East MacDonnell-
Plenty Highway Region

VISITOR EXPERIENCE MASTER PLAN

October 2018
Acknowledgement of Country

Central Desert Regional Council and partners would like to show their respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Land, of Elders past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Acknowledgements

This Visitor Experience Plan for the East MacDonnell Ranges and the Plenty Highway region was prepared by TRC Tourism Pty Ltd 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 and Culture.

The Plan was prepared in consultation with the region’s Aboriginal communities, Traditional Owners, other landholders and land managers, and the tourism industry.

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Community Tourism Action Plan - Engawala

Community Tourism Action Plan - Bonya

Community Tourism Action Plan - Atitjere

Community Tourism Action Plan - Gemtree
Executive Summary

Where getting off the beaten track gives you the opportunity to experience both pastoral and Aboriginal cultural stories, traditional and contemporary.

The East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Region is home to the spectacular East MacDonnell Ranges, Aboriginal communities, unique sites and visitor attractions and cattle stations. The diversity of this area creates and exceptional tourism opportunity for drive visitation, located within close proximity to Alice Springs. The area also taps into through traffic, bordering both the Stuart Highway to the west and the ‘Outback Way’ to the Queensland border in the east.

This Visitor Experience Master Plan has been developed in collaboration with local communities, landholders, Traditional Owners, the tourism industry, local government and agency stakeholders. By understanding our target markets, existing experiences, aspirations of local people and gaps, we have developed a Plan that has significant potential to stimulate growth in the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway visitor economy and provide business and employment opportunities for Aboriginal communities and local businesses.

The plan has identified priority projects that respond to the following important trends in tourism and the region:

Sealing of the Plenty Highway and Outback Way marketing means there will be more visitors using this route

- Increasing demand for caravan and camping travel opens possibilities for improved road trip experiences in the region
- Megafauna Central in Alice Springs has opened and, together with the existing Dinosaur Trail from Queensland, these experiences are attracting visitors that are interested in megafauna and fossils and want to visit the Alcoota site
- The proposed Jervois Mine (KGL Resources Ltd) will provide employment and business opportunities for the Bonya Community and assist in stimulating the development of services for Plenty Highway travellers.
- Turbocharging Tourism is intended to underpin growth in the experience offering for the Territory and attract growth in visitor numbers, dispersal and spend. The region needs to ensure it benefits from this investment.

Tourism development in the Barkly Region will complement that in the Plenty Highway and East MacDonnell ranges and the regions need to integrate and work together to leverage opportunities.
The featured priorities within this Plan include:

**Plenty Highway Enterprise Support – developing and supporting community businesses**

*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.*

Investment required: $250,000–300,000 per annum

**Plenty Highway Campgrounds**

*Allied with the first priority, visitors travelling the road are seeking campsites and facilities for overnight stays. A number of opportunities have been identified and, coupled with capacity building in communities, investment in infrastructure for campgrounds can underpin longer stay by visitors on their journey.*

Investment required: $1.5 – 2 million (planning, infrastructure, capacity building)

**Alcoota Fossil Site Activation**

*Interest in the Alcoota Fossil site has increased since the opening of Mega Fauna Central. The site offers an exciting opportunity for a new guided tourism experience that could be delivered by local aboriginal community members. Investment in the site to support a new experience is required to address conservation of the site, viewing area and access, visitor amenities, interpretation and capacity building.*

Investment required: $4–5 million (planning, infrastructure, capacity building)

**East MacDonnell Ranges Eco Accommodation**

*Investment in a unique eco accommodation facility in the East MacDonnell Ranges combined with the Arltunga project outlined below could be game changers for attracting new markets into this part of the region. Given such a facility is likely to be on public and/or joint managed land, the approach to market needs to be preceded by preparatory planning and land and site clearances to create an enabling environment. Investment the actual eco accommodation would be expected to be private sector.*

Investment required: $3 million (pre planning and site clearances prior to Expression of Interest process)

**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 people to this part of the region. Feasibility assessment and master planning is required before investing in a revitalisation of the reserve’s visitor experience and, potentially, encouraging the private sector to play a role in management and tourism product delivery.*

Investment required: $3.5 – 4 million (planning $300,000 plus site development)

Implementation of the Plan will require a mix of public and private investment, leading towards the realisation of the tourism vision for the Region:

*‘Increased exposure of the East MacDonnell Ranges and Plenty Highway with growth in visitor numbers, dispersal and yield creating a range of social and economic outcomes for communities and businesses.’*
1 Introduction

1.1 The Plan

The Visitor Experience Master Plan for the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region (the Plan) has been developed in collaboration with local communities, landholders, Traditional Owners, the tourism industry, local government and agency stakeholders. 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, bringing economic and social benefits to both visitors and residents.

The Aim of this Master Plan is to:

- Provide a prioritised framework for the future development of visitor experiences
- Present a preferred management model promoting sound governance practices
- Strengthen relationships with neighbouring regions and states to enhance the existing road journeys, particularly the Outback Way
- Integrate with existing strategies in the region such as roads, natural and cultural heritage programs
- Ensure a coordinated approach to tourism between businesses, government, the tourism industry and communities
- Present viable and realistic opportunities encouraging both private and public investment in the region.

The Road Map for this Visitor Experience Master Plan is as follows:

After assessing the current and potential demand for tourism in the region as well as existing supply and use, the Plan addresses the types of tourism activity and the sites, journeys and events that might be suitable. Further to this Plan, individual Community Tourism Action Plans have been developed providing greater detail to the specific opportunities and recommendations for each Community.

The implementation of the Plan and Community Tourism Action Plans will underpin improvements over time in the visitor experience of the region and the range of tourism experiences on offer as well as create economic opportunities. Each stakeholder plays an enabling role towards implementation of this Plan. Success will only be achieved through active support and engagement to realise the Aims of this Master Plan.
1.2 The East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Region

The area of the Visitor Experience Master Plan covers eastern Arrernte and Anmatjere country to the east and north-east of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory (NT). It extends from north of the Plenty Highway to the Ross Highway and associated visitor destinations in the south. It is bounded in the west by the Stuart Highway and in the east by the Queensland border. The area is largely within the boundaries of the Central Desert Regional Council, the local government authority for an area of 283,000 square kilometres extending between the Queensland and Western Australian borders north of Alice Springs. Some small parts of the Plan area fall within the MacDonnell Regional Council boundaries – but these are only small in area, population and tourism potential.

In close proximity to the township of Alice Springs, the Region incorporates the spectacular East MacDonnell Ranges, with several sites along the ranges forming part of the East MacDonnell National Park. There are also several cattle stations, Aboriginal Communities and unique sites of interest that have the potential to contribute towards an exceptional tourism experience across the region.

1.3 How the plan was developed

The Visitor Experience Master Plan was prepared by a team of TRC Tourism consultants working with the Project Steering Committee (see Appendix D) over the period April to October 2018.

The TRC team understood extensive desktop research before a process of in region consultation and field visits across the East MacDonnell Ranges, the Plenty Highway and other parts of the region. Discussions were held in the communities along the Plenty Highway as well as with many of the pastoral stations and tour operators within the region.

Following the first round of consultation, a strategic directions paper was prepared and circulated. A second round of consultation was then held to seek inputs on the thinking in the paper. This then formed the building blocks for the draft and final plans.
Figure 1: The region covered by the Visitor Experience Plan
## Current Situation

### Land and Communities

The land in the project area is a mix of pastoral leases and freehold land (some Aboriginal owned and managed), Aboriginal community land excised from pastoral leases and several conservation reserves. A cluster of Parks and Wildlife Commission of the NT (PWCNT) reserves is concentrated along the East MacDonnell Ranges and accessed from the Ross Highway and the Binns Track - Yeperenye/Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park, Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve, Trephina Gorge Nature Park, Airltunga Historical Reserve, Ruby Gap Nature Park and N’Dhala Gorge Nature Park. Most of these reserves are Aboriginal Land that has been leased back to the NT Government for joint management by the Traditional Owners and the PWCNT. Native Title rights have been determined to exist over parts of the Mt Riddock, Bushy Park and Aileron Pastoral Leases which are located at the western end of the Plenty Highway.

The area is sparsely populated with an estimated resident population of around 730 people who live in Aboriginal communities and on pastoral stations and other small settlements, with the main population centres in the north of the Plan area. Table 2 provides a summary of each of the communities in the area, their location and population as from the 2016 Census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town / Community</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engawala</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>North of the Plenty Highway, 181 km from Alice Springs situated on Alcoota Station (Aboriginal Freehold land)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atitjere (Harts Range)</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>On the Plenty Highway, 240 km from Alice Springs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonya (Ortripa Thura)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Near the Plenty Highway at the Jervois Pastoral Station, 350 km from Alice Springs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Plan area’s other residents live in small Aboriginal communities and outstations or on pastoral leases. The Traditional Owners of the joint management parks along the Ross Highway mainly live in Santa Teresa (to the south) or in Alice Springs.

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1. Information from National Native Title Register - [http://www.nntt.gov.au/searchRegApps/NativeTitleRegisters/Pages/Search-National-Native-Title-Register.aspx](http://www.nntt.gov.au/searchRegApps/NativeTitleRegisters/Pages/Search-National-Native-Title-Register.aspx);

2.2 The Current Visitor Offer

For visitors, the Region provides a mix of Aboriginal culture together with settler history. Travellers can explore ancient sites of cultural significance within incredible landscapes in the East MacDonnell Ranges. As well as the cultural heritage, the region shares stories of gold and gem-fossicking and early pastoralism still evident today.

Although lesser known than the Western MacDonnell Ranges, the region incorporates the striking elements of the central red desert and shrublands, framed by remarkable sheer quartzite cliffs, white sandy creek beds, seasonal waterholes and towering ghost gums.

The main access roads in the project area are:

- **The Plenty Highway** between the Stuart Highway and the Queensland border which links to the outback town of Boulia (near Winton) in Queensland. The total distance from Boulia to the Stuart Highway is 740 kilometres. This road also connects to the Sandover Highway which provides access to and from NW Queensland around Camooweal and Mt Isa and beyond to the Savannah Way. The Plenty Highway is part of the Outback Way driving route which extends from Winton, Queensland, through the southern NT to Laverton in Western Australia. In the NT, the Plenty Highway is currently sealed from the Stuart Highway to Atitjere (Harts Range) and the NT Government has allocated funds for extending the seal on the highway but there is not yet any commitment to complete the remaining distance of over 400km. On the Queensland side only just over 100km of the 630km from the NT border to Winton via Boulia remains unsealed. In WA they are working steadily to fulfil the WA Governments commitment to seal the entire 700km and have done 100km so far.

- **The Ross Highway** which is a sealed road through the East MacDonnell Ranges from Alice Springs to the Ross River Resort. It provides the main visitor access route to the East MacDonnell conservation parks.

- **The Binns Track** is promoted as an ‘epic’ 2,230 km 4WD track that runs from the South Australian border connecting the Central Desert with the ‘big river country’ of the north, finishing near Timber Creek on the Victoria River. It connects the Central Desert region, via the Barkly Region, to the Top End of the NT. In the project area the Binns Track provides a link between N’Dhala Gorge Nature Park and Ross River Resort, Arltunga Historical Reserve, Hale River Homestead and the Plenty Highway. North of the Plenty Highway the main visitor access is along the continuation of the Binns Track which connects the Plenty Highway to the Sandover Highway and through the Iytwelepenty / Davenport Ranges in the Barkly Region.
The Gardens Road (or Arltunga Tourist Route) which is an unsealed road between the Stuart Highway and Arltunga Historical Reserve to the north of the East MacDonnell Ranges.

The Hay River Track which is a remote 4WD route between Jervois Station through the Simpson Desert to Birdsville in south west Queensland. The route traverses Aboriginal land and access requires a permit.

