overall grade of risk	Risk treatment
Significant theft of merchandise	Low	High	Medium	Stocktake procedures Staff awareness of issue Accounting for reasonable loss of stock
Mismanagement of finances or funding grants	Low	High	Medium	Finance and risk committee oversight Board and stakeholder reporting processes Approval level for spending and management of grant monies All grant funds programs follow policy and procedure processes
Relationship issues with major stakeholders such as TNT, NTG, Councils	Low	Low	Low	Ensure open communication Report as required Maintain agreed MoUs
Lack of industry support and reduced membership	Low	Low	Low	Continued focus on member benefits and delivery of those benefits Strong advocacy role on behalf of members Yearly members survey Feedback on TCA provided through board and stakeholders
Information Centre booking system unsupportable	Low	Medium	Low	Ensure licence agreements provide support programs Ensure manual booking system process is maintained
Inequitable representation on board not representing the best interests of industry and the region	Low	Low	Low	Continual review of TCA constitution Ensuring wide range of applications for TCA Board representation







**TOURISM**  
CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

The Heart. The Soul. The Centre.