*Figure 2: Main access roads in the project area*

Details of the existing visitor attractions and products in the project area are provided in Appendix A.
The areas of highest visitation are the 2WD accessible conservation reserves along, or accessed from, the Ross Highway. The reserves provide low key visitor experiences centred around the area’s outstanding range and gorge scenery and Aboriginal rock art, together with interpretation of the historic mining town in the Arltunga Historical Reserve. For some visitors the less crowded and developed nature of the East MacDonnell Ranges (compared with the West MacDonnell Ranges) is a core feature of its attraction. Trephina Gorge Nature Park (the main park in the area) received an estimated 28,100 visitors in 2017 compared with 153,100 visitors to the Tjoritja/West MacDonnell National Park3. Visitation is less to the more remote N’Dhala Gorge and Ruby Gap Nature Parks which require high clearance 4WD vehicles for access. Several guided day tours (and some overnight tours) of the East MacDonnell Ranges operate from Alice Springs. The music and arts festival, Wide Open Spaces, is held annually at the Ross River Resort and is reported to have attracted over 2,000 participants in 20184.

Aboriginal participation in tourism is at an early stage. Traditional Owners have recently developed a downloadable app for interpretation of Yeperenye/Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park and Traditional Owners may participate in booked education sessions at Trephina Gorge.

Visitor hubs in the East MacDonnell Ranges are:

- **Trephina Gorge Nature Park** - where there are camping areas, a ranger station, several walking trails, ranger interpretation and provision for school education groups
- **Gemtree** - The main visitor hub is at Gemtree where the Gemtree Caravan Park provides accommodation, food, fuel and gemstone sales and tours
- **Ross River Resort** – providing a range of accommodation, conference facilities and food and facilities for passing travellers and guided tours
- **Arltunga Historical Reserve** – where there is a visitor centre, day use facilities and self-guided walks
- **Hale River Homestead** – providing accommodation, events facilities and food and facilities for passing travellers and guided tours.
- **Ruby Gap Nature Park** – which is a remote hub (without facilities) used by 4WD tourers, campers and walkers.

There are fewer visitor facilities and attractions along the Plenty Highway where the main visitor activities are outback touring and gemstone fossicking in the Harts Range. The area hosts one major event, the Harts Range Bush Sports Weekend, which comprises rodeo, horse racing and gymkhana events and entertainment held over four days each August. The conservation reserves in the area – Dulcie Range National Park and the privately-owned Mac and Rose Chalmers Conservation Reserve – are remote and have low visitation. The Alcoota Scientific Reserve near Alcoota Station contains significant megafauna fossils but has not been developed as a visitor attraction.

Food and fuel are also available at Atitjere (also referred to as Harts Range) where the Akngerrekenhe Art Centre is also open to the public. The Spotted Tiger campground is established but has not been operating for some time. There is a basic store with fuel and a camping area at Jervois Station, and Tobermorey Station near the Queensland border5 has two cabins, two modern single rooms and a small, shady campground. They also sell fuel but do not offer meals. Some long distance outback tours pass along the Plenty Highway, notably

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5 Information from https://www.hemamaps.com/explore/tracks/plenty-highway. Also personal on site verifications
Outback Spirit. Batton Hill Camp, a serviced camp on Atnetye Aboriginal Land on the Hay River Track south of Jervois Station, is operated by Traditional Owners who also provide guided tours of their country including the nearby Goyder’s Pillar.

### 2.3 The Tourism Context

Details of Northern Territory and Central Australian tourism trends and visitor profiles are provided in Appendix B. It must be noted that due to the nature of the statistical data collection statistics provided are for the broader Central Australian region not directly to the East MacDonnell and Plenty Highway region.

The East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region is part of the Alice Springs-MacDonnell tourism region which covers the town of Alice Springs, the East and West MacDonnell Ranges, Ti Tree, the Tanami Desert, Yuendumu and Hermannsburg.

NT wide, the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Region accounts for:

- 23% of the overall domestic visitation
- 47% of the overall international leisure visitors in 2017
- 27% of the NT’s total visitation (combined domestic and international travel).  

In the year ending June 2017 the tourism region had an estimated 484,000 overnight visitors, 75% of whom were domestic visitors (50% interstate and 25% intra-Territory).  

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6 Tourism NT (2017a) and (2017b).
**Figure 3: Who are the Region’s visitors?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intra-Territory visitors</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 25% of all domestic overnight visitors come from within the NT.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Half visit for business purposes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stay 2.6 nights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most visit September – December</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Travel alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 40 – 54 years of age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interstate visitors</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 48% are leisure visitors, with 32% ‘on business’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stay 6.1 nights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most visit June – December</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Adult couple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Between 40- 65+ years of age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Largely from Victoria</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International visitors</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Leisure visitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stay 4.8 nights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visit September – March</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Travel alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 15 – 29 years of age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• From US, UK and Germany</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4: How do visitors travel through the Region?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intra-territory</th>
<th>Private or hire car</th>
<th>Coach</th>
<th>Motorhome/caravan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interstate</td>
<td>68 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>41 %</td>
<td>7 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 %</td>
<td>32 %</td>
<td>7 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**This information incorporates the broader Alice Springs and entire MacDonnell Ranges Region. Totals do not equal 100% as ‘air’ travel has been included as an option to visit the broader region factoring in Alice Springs arrivals.**
Hotels are the most popular choice for accommodation type across all markets, accounting for more than 40% (bear in mind this includes Alice Springs). In addition, international travellers will also select backpacker or hostel type accommodation (21%) and interstate travellers commercial caravan parks or campgrounds (21%).

The Tourism NT Regional Profile lists the most popular activities by visitors to the Alice-MacDonnell Region as being:

- Easting out at cafes and restaurants
- Sightseeing
- Bushwalking
- Visiting National Parks

As pointed out by Tourism Central Australia, the region’s competitive advantage is affected by the difficulty and cost of access and the comparative affordability of competing destinations offering similar types of experiences. Accessibility in the West MacDonnell Ranges area is being addressed through the sealing of the Inner Loop road; the development of the Red Centre Adventure Ride between Alice Springs and Glen Helen through Tjoritja/West MacDonnell Ranges National Park; and the development of the tourism precinct at Hermannsburg. This area has a wide range of tours and experience options, however also lacks accommodation. Under the 2016 NT Mountain Biking Master Plan Alice Springs is being developed as a world class hub for mountain biking with a range of trails and events suited to local, domestic and international visitors. This has potential to attract a wider range of visitors to Alice Springs who have an interest in adventure experiences in the region.

Tourism developments in the region have been concentrated in Alice Springs and the West MacDonnell Ranges and related areas which receive the region’s highest visitor numbers. There is significantly less visitation and tourism development in the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region – as a broad estimate the Sandover-Plenty statistical area (which includes the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway) receives around 10% of the Alice Springs-MacDonnell tourism region’s visitors.

On the one hand the West MacDonnell Ranges is a major competitor with the Plan area given its greater accessibility, range of products and services, and marketing visibility. On the other hand, the less developed country in the East MacDonnell Ranges and around the Plenty Highway is seen as more appealing by some visitors who seek more remote and less developed experiences.

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2.4 Opportunities for the Region

Several recent initiatives and proposals provide potential opportunities for tourism development and growth in the East MacDonnell-Plenty Region.

- **Sealing of the Plenty Highway and Outback Way marketing.** Proposals by the NT Government for sealing the remaining unsealed portion of the Plenty Highway will open the highway to a wider range of travellers and provide opportunities for related experiences and services along and near the highway. The Outback Way is an important promotional journey linking Laverton in WA through to Outback Australia and into Winton Queensland. The Outback Way traverses the Stuart Highway via Tennant Creek and then onto the Barkly Highway heading east into Queensland. The Outback Highway Development Council (OHDC) was originally formed in 1997 to “cause the upgrade and sealing of the Outback Way, for the good of the nation”. OHDC has successfully lobbied for road improvement funding, with the Australian Government investing $330 million over a 10 year period to be allocated to upgrading sections of the Outback Way including sealing and widening the roads. Through road upgrades and regional marketing and promotion, OHDC aspire to improve the quality of life for inland Australians by increasing service provision and economic opportunities for communities. Tourism is a strong component of OHDC’s mandate supporting safe experiences celebrating the spirit and culture of inland Australia while respecting the natural environment. OHDC provides a mechanism for stakeholders to cooperate and collaborate on infrastructure and service projects, tourism, marketing and promotion and regional economic development. The Outback Way is also being developed as an Art and Artisan Trail with information about art galleries, art experiences, gemstones, attractions and art and performance events along the route.

- **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. The popularity of caravan and camping holidays extends across all age groups. It is a popular form of family holiday, with the majority (48%) of domestic caravan and camping trips conducted by travellers aged between 30 and 54 years, with increasing demand from younger travellers. Travellers aged over 55 years undertake around 29% of domestic caravan and camping trips. Extended trips (including in outback regions) by this ‘grey nomad’ age group are reportedly increasing, reflecting the entry to retirement of the large post-World War II baby boomer population. The over 55 drive market is already an established market for the Alice Springs area during the winter season. Caravan and camping travel by international visitors, while still comparatively small, also increased by 13% from June 2016 to June 2017 – particularly among European and North American visitors who are the main international source markets for the Alice Springs region.

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10 [www.outbackway.org.au](http://www.outbackway.org.au)
• **Megafauna Central and linkages to Alcoota.** This major new Alice Springs attraction, Megafauna Central, showcases the megafauna fossils found on the Alcoota Scientific Reserve and offers significant potential to stimulate interest and acts as a hub and booking portal for visits to the Alcoota site and nearby Engawala. Although Megafauna Central was only opened in July 2018 there is anecdotal evidence of visitors to the attraction inquiring about visits to the Alcoota site (which is currently closed to the public). There is also potential to link promotion of the Alcoota megafauna with Queensland’s Dinosaur Trail at Winton on the eastern end of the Outback Way.

• **Proposed Jervois Mine (KGL Resources Ltd).** Development of this mining operation (expected to commence mining in late 2018) near Jervois at the eastern end of the Plenty Highway has potential to provide employment and business opportunities for the Bonya Community and assist in stimulating the development of services for Plenty Highway travellers.

• **Turbocharging Tourism.** Under its *Turbocharging Tourism Action Plan* the NT Government aims to stimulate tourism development through funding initiatives and the preparation of strategic plans for Aboriginal Tourism and Tourism Industry Development (both under preparation at the time of writing this Plan). This East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Visitor Experience Plan places the region in a good position to leverage opportunities, funding and programs that may become available under the two strategic plans.

• **Tourism development in the Barkly Region.** The Barkly Regional Council is also planning for visitor experiences in its area, which adjoins the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region to the north (from around the Sandover Highway). As routes such as the Sandover Highway and the Binns Track traverse both regions there are opportunities for coordinated and collaborative experience development and promotion. The Barkly plan also proposes comprehensive planning to ensure the Stuart Highway becomes an exciting experience for travellers. It will be critical that regions work together for this.
3 Vision for the Future

3.1 Vision and Guiding Principles

The development of visitor experiences in the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region will be guided by the following Vision and Guiding Principles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>VISION</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Increased exposure of the East MacDonnell Ranges and Plenty Highway with growth in visitor numbers, dispersal and yield creating a range of social and economic outcomes for communities and businesses</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>GUIDING PRINCIPLES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Ensuring cultural continuity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Caring for country</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Consumer focus</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Sustainable business</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Distinctive Central Australian experiences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Capacity before commerce</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Sustainable built assets</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8. Community benefits</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Positioning the Region

A positioning statement helps inform all aspects of the visitor experience from pre-trip information to the experience while there and post trip follow up. It reflects what is special about the region and how it can differentiate itself from other destinations in the tourism marketplace.

To attract visitors, it is important for the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region to differentiate itself from the better-known West MacDonnell ranges and other parts of the NT.

Distinctive characteristics of the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region include:

- a sense of remoteness
- friendly communities – opportunities to connect with a variety of local people
- connections between pastoral and Aboriginal communities
- the mining story that played a lead role in the history of the region – and that can be experienced today at Arltunga and through fossicking.

The positioning for the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region will be:

*Where getting off the beaten track gives you the opportunity to experience both pastoral and Aboriginal cultural stories, traditional and contemporary.*

The positioning is not an advertising or marketing tagline - it is simply a concept that underpins the experience offered to the visitor and guides the way the region is marketed and promoted.
3.3 Visitor Markets

In developing visitor experiences in the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region a range of visitor markets will be targeted (see Table 1). These markets are mainly the current and emerging visitor markets for the wider Alice Springs-MacDonnell tourism region. The Alcoota Scientific Reserve has potential to attract niche markets comprised of palaeontology education and research visitors and geotourism visitors.

Table 2: Visitor markets for the Alice Springs-MacDonnell tourism region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drive Market</td>
<td>Self-drive leisure travellers often on extended trips. An estimated 140,000 visitors to the region in 2016-17(^{11}). Mainly domestic visitors – 29% intra-Territory visitors and 56% from Victoria/Tasmania, NSW/ACT and South Australia. A small percentage are international visitors. Tend to stay an average of 3 nights in the region. A variety of travel, accommodation and experience preferences. Some are self-sufficient travellers (in caravans or motorhomes). Some visit the more developed destinations, while others are on remote 4WD trips. 4WD enthusiasts, clubs and tourers are a niche market and will be attracted by the Binns Track and other remote journeys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired visitors</td>
<td>54% of the region’s interstate overnight visitors and 21% of overnight intra-Territory visitors are aged over 55. Many of these will be drive visitors, including those on extended trips (‘grey nomads’). Price will be a significant consideration for some of this market who are on fixed incomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International visitors</td>
<td>Typically, from North America and European countries The majority fly in to Alice Springs, but some are on coach tours or travel by private vehicle (owned or rented). Interested in iconic attractions and tours in Alice Springs, the West MacDonnell Ranges and Uluru. Some are independent travellers interested in immersive adventure, nature-based and Aboriginal cultural experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure and soft adventure</td>
<td>A variable market (in age, life cycle, skill levels, price points) interested in active holidays and exploration of the region’s natural and cultural attributes as independent travellers or on supported experiences. Come to the wider region for bushwalking (the Larapinta Trail), mountain biking, remote 4WD touring. For some adventure is one component of a wider destination experience and may be of short duration (a 4WD tour, balloon ride, mountain bike ride, camel ride, quad bike tour). For others the adventure activity is the prime focus of the visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festival and event visitors</td>
<td>Participants in or spectators at cultural and sporting events and festivals. They may seek other activities during their visit. Festivals and events may include local tourism and performances in event itineraries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Market | Description
--- | ---
**Conference and corporate visitors** | Itineraries may include tourism product as part of the overall conference or incentive program, or as pre and post touring options. There are existing infrastructure and facilities at Ross River Homestead which could host small business events groups, or incentives. Undoolya Station also has the capacity to host offsite dinners and potential incentive activities.

**Aboriginal cultural tourism visitors** | A varied group estimated by a study for Tourism NT\(^{12}\) to comprise 33% of the Australian population with different types on interest in Aboriginal experiences:

- **Observers** – interested in an overall tourism experience and preferring to view culture from a distance, such as museums, rock art sites and cultural centres (approximately 12.4% of the population)

- **Intrigued** – interested in visiting friends, a blend of comfort and challenge and connecting with culture through short ‘non-confrontational’ experiences (such as bush tucker experiences, art workshops) often planned (approximately 12.4% of the population)

- **Immersive** – expect holidays to provide opportunities to participate in events, learn and make personal connections to another culture (such as attending ceremonies, hearing stories), and learn something about themselves (about 13.9% of the population).

Current uptake in Aboriginal Tourism experiences by holiday travellers varies between international and domestic markets. Research by Tourism NT shows that approximately 82% of international holiday visitors, 22% of intrastate holiday visitors and 7% of intra-Territory holiday visitors to Central Australia participate in an Aboriginal tourism experience.

There is potential for a proportion of these visitors to be attracted to new cultural experiences and locations in the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway area, especially if they provide a different or less crowded experience than Alice Springs or the West MacDonnell Ranges.

**Palaeontology, science, museums and geotourism markets** | The Alcoota dig attracts scientists, palaeontologists and tertiary and secondary students with an interest in megafauna and fossils. This market has potential to grow. There is also potential to attract visitors interested in fossils, palaeontology and volunteer activities with tourism development of the Alcoota Scientific Reserve, coordinated marketing with the Dinosaur Trail (at the eastern end of the Outback Way in Queensland) and Megafauna Central in Alice Springs.

**Other Special Interest Markets** | Tourism NT are currently pursuing ‘special interest markets for some sectors. Special interest markets specific for the East MacDonnell-Plenty Region include:

- **Bird watching**

- **Education tourism for Australian schools**

- **Luxury outback experiences**

\(^{12}\) NT Department of Tourism and Culture (2017). *National demand for cultural tourism in Australia*. (Research conducted by Instinct and Reason).
4 Experience Development

In this section, experience development opportunities for the Region will be presented. They have been categorised as:

- 4.1 Road journeys
- 4.2 Community tourism action plans (providing greater specific details for communities in the region)
- 4.3 Pastoral Stations
- 4.3 East MacDonnell Experience
- 4.4 Events

In addition, two main visitor hubs for the region are envisaged – Gemtree on the Plenty Highway and a revitalised Arltunga as the hub for the East MacDonnell Ranges.

Actions are provided to implement each proposal and are prioritised as:

- **High**
  - Critical actions to be undertaken within 2 years
- **Medium**
  - Actions to be undertaken in 2 to 5 years. Some will be dependent on the completion of high priority actions
- **Low**
  - Actions to be undertaken in the longer term - 5 to 10 years.

*Figure 6: Flow Chart for prioritising implementation of recommendations*
4.1 Road Journeys

A major focus of this Visitor Experience Plan is the development of exceptional drive journeys that enable access and underpin visitor experience development through the region.

The region’s roads form an essential framework that enables visitors to access the region and experience its places, people and stories. A journey on the region’s semi-remote roads is also an experience in itself.

Themed drive journeys (that are well promoted and supported by quality visitor information, facilities and attractions) have become an important element of travel globally and have been instrumental in attracting increased visitation to regional and remote areas. The requirements for development and operation of a quality road journey are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Characteristics of quality road journeys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An integrated, coherent journey</td>
<td>The journey works in a holistic way. It tells a story (or stories) relevant to the areas passed through, has attractions that showcase places and people, and has facilities, services and accommodation at the right places to facilitate the journey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinated planning and delivery</td>
<td>Mechanisms are required to ensure the journey is developed in a consistent and coordinated manner by the communities, landholders, land managers and local government authorities along the route. This is often achieved through the establishment of a representative coordinating organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meets the needs and aspirations of visitor markets</td>
<td>The level of development, facilities and support should be aligned to the visitors undertaking the journey. There are different requirements between a sealed highway which attracts a variety of markets and a remote 4WD route where self-reliant visitors are seeking isolation and adventure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging attractions</td>
<td>Opportunities to be immersed in places along the route and engage with people and their culture is the essence of a memorable journey. There should be a range of places, attractions and products that bring the journey to life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging storytelling</td>
<td>Stories about the journeys, places and people are also central to the experience and the development of engaging attractions. Storytelling should be readily available through sources such as websites, downloadable apps, signage, attractions, tours and personal interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality visitor information</td>
<td>Information is easily available on all aspects of the route, facilities, attractions, booking, planning and safety and is managed so it remains up-to-date. A comprehensive journey website is an important tool for disseminating information. Globally, many drive journey websites are providing a one-stop-shop service covering current route information, booking links, maps, itineraries, guide books and interpretive material. Arrangements for provision of information by local visitor centres and tourism providers is also desirable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriate signage and road</strong></td>
<td>Direction finding and safety signage appropriate to the journey is provided. Roads are designed and maintained to the level required for the type of journey and expected visitor markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services and amenity</strong></td>
<td>Depending on the journey’s experience (remote, semi-remote, sealed highway) and the degree of visitors’ self-reliance, drive visitors need at locations appropriate to the journey:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• accommodation and campgrounds (at appropriate price points for markets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• rest stop facilities, access to water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• food and convenience stores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• fuel and vehicle repair services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• dump points for caravans and RVs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• access to mobile telephony and internet connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roadhouses on many remote routes are important centres for visitor services and accommodation and many are attractions in their own right (see Daly Waters Pub example in Appendix C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As outback travel increases in Australia the provision of developed camping facilities along tourism routes is important to ensure that camping is environmentally sustainable and to encourage travellers to stay longer at places along the route. Campgrounds are also opportunities for local people to develop attractions and interact with travellers (see Camping with Custodians example in Appendix C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effecting marketing and promotion</strong></td>
<td>Managers and stakeholders are active in promoting the journey and its features. Appropriate channels and methods are used to disseminate knowledge about the journey to potential visitors and the tourism trade.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Australia, remote iconic road journeys include the Gibb River Road in the Kimberley and the Savannah Way across northern Australia between Cairns and Broome. Such journeys provide opportunities to local communities to establish linked services and attractions. The case studies in Appendix C provide examples of the development and management of remote road journeys (the Savannah Way) and linked services and attractions provided by local communities and businesses (Camping with Custodians in Western Australia, Home Valley Station at the northern end of the Gibb River Road, and the Daly Waters Pub on the Stuart Highway).
The following routes are the primary journeys that will continue to underpin the experience of the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region.

- **The Plenty Highway.** Currently an adventurous experience, as the proposed sealing of the highway progresses this route will become suited to a broader range of markets, including travellers on the Outback Way route between Queensland and Western Australia, but importantly also as a new access route to the Red Centre from SE Queensland and Northern NSW markets. To maximise this potential, it is critical:
  - to develop a suite of compelling experiences that will encourage visitors to stop and enjoy the region rather than driving through
  - Increase the pace of the sealing of the road to match or exceed that of Qld (and WA). It is particularly important to keep in mind that there are a significant number of potential visitors touring western Queensland that will not choose to use the Plenty until most of it is sealed and the unsealed portion is well built and maintained.
  - capitalise on the inclusion of the Plenty Highway in the Outback Way drive route and potential collaborative information, marketing and lobbying with the Outback Way
  - leverage the interest in palaeontology by investigating cross-marketing links between the Alcoota fossil site (which this Plan proposes be opened for guided visitor access) and the Dinosaur Trail (which ends in Winton at the start of the Outback Way).

- **The East MacDonnell Ranges route.** Consisting of the Ross Highway from Emily and Jessie Gaps to the 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.

- **The 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

- **The Hay River Track.** This route travels south from the Plenty Highway through the Simpson Desert to Birdsville. It will be managed as a remote adventure experience for self-sufficient travellers.

**The Stuart Highway** south and north of Alice Springs acts as a gateway for visitors entering the East MacDonnell-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 encourage visitors to ‘get off the beaten track’ and explore the remote and unique communities, landscapes and stories the region has to offer. The East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway area will need to commit to participating in and complementing the future promotion, interpretation and facilities provided on the Stuart Highway in partnership with neighbouring regions.

*Changing this travel pattern is critical to the future economic growth of the region, and an important aim is to extend length of stay so visitors spend more than one night in the region.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS – ROAD JOURNEYS</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plenty Highway</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>NTG Public Companies such as Telstra &amp; Optus Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the experience along the Plenty Highway as sealing occurs including:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) provision of effective tourist directional signage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) a series of stopping points with picnic facilities and orientation signage about nearby sites and attractions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) gateway signage at the Stuart Highway junction and Queensland border</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) additional camping and overnight accommodation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v) establishment of motor vehicle recovery, repair and fuel supply service between Atitjere and Tobermorey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi) improved access to mobile telephony, particularly at the main communities along the highway.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2</strong></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Tourism NT Tourism Central Australia NT Dept Business Residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen the positioning of the Plenty Highway as the part of the Outback Way through:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) building partnerships with Queensland and the Outback Highway Development Council Inc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) further development of the story and point of difference the journey offers along the Plenty Highway</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) experience development along the journey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) effective promotion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A3</strong></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Tourism NT Tourism Central Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop coordinated, cross-border marketing with Queensland connected to the Dinosaur Trail (which ends at Winton), other western Queensland paleontological tourism sites, the Alcoota fossil dig and the new Megafauna Central experience in Alice Springs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A4</strong></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside each of the communities along the Plenty Highway, develop small welcome &amp; information bays with basic picnic facilities, similar to the one on the outskirts of Atitjere, which needs to be revitalised.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East MacDonnell Ranges Route</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A5</strong></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>NTG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widen the sealed section of the Ross Highway before Ross River Resort to create a two-way sealed highway.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A6</strong></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>NTG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seal or as a minimum, construct and maintain as an excellent gravel surface the road beyond Ross River to Arltunga Historical Reserve.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Binns Track</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A7</strong></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>NTG Tourism NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthen the development of the Binns Track as an iconic remote experience for the region through:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) installation of quality signage at key locations and junctions, including at its crossings of the Stuart and Barkly Highways.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ACTIONS – ROAD JOURNEYS

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ii)</td>
<td>identification and development of appropriate campsites and overnight accommodation</td>
<td>Tourism Central Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii)</td>
<td>improved route mapping and distribution of maps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv)</td>
<td>effective promotion, including an online presence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v)</td>
<td>An interpretation plan including audio signs and digital experiences. Stories throughout the region and neighbouring Barkly and Victoria Daly can link in to the overall experience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi)</td>
<td>A continuous maintenance and upgrade schedule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii)</td>
<td>The Binns Track as an iconic 4WD Experience - General awareness and promotion of the 4WD experiences along the Binns Track, elevating its status as a must do adventure drive (akin to the Gibb River Road journey). This could also include annual events such as themed tag-along tours or club journeys.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A8</td>
<td>Promote a series of regional itineraries including:</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>i) a two night return journey from Alice Springs via the Ross Highway, Binns Track and Arltunga Road with accommodation at Hale River station.</td>
<td>Tourism NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii) a three night return journey from Alice Springs via the Ross Highway, Binns Track and Plenty Highway with accommodation at Hale River Station and Gemtree (with packaged experiences based from here)</td>
<td>Tourism Central Australia (TCA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii) a four night return journey from Alice Springs via the Ross Highway, Binns Track and Plenty Highway with accommodation at Hale River station and at Gemtree (with packaged experiences based from here to Alcoota and Tower Rock/Mac and Rose Conservation Reserve)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iv) a longer journey from Alice Springs via the Ross Highway and Binns Track through to the Sandover Highway and into the Barkly Region.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A9</td>
<td>Develop a map and storytelling resource for regional road journeys that includes pastoral and Aboriginal oral histories. Investigate linking this resource to Tourism Central Australia’s proposed trails guide and app. Improved road signage welcoming visitors into the communities.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A10</td>
<td>Ensure that the region’s 4WD journeys are strongly promoted utilising the 4WD resource recently prepared by Tourism NT.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A11</td>
<td>Participate in planning for creation of the Stuart Highway as an exciting journey or travellers between Alice Springs and Darwin</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Community Tourism Action Plans

The East MacDonnell-Plenty Region covers a large area, with communities and attractions at different stages of tourism development. Community Tourism Action Plans will provide recommendations over a smaller area encompassing the tourism development opportunities specific to that community. This will provide the local community with the focus points and mechanisms to be able to engage in tourism (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and enable social and economic benefits for not only their own community members, but the wider Region as well. One of the goals of the Community Tourism Action Plans will be to assist communities in moving forward from the idea of tourism to actual enterprises and employment. Action Plans have been developed for Gemtree, Bonya, Atijere and Engawala.

Community Tourism Action Plans are intended to be guides for long term tourism development in a community or group covering the tourism vision, short and long-term tourism options, and identification of capacity development needs and strategies.

Figure 7 – East MacDonnell-Plenty map indicating locations of Community Tourism Action Plans
4.2.1 Gemtree

The caravan park/hub at Gemtree offers a range of accommodation, visitor services, entertainment and products. Tours, information and displays of the Harts Range gem fields are provided and self-guided 4WD tours can be arranged on pastoral stations. The caravan park is also used as a stopping point by travellers on the Binns Track. The caravan park operators have existing relationships with the surrounding Aboriginal communities and pastoral stations.

Gemtree will continue to operate and be developed further as a primary visitor hub on the Plenty Highway to cater for increasing demand to meet the needs and expectations of the region’s visitor markets. This includes:

- expansion of the accommodation offering and associated services and products
- potentially acting as a hub providing information on available experience and assisting in organising tours showcasing the area’s Aboriginal culture, pastoral and mining history, including tours run by people from the Engawala and Atitjere communities.

Gemtree Priorities

A summary of the Gemtree Priorities is listed below. More substantial details are provided in the Gemtree Community Tourism Action Plan within the Appendices of this document.

Table 5 – Summary of Gemtree Tourism Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>As demand grows and the capacity to invest increases, extend the accommodation offering at Gemtree at standards suited to visitor markets.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Work with Aboriginal communities and pastoral stations along the Plenty Highway to develop a program of cultural tours that showcase Aboriginal culture, pastoral history and mining.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Extend Gemtree’s role as a visitor experience hub for the Plenty Highway by providing information and considering booking for visitor experience products offered by Aboriginal communities and other operators.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Work with relevant Aboriginal communities and groups to investigate and, if feasible, develop Aboriginal-guided horse/wagon experiences.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>Investigate and, if feasible, develop additional products at the Gemtree hub such as bush tucker products, bush bathtubs.</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>Enable mobile telephony for travellers (as per Red Gum store).</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.2 Engawala

The Engawala community, situated on Alcoota Station (which is Aboriginal freehold land) about 30 km north of the Plenty Highway, will focus on developing tourism experiences which leverage off the anticipated increased number of visitors travelling on the Plenty Highway and Binns Track, the development of the Gemtree visitor hub and increased interest in the megafauna fossils at the nearby Alcoota Scientific Reserve. The community aims to improve its visitor infrastructure and products through:

- renovation of the ‘Old Store’ building to become an art gallery, museum and information and interpretation centre
- providing visitors services (potentially utilising community facilities) and camping facilities
- developing products such as art demonstrations and lessons, and guided on-country tours
- developing products offered by trained local aboriginal guides at the Alcoota fossil site under a partnership arrangement with the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (see section 4.5.6 on activation of the Alcoota site).

Table 6 – Summary of Engawala Tourism Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS – ENGAWALA</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 Seek funding to provide the capital required for investments.</td>
<td>High and Medium</td>
<td>NTG IBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 Renovate the ‘Old Store’ and develop it to become an art gallery, museum, information and interpretation centre.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>NT Art Trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3 Investigate and, if feasible, offer art demonstrations and lessons at the proposed art gallery.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4 Install Plenty Highway signage directing visitors to Engawala.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>NTG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5 Investigate and, if feasible, provide visitor services such as retail services, toilets and a dump point.</td>
<td>High and Medium</td>
<td>IBA?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C7 Work with Gemtree to develop cultural tours that showcase Aboriginal culture and the pastoral history of the area.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Gemtree Engawala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C8 Investigate, and if feasible, develop on-country Aboriginal cultural experiences.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C9 Promote Engawala visitor products and services through Gemtree, Tourism Central Australia and relevant websites and venues.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Gemtree TCA Tourism NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C10 Work with the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory to plan for and offer visitor experiences at the Alcoota fossil site</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>MAGNT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.3 Atitjere

The Atitjere community at Harts Range is an established stopping-point offering basic supplies and fuel for travellers on the Plenty Highway and Binns Track. It is also close to the Harts Range gemstone fossicking area. Community members aim to re-establish and improve management of the closed Spotted Tiger campground. As part of this re-development, community members would offer daytime art experiences at the campsite on selected days. As visitation to the region increases the community will investigate developing tours to local sites (such as fossicking areas, the old Harts Range police station and army camp) and natural attractions (such as Dulcie Ranges National Park, Boxhill Crater and Mac and Rose Chalmers Conservation Reserve).

Table 7 – Summary of Atitjere Tourism Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS – ATITJERE</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>D1</strong> Seek funding to provide the capital required for investments.</td>
<td>High and Medium</td>
<td>IBA?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D2</strong> Re-establish the Spotted Tiger campground to an improved standard including site facilities, infrastructure, access road and directional signage.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Barbara Petrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D3</strong> Work with interested parties to plan and establish a campground booking and payment system including an on-line capability.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Barbara Petrick TCA Tourism NT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D4</strong> Establish a sustainable system for day-to-day campground management, such as campground hosts.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Barbara Petrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D5</strong> Promote the Spotted Tiger campground through Gemtree, Tourism Central Australia, relevant websites and venues and the Harts Bush Sport Weekend.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Gemtree TCA Tourism NT Operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D6</strong> Investigate and, if feasible, develop local tour products such as fossicking tours and tours to the old Harts Range police station and army camp.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D7</strong> Investigate and, if feasible, develop tagalong 4WD tours to bush locations such as Dulcie Ranges National Park (via Dnieper Downs), Boxhill Crater and Mac and Rose Chalmers Conservation Reserve.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Community members especially Barbara Petrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D8</strong> Investigate the feasibility of upgrading the Atitjere community entrance and Visitor Information Bay to include improved amenity and establishment of a Drive-by Billboard Art Gallery.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>OHDC Inc Tourism NT CDRC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.4 Bonya

Bonya is located just off the Plenty Highway about 22 km from Jervois and 360 km from Alice Springs. The community at Bonya is planning to develop services (such as freight transport, vehicle recovery and repair, and fuel sales, and improved retail offering at the community store) to support the potential local population increases associated with workers for the proposed nearby Jervois mine and for use by Plenty Highway visitors. In addition, it is proposed to develop a campground near the community and short tagalong tours showcasing local art sites, bush tucker and hunting. Due to Bonya’s off-highway location directional signage and promotion of its facilities and services will be necessary to attract visitors.

Table 8 – Summary of Bonya Tourism Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS – BONYA</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>E1</strong> Seek funding to provide the capital required for investments. Particularly consider the Aboriginal Benefit Account.</td>
<td>High and Medium</td>
<td>Arramwelke Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E2</strong> Establish facilities for fuel sales (diesel and Opal) at Bonya.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Tyantentge Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E3</strong> Improve the range of retail sales at the Bonya store.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Tyantentge Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E4</strong> Establish a vehicle recovery and minor vehicle repair service.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Arramwelke Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E5</strong> Install Plenty Highway signage directing visitors to the services and facilities at Bonya.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Bonya NTG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E6</strong> Promote the facilities and services at Bonya through Gemtree, Tourism Central Australia, relevant websites, social media and venues</td>
<td>High and ongoing</td>
<td>Arramwelke &amp; Tyantentge Aboriginal Corporations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E7</strong> Undertake site and business planning for construction and management of a campground at Bonya.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Arramwelke Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E8</strong> Investigate and, if feasible, program of short tagalong tours close to the community showcasing aspects such as local art sites, bush tucker and hunting.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Arramwelke Aboriginal Corporation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Plenty Highway Pastoral Stations

There are several pastoral stations along the Plenty Highway, most holding perpetual leases. There is limited interest however in tourism by station managers, although a few of them are offering basic services already.

It is recommended that the local Council and NT Government continue to work together to support and grow the existing opportunities, as well as meet with Station Owners to showcase studies of opportunities. Many Station Managers are concerned that tourists will create a biosecurity hazard and some feel that visitors may not understand pastoral practices leading to negative experiences and reputational damage.

Centre Farm also manages/leases a few properties in the Region such as the Ti-Tree mango farm that are on Aboriginal Land. The farms are mainly fruit growing locations (mangoes, melons etc) and although not currently a tourism experience, can possibly grow visitors to the region through fruit-picking work and also paddock to plate type opportunities.

Table 9 – Summary of Pastoral Stations and potential tourism opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastoral Station</th>
<th>Current Tourism Offer</th>
<th>Proposed Future Tourism Offer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harrys Creek</td>
<td>Simple campsite, accommodation and high tower used by family members</td>
<td>Interested in tourism on a very small scale but would require an experience offering to support accommodation given proximity to AS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Tank</td>
<td>Appears to offer cultural awareness workshops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gardens</td>
<td>No tourism services</td>
<td>No immediate interest in tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Riddock</td>
<td>No tourism services</td>
<td>No immediate interest in tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huckitta</td>
<td>Alternative access to Dulcie Ranges NP is through property.</td>
<td>Interested in offering tagalongs focussed cattle station activities on Huckitta and gemstone fossicking over near Eaglebeak outstation. Location has potential for the development of other services including accommodation. Needs follow up by NTG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>Current small tourism offering</td>
<td>Comfortable to continue at present level with no plans to expand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jervois</td>
<td>Kiosk and campground</td>
<td>Station ownership in transition to next generation who may or may not be interested in additional tourism activities in future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacDonald Downs</td>
<td>No tourism services</td>
<td>No immediate interest in tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Gum Store</td>
<td>Store with 4G phone coverage</td>
<td>Considering some accommodation and art centre; ideal location for overnight stop on Binns Track. Further discussions to occur by phone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarlton Downs</td>
<td>No tourism services</td>
<td>This station is owned by the same organisation as Tobermorey, which is where they choose to offer service to visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobermorey</td>
<td>Fuel, Repairs, 2 Cabins, 2 single rooms and a Camping area. No meals available. CASA standard airstrip.</td>
<td>Comfortable to continue at present level with no plans to expand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pastoral Station | Current Tourism Offer | Proposed Future Tourism Offer
--- | --- | ---
Undoolya Station | Outback Quad Adventures have exclusive touring rights on Undoolya Station, the oldest working cattle station in the Northern Territory. Specialising in group station touring and corporate touring. | Further discussions to occur with both Outback Quad Adventures and Undoolya Station about additional opportunities or linking experiences in the area. [https://outbackquadadventures.com.au/](https://outbackquadadventures.com.au/)

### 4.4 East MacDonnell Ranges Experiences

#### 4.4.1 Nature Parks and Reserves

The joint management nature parks and reserves along the East MacDonnell Ranges – Yeperenye/Emily and Jessie Gaps, Corroboree Rock, Trephina Gorge, N’Dhala Gorge and Ruby Gap – with their outstanding rock art and gorge scenery are core nature and culture visitor destinations along the East MacDonnell Range. These areas will continue to provide core visitor experiences compatible with their outstanding natural and cultural values:

- **Yeperenye/Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park** and **Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve** will continue to be managed as sustainable day use areas with opportunities for appreciation and interpretation of rock art and Aboriginal culture.

- **Trephina Gorge Nature Park** will continue to be a camping and recreational hub. Opportunities to improve and manage accommodation and camping, sustainable visitor activities for a range of markets and quality interpretation will be investigated. Environmental and water supply issues will need to be considered. Ideally Trephina Gorge will remain a nature based camping hub while Arltunga Historical Reserve is developed as the main visitor and information hub for the East MacDonnell Ranges (see section 5).

- **N’Dhala Gorge Nature Park** will be managed as a more remote cultural landscape with low key, sustainable opportunities and managed opportunities to appreciate its significant and sensitive rock art.

- **Ruby Gap Nature Park** will be managed as a hub for remote 4WD access. The provision of basic facilities including visitor amenities (including toilets) and simple signage will be required to aid in visitor compliance and protection of the environment.

- **Arltunga Historical Reserve** - Revitalisation of Arltunga as the major visitor hub for the area is proposed. Please see section 5 for details.

Tourism planning for these parks and reserves will be undertaken as part of the joint management process between Traditional Owner and the PWCNT and in accordance with the relevant joint management plans. The following actions indicate opportunities that may be investigated as part of the joint management process.
### Table 10 – East MacDonnell Ranges parks and protected area tourism priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS – East MacDonnell Ranges Joint Management Parks</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1 Investigate the development of Traditional Owner-guided talks and tours at Emily and Jessie Gaps.</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Joint management partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| F2 Investigate improvements to camping facilities and management at Trephina Gorge including:  
i) provision of additional camping sites to manage overcrowding  
ii) use of campground hosts  
iii) upgrading and leasing of the current ranger accommodation as visitor accommodation (in association with possible transfer of the ranger station to Arltunga Historical Reserve – see section 4.5.5)  
iv) implementation of an online booking system | Medium | Joint management partners |
| F3 Investigate development of a disabled access track at Trephina Gorge. | Medium | Joint management partners |
| F4 Investigate improvement of the Trephina Gorge access road, including potential sealing to enable access by 2WD hire cars. | Medium | Joint management partners |
| F5 Provide basic visitor facilities and improved visitor information and warnings at Ruby Gap Nature Park to manage environmental impacts and the use of the area as a remote experience. | High | Joint management partners |
| F6 Trails - Investigate opportunities for walking, mountain biking and horse riding experiences in the East MacDonnell Ranges. | Low | Joint management partners, landowners and other stakeholders |

#### 4.4.2 Ross River Resort

The privately-operated Ross River Resort, based around the original Loves Creek Homestead, is an established visitor hub for the East MacDonnell Ranges. It provides camping and roofed accommodation, conference and function facilities, food, fuel and other supplies, and visitor information. In addition to accommodation, the resort is used as a stopping place by day and overnight visitors to the area, guided tours and travellers on the Binns Track.
The resort now requires refurbishment and rejuvenation to meet the needs of contemporary markets. Critical success factors to maintain the resort’s important role in the region’s visitation are:

- progressive upgrading of facilities and accommodation to contemporary standards
- exploration of potential partnerships with tourism operators to offer products utilising or based at the resort
- further development as a regional conference and event centre - including potentially catering for regional corporate function.

**Table 11 – Ross River Resort tourism priorities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONs – Ross River Resort</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| G1 Develop and implement a plan for the future of the Ross River Resort (in consultation with Northern Territory Government, regional and tourism stakeholders) aimed at rejuvenating the resort visitor offering to meet the needs of contemporary visitor markets and to complement proposed visitor experience development in the East MacDonnell Ranges. The plan should include consideration of:  
  i) accommodation and facility upgrades  
  ii) conference and event development  
  iii) tourism partnerships.  
  iv) The nearby historic penal camp close by to Ross River which could be used as a visitor attraction | Medium | Ross River Resort owners |

**4.4.3 Hale River Homestead**

The privately-operated Hale River Homestead at Old Ambalindum on the Binns Track about 115 km north east of Alice Springs offers distinctive and recently developed accommodation, function facilities, food services and associated visitor activities (such as walking and cycling trails). The homestead is used as a base for exploring the surrounding area, as a stopping-place for guided tours and travellers and as a function destination. Its visitor offering is well suited to visitor markets for the Binns Track and East MacDonnell Ranges. There is potential to further develop partnerships with operators and other stakeholders and storytelling compatible with East MacDonnell Ranges themes.

**Table 12 – Hale River Homestead tourism priorities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONs – Hale River Homestead</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1 Continue to operate and develop the Hale River Homestead to provide visitor experiences and services that are compatible with, and enhance, East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway experiences. This may include exploration of partnerships with operators and other stakeholders and development of storytelling and events utilising the swimmable dam with the magnificent landscape as a backdrop.</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Hale River Homestead owners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Events

Development of a range of events will assist in attracting visitors and promoting the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region as a vibrant visitor destination. The Garma Festival example in Appendix C illustrates the regional tourism and community benefits that are generated from remote area cultural events.

The region currently has two major events - the annual Harts Range Bush Sports Weekend (also known as the Harts Range Races) held near Atitjere and Wide Open Space, an annual 3-day music, arts and desert culture festival held at Ross River Resort.

Development of one or more cultural events in the Plenty Highway area would complement the proposed development of community-based cultural experiences in the area. As the Arltunga Historical Reserve is revitalised the development of festivals and events would assist in developing the site as the major visitor hub in the south of the region.

Table 13 – East MacDonnell-Plenty Region Event Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS – EVENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Game Changers

Game changers are critical projects that are essential for improving the region’s visitor experiences.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Plenty Highway Enterprise Support
Local community tourism enterprises will be a core part of tourism experience development along and near the Plenty Highway. Effective business planning, development and operation will be critical to ensure increased regional tourism, enterprises that are feasible and deliver the right products for markets, and flow-on of economic benefit from tourism to local communities. As most community residents have limited tourism experience, access to capacity building and business support and advice will be critical to enable successful tourism development.

Plenty Highway Campgrounds
The establishment of campgrounds by communities along the Plenty Highway will add to the accommodation options along the highway and encourage visitors to stay longer in the Region. Currently campgrounds are proposed at Bunya and Attitjare. The campgrounds also provide communities with opportunities to offer linked Aboriginal cultural and nature-based experiences that will be an added attraction for visitors and increase the revenue gained from tourism.

Alcoola Fossil Site Activation
The Alcoola fossil beds, located about 200 km north of Alice Springs off the Plenty Highway, contain an exceptionally rich concentration of unique, 4 to 8 million year old megafauna and other fossils formed from animals dying around a drying waterhole. The megafauna fossils are now showcased at Magnetite Central, a major Central Australian visitor attraction opened in July 2022. The increased interest in the site presents an opportunity to create a visitor experience linking to existing ‘Dinosaur Trails’.

East MacDonnell Ranges Eco-Accommodation
Eco-accommodation facilities (such as eco-lodges and safari camps) have become signature experiences for many outstanding outback and other remote locations, ensuring an ever-increasing interest in nature and cultural experiences and assisting in developing a region’s identity in the marketplace. The East MacDonnell Ranges currently lacks eco-accommodation aimed at self-adventure and higher and nature-based visitors. Pending approvals and site assessments, there is an opportunity to investigate the feasibility of eco-accommodation that could be established through a private/public partnership.

Artunga Experience Development
The Artunga Historical Reserve is the site of a former gold mining town that was formed in response to a gold rush in 1887. Today the Reserve is managed by Parks, Wildlife and Heritage Division of the Northern Territory. The Artunga Historical Reserve is an untapped opportunity that could become a strong driver for day and evening visitation to the East MacDonnell Ranges. As a major visitor hub for the area, the site would appeal to a range of markets using the Stuart Highway and Stuart Track. This would require significant investment 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.
5.1 Plenty Highway Enterprise Support

Local community tourism enterprises will be a core part of tourism experience development along and near the Plenty Highway. Effective business planning, development and operation will be critical to achieve increased regional tourism, enterprises that are feasible and deliver the right products for markets, and flow-on of economic benefits from tourism to local communities. As most community residents have limited tourism experience, access to capacity building and business support and advice will be critical to enable successful tourism development.

A mechanism to assist developing tourism enterprises is desirable to ensure that new enterprises and their personnel have access to advice, support and training and development programs that meet their needs. The types of support that may be needed include:

- understanding of the tourism industry and development of contacts and networking
- employment training programs for skills development including workforce skills, hospitality and tour guide training
- business planning and operation
- development of skills specific to an enterprise – such as marketing, content presentation, specific knowledge (from traditional Aboriginal and more contemporary sources)
- mentoring of new operators and enterprises.

There are numerous government training and business support programs and grants and private provider programs that may be suitable for new enterprises in the region. A service that assists in sourcing the right programs and making applications would help to streamline the business planning and development process for new community tourism enterprises. In other cases, assistance may be needed to source providers or personnel to provide for specific training requirements (such as tour guide training, art marketing).

There are several options for providing an enterprise support service to community enterprises:

- a Local Independent Enterprise Support Service established as a foundation, corporation or other self-funding enterprise and potentially located at the Plenty Highway visitor hub at Gemtree. Adequate funding would be needed to cover administration, staff and activities. The offering of additional services (such as tourism booking) might supplement income.

- a Broad Scale Independent Enterprise Support Service established through the Outback Way organisation and potentially covering businesses along the entire Outback Way route. Adequate funding would be needed to cover administration, staff and activities. It may be feasible for Outback Way to use their reputation and position to gain significant philanthropic support for this concept.

- a funded Central Desert Regional Council (or other local organisation) team with a tourism training coordination and facilitation role. This team would coordinate tourism enterprise training and business capacity development by acting as a source of advice and a conduit to existing support programs. Partnerships might be developed with training providers in Alice Springs to offer programs. Use could also be made of the NT Department of Trade, Business and Innovation Small Business Champion service based in Alice Springs to assist in identifying appropriate types of business support.

- a contract with an existing training provider in Alice Springs to carry out the tourism training coordination and facilitation role.
Regardless of the model adopted, the following actions are critical to the success of community businesses in the area:

- Commitment to funding over an extended period of time (up to 10 years)
- Resources committed to working directly in this region and ideally non-government to ensure continuity and resource commitment to this sole role
- Flexibility in delivery for different scales of activities
- Commencement in the short term

The Central Desert Regional Council recently developed a model for Doing Small Business in the Bush workshops. The model was trialled in Yuendumu and should be referenced for future tourism enterprise support in the region.¹³

Given that the Barkly region will be at a similar stage of development for some businesses, cost efficiencies may be achieved through working together.

Table 14 – Priorities for enabling Plenty Highway Enterprise Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS – PLENTY HIGHWAY ENTERPRISE SUPPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K1 Investigate and establish an effective mechanism to assist new and developing community tourism enterprises with training and business capacity building. This may include also the development of cultural campgrounds for visitors along the Highway.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹³ Central Desert Regional Council, Doing Small Business in the Bush, April 2013
5.2 Plenty Highway Campgrounds

The establishment of campgrounds by communities along the Plenty Highway (dealt with in the individual Community Tourism Action Plans) will add to the accommodation options along the highway and encourage visitors to stay longer in the region. Currently campgrounds are proposed at Bonya and Atitjere.

The campgrounds also provide communities with opportunities to offer linked Aboriginal cultural and nature-based experiences that will be an added attraction for visitors and increase the revenue gained from tourism. This concept of linked campground and cultural products has been successfully introduced into the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of Western Australia with the Camping with Custodians scheme (described in Appendix C). There is also a possibility of using the Camping with Custodians brand identity in the Northern Territory with agreement from Western Australia.

Once established community campgrounds and linked cultural experiences will need to be promoted to build market awareness. Local and internet information and directional signage from the Plenty Highway will also be required.

Table 15 – Priorities for enabling Plenty Highway Campgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS – PLENTY HIGHWAY CAMPGROUNDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Alcoota Fossil Site Activation

The Alcoota fossil beds, located about 200 km north of Alice Springs off the Plenty Highway, contain an exceptionally rich concentration of unique, 6 to 8 million year old megafauna and other fossils formed from animals dying around a drying waterhole. Fossils found include the world’s largest bird, marsupial ‘lions’ and ‘wolves’, a giant wombat-like animal and enormous crocodiles and goanna-like reptiles. The fossil site is important for the understanding of the evolution of Australian fauna and the aridification of Central Australia. It is a significant site for palaeontology research and education.

The fossil beds are protected by the Alcoota Scientific Reserve managed by the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT). The Scientific Reserve, which is close to the Engawala community, is not open to the public and access is restricted to research and education activities.

The megafauna fossils are now showcased at Megafauna Central, a major Central Australian visitor attraction opened in July 2018 and part of the revitalisation of the Alice Springs CBD intended to boost regional tourism. The opening of Megafauna Central has led to increased visibility of the Alcoota fossils and potential increased demand for on-site visitation by geotourism, voluntourism and palaeontology education markets. Further focus on the area could be achieved by Plenty Highway marketing and interpretation links between the Alcoota site, Megafauna Central and Queensland’s Dinosaur Trail at Winton on the eastern end of the Outback Way. The Alcoota megafauna fossils date from a more recent era than the dinosaur fossils in Queensland and would complement the picture of evolution presented by the older Queensland sites.

Visitor development at the Alcoota Scientific Reserve would also 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 (see the Engawala Community Tourism Action Plan in the Appendices).

Visitor activation of the Alcoota fossil site will be done gradually as a partnership between MAGNT, the NT Government, the Engawala Community and potentially other stakeholders such as institutions involved in on-site archaeology and research. Given the small size of the site and the sensitivity of the fossils and archaeological excavations, it is proposed that the site be developed for small scale, controlled experiences.

Australia’s Dinosaur Trail

Australian’s Dinosaur Trail is a journey visiting the dinosaur museums in Hughenden (Flinders Discovery Centre), Richmond (Kronosaurus Korner) and Winton (Australian Age of Dinosaurs, fossilised dinosaur footprints at the Dinosaur Stampede) in central Queensland. The Trail also includes fossil fossicking sites near Richmond, school holiday programs, behind-the-scenes experiences and the possibility of volunteering at museums and digs. A discounted pass is offered for attractions on the trail.

Between them the museums and sites on the Dinosaur Trail showcase fossils of terrestrial and marine dinosaurs and other animals dating from around 100 million years ago and older and provide insights into the environments and geology of those periods.

Source: http://www.australiasdinosaurtrail.com
Activation of the Alcoota fossil site for visitor experiences requires the following steps:

i) protection of the site in the short term and enabling of further research and digging

ii) development of an improved access road and gateway

iii) archaeological development of an area that will enable visitors to view layers of excavation

iv) initial development of basic interpretation, visitor infrastructure and amenities

v) training of Engawala community members to provide on-site interpretation

vi) development of interpretive products with participation by the Engawala community – for example through guided tours, tagalong tours or provision of step-on guides. Interpretation could include the Alcoota fossil site story and the Aboriginal history and culture of the surrounding area

vii) development of resources to underpin guided tour interpretation – for example augmented reality resources to demonstrate how megafauna lived in Australia

viii) investigation of voluntourism opportunities (where visitor pay for participation in on-site palaeontology activities) and the necessary support facilities (such as accommodation, catering, transport) and operating arrangements.

---

**Voluntourism**

Voluntourism – volunteer participation in environmental, cultural, scientific research or social programs – is becoming an increasing travel trend globally. Visitors pay to take part in specific monitoring or research programs through packages that include activities, accommodation and catering. The visitors gain an in-depth, behind-the-scenes experience while contributing to the outcomes of the particular program.

Voluntourism programs are run by management agencies, research and educational institutions, museums, nature parks and sometimes by not-for-profit organisations such as Conservation Volunteers Australia.

The **Australian Age of Dinosaurs** near Winton, Queensland is a major museum housing and conducting research on Australia’s largest collection of dinosaur fossils and showcasing those dinosaurs and Australia’s evolutionary history. Two main voluntourism packages are offered.

The **Dig-a-Dino** experience is a 7-day experience run three times a year. In this fully-catered and accommodated experience, participants take part in 5 to 6 days of fossil digging under training and guidance by experts. A side trip to the Dinosaur Stampede National Monument and experience cleaning fossils specimens in the laboratory are also included. The experience is very popular and has a waiting list.

The **Prep-a-Dino** experience enables participants to work under supervision in the Fossil Preparation Laboratory learning to prepare and restore fossils. Packages are offered from 2 to 10 days. Participants with 10 days experience qualify as an Honorary Technician and can participate in further laboratory work free of charge (subject to annual refresher training).

*Source: http://www.australianageofdinosaurs.com*
### Table 16 – Priorities for enabling the Activation of the Alcoota Fossil Site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **M1** Develop a Master Plan and Feasibility Assessment for visitor experiences at the Alcoota Scientific Reserve in a partnership approach between the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT, the NT Government, the Engawala Community and other stakeholders. The Master Plan should cover:  
   i) the site visitor experience concept  
   ii) site visitor access, infrastructure, facilities and interpretation resources  
   iii) visitor product / tour concepts  
   iv) training for Engawala community members in guiding and interpretation  
   v) partnership governance arrangements. | High | Led by MAGNT with input from the Engawala Community, TCA, the Central Desert Regional Council, the tourism industry, institutions and researchers. |
| **M2** Develop improved access to the site in accordance with the Master Plan. | Medium | |
| **M3** Develop site visitor infrastructure and improvements in accordance with the Master Plan. | Medium | Museum and Art Gallery of the NT |
| **M4** Undertake training of Engawala community members in site-related guiding and interpretation. | Medium | |
| **M5** Develop site guided products in accordance with the Master Plan. | Medium | |
| **M6** Work with the Outback Way, Dinosaur Way and Megafauna Central to include the Alcoota fossil site in linked fossil and geotourism marketing and interpretation. | Medium | |
| **M7** Investigate voluntourism opportunities and experience support facilities for the Alcoota site and potentially Megafauna Central. | Low | |
5.4 East MacDonnell Ranges Eco-accommodation

Eco-accommodation facilities (such as ecolodges and safari camps) have become signature experiences for many outstanding outback and other remote locations, serving as centres for unique, immersive nature and cultural experiences and assisting in developing a region’s identity in the marketplace. The East MacDonnell Ranges currently lacks eco-accommodation aimed at soft adventure and higher end nature-based visitors. An appropriate site for eco-accommodation would need to be determined (dependent the location) subject to land availability and ownership, management plan provisions, environmental impacts and their management, access and availability of water. With the revitalisation of the Arltunga Historical Reserve (see section 4.5.6) there may be potential for development of accommodation at or nearby. Dependent on the location, eco-accommodation might be developed as a public/private investment on reserve land with prior planning and land release/approvals undertaken by Government to underpin an expression of interest process to the private sector.

Table 17 – Priorities for enabling the development of East MacDonnell Ranges Eco-Accommodation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS – East MacDonnell Ranges Eco-accommodation</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N1 Investigate a site for, and the feasibility of, new eco-accommodation in the East MacDonnell Ranges.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Tourism NT Joint Management Partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5 Arltunga Experience Development

The Arltunga Historical Reserve is the site of a former gold mining town that was formed in response to a gold rush in 1887. The site operated for over 30 years as the major centre for an extensive gold mining region, supporting up to 3,000 people. Arltunga is important in the history of Central Australia, as it was the region’s first major European settlement. Today Arltunga has a substantial and relatively intact complex of gold mining sites and buildings (some of which have been restored), that provide a picture of alluvial and reef gold mining in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These sites include mine shafts, diggings, mullock heaps, machinery, wells, government buildings, occupation and commercial sites, cemeteries, and a Government Battery.

The Reserve is managed by the PWCNT. It is 110 km from Alice Springs, 77 km of the distance being on the sealed Ross Highway and the 33 km on an unsealed road which is generally suitable for 2WD vehicles but may become impassable when wet. The Binns Track passes north/south through the area. The Reserve currently provides a visitor centre (open daily from 8am to 5pm), self-guided displays and interpretive walks, Ranger guided tours and day use facilities. Overnight camping is not permitted.

Interpretation is...

A means of communicating ideas and feelings which help people enrich their understanding and appreciation of the world, and their role within it. Aboriginal cultural interpretation focuses on Australia’s Aboriginal cultural heritage for the same purpose (Interpretation Australia).

Visitor interpretation in a various modes and formats (signs, digital, face-to-face) is key to ensuring accurate visitor enjoyment, education, appreciation and advocacy of the Arltunga Historic Site. It also provides employment opportunities for local people to share their stories. Samples of interpretation concepts and projects can be viewed at Appendix C.
A nearby hotel (the Arltunga Bush Hotel) has closed but an associated privately-operated, rudimentary campground is still operating. Visitors can undertake fossicking on an adjacent Fossicking Reserve.

Arltunga was previously a more popular destination (including a weekend destination for residents of Alice Springs) but that visitation has lessened with the closing of the hotel. The visitor experience and interpretation at the site has become dated and does not align with contemporary approaches (such as those utilising interactive experiences and digital technology).

The Arltunga Historical Reserve is an untapped opportunity that could become a strong driver for day and overnight visitation to the East MacDonnell Ranges. As a major visitor hub for the area, the site would appeal to a range of markets using the Ross Highway and Binns Track. This would require significant investment 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. The East MacDonnell Ranges lacks eco-accommodation options – there may be potential to develop sympathetic eco-accommodation (such as ‘glamping’ safari tents) in the Arltunga area. The old Arltunga Pub site is on freehold land and may have future potential for new visitor facilities, service and accommodation development for visitors attracted to the revitalised Arltunga experience.

Feasibility assessment and master planning is desirable to ensure that revitalisation of the reserve’s visitor experience occurs in a planned and sustainable manner and that potential environmental impacts and water supply issues are adequately considered. A master plan would also provide a basis for attraction of investment in Arltunga’s revitalisation and associated products. Given the area’s significance in development of Central Australia’s mining industry, there may be scope for seeking philanthropic mining industry contributions to upgrading of the reserve’s interpretation.

Samples of both Interpretation Concepts and Site Master Planning can be viewed at Appendix C – Visitor Experience Case Studies and Examples.

**Corporate Philanthropy**

Corporate philanthropy by Australian companies is a potential source of funding for community, tourism and research programs and developments. For example, the Mindaroo Foundation (established by Fortescue Metals Group Chairman Andrew Forrest) contributes to various training and employment (including for Aboriginal people and communities), social, arts and culture, research and conservation programs in Australia and other countries. In July 2018 it was announced that the Mindaroo Foundation would invest in a research facility at the Ningaloo Centre in Exmouth, Western Australia to study the Ningaloo Reef and oceans – an initiative aimed at both contributing to sustainable management of the Ningaloo World Heritage Area and its marine resources and contributing to employment and tourism in the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Recommended Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **O1** Prepare and implement a Master Plan for the Arltunga Historical Reserve that addresses:  
   i) a concept for a revitalised Arltunga visitor experience  
   ii) feasibility assessment  
   iii) contemporary and innovative approaches to interpretation and the visitor centre  
   iv) visitor services and facilities  
   v) potential for accommodation in or near the reserve  
   vi) potential partnerships for visitor products  
   vii) investment sources  
   viii) transfer of the PWCNT ranger station from Trephina Gorge to Arltunga.  
   The Master Plan should be developed in consultation with Traditional Owners, local landholders, the tourism industry and other stakeholders. | High | PWCNT |
| **O2** Investigate sources of investment and philanthropy for revitalisation of interpretation, facilities and services at Arltunga in accordance with the Master Plan. | High or Medium | PWCNT |
| **O3** Seek expressions of interest for commercial guided experiences and services (such as food) at Arltunga service in accordance with the Master Plan. | Medium | PWCNT |
| **O4** Investigate suitable sites for establishment of appropriate overnight accommodation (potentially through a private-public partnership) in accordance with the Master Plan. | Medium | PWCNT |
| **O5** The Binns Track travels through Arltunga, with effective journey/interpretation planning, the Track has the potential to become an iconic must-do 4WD adventure. | Medium | NTG |
6 Enablers

6.1 Governance

The region crosses into various jurisdictions including as a Ward of the Central Desert Council. With varying landholders, communities, businesses and cultural and historic sites and land management obligations, it is important to establish a strong and united governance system to implement the Visitor Experience Plan.

Figure 7: Draft Governance Structure for Implementation of the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Plan

6.2 Marketing and Promotion

Tourism Central Australia will hold a pivotal role in the future marketing and promotion of the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway area, it is imperative they are involved in future tourism development opportunities, providing a mechanism for assessing market potential and advocacy. TCA can support regional promotion and representation, aid in development of region marketing strategies, new product development and packages both within the region and also externally connecting to journeys such as the Outback Way, Overlander’s Way and Explorer’s Way.

6.3 Interpretation and Storytelling

The Visitor Experience Plan has noted the importance of upgrading existing interpretation across the entire region. Much of the signage is old or non-existent across the region and key sites such as Arltunga Historical Reserve and Trephina Gorge could certainly benefit from broader interpretation planning including digital interpretations. Identifying a synonymous East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Brand will ensure a consistent look and feel and creation of continued and connecting stories across the region, that differentiate from those of the West MacDonnell area.

A broader regional interpretation plan can aid in developing key ‘themes’ for the region, aiding in future experience development and unique branding proposition.

Gemtree provide exceptional onsite interpretation and story-telling experiences. Developing this tourism experience as a hub can help feed ongoing stories into neighbouring communities, as well as facilitating capacity building.

There are several new interpretation opportunities identified, particularly at the Alcoota site and also within the local communities. Identifying a training provider who can support these communities is imperative to future tourism experience development.
6.4 Capacity Building

Significant resources will need to be committed to increasing the capacity of communities to deliver on their aspirations as documented in these strategic directions. Some of the support required will include:

- **Training**
  - basic tourism tour guiding, customer service, hospitality, micro finance, business planning and management

- **Mentoring**
  - long term mentoring will be required to complement training and to support the establishment of enterprises

- **Business support**
  - whilst guiding and offering experiences to tourists may suit some people, the business support, booking systems and promotion will require considerable effort and may best be done as an Investment and Funding.

6.5 Investment and Funding

Opportunities identified in this plan will require a mix of public and private sector investment. The following table sets out the items, the level or priority and the likely sources. These may include Grants, Loans or Equity arrangements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O1 Bonya</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>ABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>ABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>ABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Community/Store</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community/Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O2 Roads</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>NTG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O3 Gemtree developments</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Gemtree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O4 East MacDonnell Ecolodge – EOI</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>NTG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O5 Telecommunications – Mobile coverage at/near Plenty and Ross Highway communities.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Telstra/Optus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O6 Accommodation at Red Gum Visitor Info bay</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O7 Arltunga Revitalisation</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O8 Spotted Tiger – R&amp;M = upgrade</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>ABA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O9 Alcoota Activation</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>NTG (committed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7 Next Steps

THE PROJECT AREA

Plenty Highway Enterprise Support
Business & Community Development Planning Model
Estimated investment: $250,000 - $300,000 PA

Alcoota Fossil Site Activation
Site Plan and Feasibility & Impact Assessment Estimated investment: $4-5 million (planning, infrastructure, capacity building)

East MacDonnell Ranges Eco Accommodation
Feasibility and site plan/assessment Estimated Investment: $3 million (pre planning and site clearances prior to Expression of Interest process)

Next Steps

Arltunga Experience Development
Feasibility and site plan/assessment Estimated Investment: $3.5-4 million (planning $300,000 plus site development)
Arltunga has also been recommended as a potential site for future Eco Accommodation.

Binns Track
Epic 4 WD Adventure - Journey Site Planning (including new experiences, track extensions, maintenance and interpretation). Estimated Investment: $500,000

Plenty Highway Campgrounds
Bonya and Atjilere Communities have been proposed for development of commercial campgrounds. Site plan and feasibility assessment, Estimated Investment: $1.5-2 million (planning, infrastructure, capacity building)
8 Conclusion

The East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region holds exceptional natural and cultural values, interwoven with historic early settlement stories and true outback communities. This Visitor Experience Plan has holistically reviewed the current visitor offer and outlined aspirations and opportunities of the various project partners, that will lead towards economic sustainability and empowerment, while also celebrating and advocating for the regions natural, cultural and historical values.

Some funding has already been committed towards visitor experience improvements within the region, however priority projects such as Enterprise Support, the Alcoota Fossil Site, Eco Accommodation, the Binns Track and new campgrounds have the opportunity to support the Region’s overall tourism vision of economic sustainability, growing visitation and visitor nights. A coordinated approach for each project will need to be taken to ensure regional tourism sustainability, through linking and complementing journeys for visitors both within the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Region and beyond.
APPENDICES
## Appendix A - Existing Products & Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attraction/Product</th>
<th>Location &amp; Access</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Ownership/Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NATURE PARKS AND OTHER PROTECTED AREAS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeperenye/Emily and Jessie Gaps Nature Park</td>
<td>10 km east of Alice Springs on the Ross Hwy, a 15 minute drive on sealed roads.</td>
<td>1,200 hectares in area(^{14}). Significant Aboriginal sacred sites and rock art depicting the caterpillar creation story. Day use only (no camping). Offers picnic facilities, short walking tracks and interpretative signs. Popular also with Alice Springs residents. Traditional Owners ask that no photographs be taken of rock art. Rock climbing and abseiling restricted to designated areas due to cultural values and fragility of rock faces. <strong>Anthwerke Interactive Experience</strong> – downloadable app launched by the Traditional Owners in late 2017 and funded from park rent monies(^{15}) (<a href="http://sitesandtrails.com.au/site/anthwerke-emily-gap">http://sitesandtrails.com.au/site/anthwerke-emily-gap</a>) Proposed Traditional Owner project to develop a walking and cycling trail between Emily and Jessie Gaps.</td>
<td>Joint management by Traditional Owners and PWCNT. Aboriginal land leased back to the NT in 2009 under a 99 year lease. Joint Management Plan (2016).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corroboree Rock Conservation Reserve</td>
<td>42 km east of Alice Springs on the Ross Hwy (sealed road).</td>
<td>Small 7.28 hectare park around a distinctive dolomite rock outcrop(^{16}). Limited recreation opportunities. Day use facilities (no camping) and a short walking track. Significant and sensitive sacred site with restricted information. Traditional Owners seek to ensure that visitors stay on tracks and do not climb the rock and that commercial photography and filming of the site not occur. Receives 15,000 visitors annually (2011 estimate).</td>
<td>Joint management by Traditional Owners and PWCNT. Aboriginal land leased back to the NT in 2009 under a 99 year lease. Joint Management Plan (2011).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NATURE PARKS AND OTHER PROTECTED AREAS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trephina Gorge Nature Park</td>
<td>85 km east of Alice Springs on the Ross Hwy (sealed road). 9 km entry road with last 5 km on 2WD gravel road. Close to Ross River Resort.</td>
<td>1,1771 hectare park. One of the most popular parks in the East MacDonnell Ranges managed for low-key family recreation and bush tourism. Has an estimated 28,100 visitors a year (2017 estimate). Recognised as a ‘quiet alternative’ to the West MacDonnell visitor destinations. Scenic landscape with quartzite cliffs, water courses and 2 gorges and rock holes. One of the outback’s largest Ghost Gums (promoted on tourism websites). Significant Aboriginal sites and dreaming stories, part of a living cultural landscape. Day use area and 3 camping areas with facilities (camping fees apply, and generators are not permitted) at Trephina Gorge. Promoted by PWCNT as a camping base for visiting other parks in the area. Access to John Hayes Rockhole suitable only for high clearance 4WD vehicles. Three short walks and the longer Trephina Ridge Top Walk (5 hours one way) connecting Trephina Gorge with John Hayes Rock Hole for experienced walkers. Promoted by PWCNT for school educational excursions. School group camping areas can be booked. Interaction with a Traditional Owner can also be arranged for a fee. Ranger station in the park. During the peak visitor period (May to September) rangers conduct guided walks and campfire talks. Zoning plan segments the park into zones for high and low visitor use and conservation purposes. Proposals for rock climbing and mountain biking require approval.</td>
<td>Joint management by Traditional Owners and PWCNT. Aboriginal land leased back to the NT in 2009 under a 99 year lease. Joint Management Plan (2011).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N’Dhala Gorge Nature Park</td>
<td>90 km east of Alice Springs via the Ross Hwy (sealed) and a sealed road to near the Ross River Resort. Park entry via a 4WD track which is impassable after heavy rain.</td>
<td>501 hectare park. Living cultural landscape with significant sites, art and stories of the Eastern Arrernte people. Thousands of stone engravings (petroglyphs), archaeological sites. Protection of engravings and sensitive sites is an important management concern. Nationally significant threatened plant species. Low key day use and a camping (fees apply at the small camping area). No water provided. One and a half hour interpreted walk to the gorge and some petroglyphs.</td>
<td>Joint management by Traditional Owners and PWCNT. Aboriginal land leased back to the NT in 2009 under a 99 year lease.</td>
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18 PWCNT (no date). Excursion Guide: Trephina Gorge Nature Park
## NATURE PARKS AND OTHER PROTECTED AREAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attraction/Product</th>
<th>Location &amp; Access</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NATURE PARKS AND OTHER PROTECTED AREAS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Arltunga Historical Reserve</td>
<td>110 km east of Alice Springs via the Ross Hwy (77 km sealed road) and the Binns Track (33km of gravel 2WD road). Unsealed road may be impassable when wet.</td>
<td>Site of Central Australia’s first town associated with a gold rush in 1887 and subsequent mining for 30 years. Features significant remains of mines, equipment and buildings, some of which have been restored. Visitor Centre open from 8am to 5 pm daily providing information and displays. self-guided interpreted walks. Day use facilities. No camping. Receives about 5,700 visitors a year (2017 estimate). Fossicking is not permitted in the reserve. A Fossicking Reserve where fossicking is permitted with an NT Fossickers Permit is located nearby.</td>
<td>Joint Management Plan (2011).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruby Gap Nature Park</td>
<td>150 km east of Alice Springs accessed on the Binns Track from Arltunga Historical Reserve. High clearance 4WD required. Track may be impassable after heavy rain.</td>
<td>Remote park with rugged terrain. Site of Central Australia’s first mining rush in 1886. Scenic gorge and waterholes along the Hale River. No facilities. Camping is permissible at Ruby Gap (subject to fees). No formed walking tracks, but a walking route up the Hale River bed to Glen Annie Gorge (2 hours return) and Fox’s Grave (4 hours return).</td>
<td>Joint management park Joint Management Plan appears to have been completed in September 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcoota Scientific Reserve (<a href="https://www.magnt.net.au/alcoota">https://www.magnt.net.au/alcoota</a>)</td>
<td>About 200 km north east of Alice Springs on Alcoota Station off the Plenty Hwy.</td>
<td>Unique megafauna fossil site from the late Miocene epoch (around 6 to 8 million years ago) demonstrating the evolution of animal and plant life at the beginning of aridification of central Australia. Fossils include the world’s largest flightless bird and wombat and a giant crocodile. Active scientific research site not currently open to the public or developed for visitation. A major visitor attraction showcasing the Alcoota fossils, Megafauna Central, was opened in Alice Springs in July 2018. Located close to the Engawala Community and Alcoota Station (which is Aboriginal land).</td>
<td>Museum and Art Gallery of the NT.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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20 PWCNT (no date). *Fact Sheet: Ruby Gap Gorge Nature Park*
### NATURE PARKS AND OTHER PROTECTED AREAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attraction/ Product</th>
<th>Location &amp; Access</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Ownership/ Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mac &amp; Rose Chalmers Conservation Reserve</td>
<td>312 kms north east of Alice Springs accessed via the Plenty Hwy and Binns Track.</td>
<td>474 hectare private reserve established under a conservation covenant on the MacDonald Downs pastoral lease. Conserves mulga woodlands and several threatened species. Striking granite boulder landscape. Located near the Binns Track. High clearance 4WD vehicle recommended for access to the reserve. Offers self-sufficient bush camping and informal bushwalking routes (no formed tracks) are indicated on reserve signage.</td>
<td>Privately managed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dulcie Ranges National Park</td>
<td>About 220 km north east of Alice Springs accessed via the Plenty Hwy and Binns Track or Huckitta Station.</td>
<td>Remote park (191 square km in area) not mentioned on the PWCNT website. 4WD access only on station tracks. No facilities. Reportedly features quartzite escarpments, gorges and numerous Aboriginal rock art and occupation sites.</td>
<td>PWCNT.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ACCOMMODATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attraction/ Product</th>
<th>Location &amp; Access</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Ownership/ Management</th>
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<th>Location &amp; Access</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACCOMMODATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotted Tiger Campground</td>
<td>At Atitjere (Harts Range) on the Plenty Highway</td>
<td>Remote campsite. Not currently operating.</td>
<td>TO/s including Barbara Petrick of Atitjere Community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jervois Station Campground</td>
<td>At Jervois Station on the Plenty Hwy</td>
<td>Basic camping Basic store and fuel supply</td>
<td>Jervois Station (family owned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobermorey Station Cabins, rooms and Campground <a href="http://tobermorey-roadhouse.com.au/">http://tobermorey-roadhouse.com.au/</a></td>
<td>At Tobermorey near the Qld/NT border on the Plenty Hwy</td>
<td>2 simple cabins, 2 modern single rooms with ensuite. Shady campground with facility for open fire cooking and ablutions with hot &amp; cold water. No meals available. Basic store and fuel supply</td>
<td>Tobermorey Station (Speed family) who also own and operate Tarlton Downs further to the west.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batton Hill Camp</td>
<td>On the Hay River Track south of Jervois Station on Atnteye Aboriginal Land.</td>
<td>Private Traditional Owner-operated serviced camp on the remote Hay River Track 4WD route between Birdsville and the Plenty Highway. The camp provides shelter, a bush kitchen, toilets and hot showers. Traditional Owners also offer guided tours of country and the nearby Goyder’s Pillar. Entry to Atnteye requires a permit. Information on the camp is limited 23.</td>
<td>Atnteye Traditional Owners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Location &amp; Access</strong></td>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandrifter Safaris (<a href="https://www.sandrifter.com.au/east-macdonnell-ranges-day-trip">https://www.sandrifter.com.au/east-macdonnell-ranges-day-trip</a>)</td>
<td>Tours depart from Alice Springs</td>
<td>Half day guided tour in 4WD vehicle featuring landscapes, rock art and Aboriginal heritage at Emily and Jessie Gaps, Corroboree Rock and Trephina Gorge. Departs twice daily in the morning and afternoon. One day tour small group tour (4 to 6 persons) visiting Corroboree Rock, Trephina Gorge, Arltunga and along the Binns Track to Hale River Homestead. Geological, rock art and pastoral heritage interpretation. East Macs Art Retreat and Beanie Fest (22 June to 2 July 2018) – Trip targeted at artists with accommodation in Alice springs, Ross River Resort and Hale River Homestead. Visits Trephina Gorge, various scenic landscapes (such as the Ross River floodplains, Paddy’s Plain, Claraville Plains) and Arltunga and includes events and workshops in Alice Springs and a visit to an Aboriginal community (Aomoonga, on the eastern edge of Alice Springs)</td>
<td>Local Alice Springs tour operator specialising in small group tours in central and northern Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Springs Expeditions (<a href="https://www.alicespringsexpeditions.com.au/east-macdonnell-ranges/">https://www.alicespringsexpeditions.com.au/east-macdonnell-ranges/</a>)</td>
<td>Tours depart from Alice Springs</td>
<td>One day guided 4WD tour on pastoral station tracks to N’Dhala Gorge, then to Arltunga and Trephina Gorge. Focus on landscape, Aboriginal and European heritage. 2 day guided 4WD tour to N’Dhala Gorge and Arltunga, an overnight camp at Ruby Gap and a walk at Trephina Gorge. Company specialises in expeditions in remote areas and utilises off-road routes.</td>
<td>Local Alice Springs company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outback Quad Adventures</td>
<td>Undoolya Station, 15 minutes’ drive east of Alice Springs</td>
<td>Only commercial tour operator on a working cattle station, the oldest working cattle station in the NT.</td>
<td>Station owned and operated by the Hayes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction/Product</td>
<td>Location &amp; Access</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Ownership/Management</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><a href="https://outbackquadadventures.com.au/">https://outbackquadadventures.com.au/</a></td>
<td>Offers half day, full day and corporate adventures on quad bikes, and a 4WD cattle station tour. Can tailor packages for groups, host events and support film crews. Will transfer customers to and from Alice Springs.</td>
<td>family (6th generation on the station). Tours hosted by Kath and Rob Frost.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemtree Fossicking Tours</td>
<td>On the Plenty Hwy (sealed section) 140 km north east of Alice Springs.</td>
<td>Tag-along garnet and zircon fossicking tours in the Harts Range area from March to October (booking essential). Tours include equipment hire, experienced guide and appraisal of stones collected. Commence from the Gemtree Caravan Park.</td>
<td>Privately owned and operated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land of Plenty Tours (<a href="https://www.discovercentralaustralia.com/gemtree-tours">https://www.discovercentralaustralia.com/gemtree-tours</a>)</td>
<td>Departs Alice Springs</td>
<td>Day tours from Alice Springs to Gemtree on the Plenty Hwy offering a live School of the Air experience, fossicking for garnets, a cultural and art workshop with Traditional Owners, a nature walk, dining with the Gemtree family and pastoral history interpretation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote Outback Cycle Tours, Plenty Hwy Cycle Touring Adventure (<a href="https://roctours.com.au/tours/plenty-highway-cycle-tour/">https://roctours.com.au/tours/plenty-highway-cycle-tour/</a>)</td>
<td>Mt Isa (Queensland) and ends at Alice Springs.</td>
<td>7 day small group guided tour (8 guests, maximum). Begins at Mt Isa and travels the Outback Way from Boulia then turning off the Plenty Hwy on the Binns Track south to Ruby Gap National Park and then the Ross Hwy to Alice Springs. Equipment (including mountain bike) provided. Camping accommodation.</td>
<td>Private company specialising in adventure cycling tours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attraction/Product</td>
<td>Location &amp; Access</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Ownership/Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxhole Meteorite Crater</td>
<td>About 180 km (265 km by road) from Alice Springs on Dnieper Station off the Plenty Hwy</td>
<td>Does not appear to be open to the public. Gemtree Caravan Park can organise self-drive 4WD access.</td>
<td>On Dnieper Pastoral Lease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akngerrekenhe Art Centre</td>
<td>At Atitjere (Harts Range) on the Plenty Hwy about 215 km from Alice Springs.</td>
<td>Features art for sale from local artists in a verity of media. A member of DesArt Incorporated, a peak body representing community-based art centres in Central Australia.</td>
<td>Atitjere Community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide Open Space (<a href="http://wideopenspace.net.au">wideopenspace.net.au</a>)</td>
<td>At Ross River Resort, 85 km from Alice Springs</td>
<td>An annual 3-day music, arts and desert culture festival held each May with a reputation for innovative performance and art. Provides camping areas and accommodation at the resort.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B – Tourism Context

NT and Central Australian Trends

The NT had an estimated 1,861 million overnights visitors in the year ending December 2017\(^24\) – 1.568 million domestic overnight visitors and 293,000 international visitors (15.7% of the total).

Overall the NT’s **domestic overnight visitation** increased in 2017 compared with 2016. This was due to increases in domestic travel for business and other purposes. Domestic holiday visitation actually decreased by 2.6% from 2016 to 2017, a trend that was below the national average of 6% growth in domestic holiday visitation\(^25\). This trend was also seen in Western Australia (WA) which also experienced a decrease in domestic holiday visitation.

In the NT in the year ending December 2017:

- interstate holiday visitor numbers were down by 3.6% for the NT as a whole and by 15% for Central Australia
- intra-Territory holiday visitors decreased by 1.3% for the NT and by 14% for Central Australia
- expenditure by domestic holiday visitors decreased by 23% between 2016 and 2017.

The NT’s **day visitation** is increasing. In 2017 the NT had an estimated 1.68 million day visitors (an increase of 14% on 2016) who spent $216 million (a 16% increase).

**International visitation** to the NT increased by 2.2% in 2017 over 2016 and international visitor expenditure increased by 9.9% while visitor nights remained steady\(^26\). This trend paralleled growth in international visitation in all Australian jurisdictions except WA, although the level of international visitation growth in the NT is below the 6.5% national average and represents a slight drop in the Territory’s market share of international visitors to Australia. International visitation growth in Central Australia in 2017 was greater than in the Top End – an 8.6% growth in visitor numbers (211,000 visitors), a 29% increase in visitor nights (1.2 million nights) and a 14% increase in expenditure ($260 million).

In the 3 years to 2017 the NT saw decreases in some of its traditional visitor markets (the UK, Germany, France, Canada and New Zealand) and increases in Asia markets (particularly Greater China).

Alice Springs-MacDonnell Visitation

The project area is situated within the Alice Springs-MacDonnell tourism region which covers the town of Alice Springs, the East and West MacDonnell Ranges, Ti Tree, the Tanami Desert, Yuendumu and Hermannsburg. The region received around 23% of the NT’s domestic overnight visitors and 47% of its international leisure visitors in 2017\(^27\).

In the year ending June 2017 the tourism region had an estimated 484,000 overnight visitors, 75% of whom were domestic visitors (50% interstate and 25% intra-Territory)\(^28\).

\(^{24}\) Tourism NT (2018a). *Northern Territory Tourism Data – latest Visitor Data: Year Ending December 2017.*

\(^{25}\) Tourism NT (2018b). *Domestic Visitation to the Northern Territory: Year ending December 2017.*

\(^{26}\) Tourism NT (2018c). *International Visititation to the Northern Territory: Year ending December 2017.*

\(^{27}\) Tourism NT (2017a) and (2017b).

\(^{28}\) Tourism NT (2017). *Tourism NT Regional Profile, Alice Springs and MacDonnell, Report Period: Year Ending June 2017.* This is the source of the information in this section.
• **Interstate visitors** comprise 66% of domestic overnight visitation. Over half (around 52%) of interstate visitors are leisure visitors (holiday and visiting friends and/or relatives (VFR)), while 32% come for business purposes. Interstate visitors stay an average of 6.1 nights and form the region’s highest yielding source market. They visit mostly in the cooler winter and spring months, with only 25% coming in the hotter December and March quarters.

• **Intra-Territory visitors**. Around 33% of domestic overnight visitors come from within the NT. Half of the region’s intra-Territory overnight visitors come for business purposes and a smaller number (32%) visit for leisure purposes. They stay in the region an average of 2.6 nights.

• **International visitors** comprise around 25% of the region’s overnight visitors and come mostly for leisure purposes, staying an average of 4.8 nights. International visitors tend to visit in the December (31%), March (28%) and September (24%) quarters.

### Overnight visitors to the Alice Springs-MacDonnell region, year ending June 2017 (Source: Tourism NT (2017))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intra-Territory</th>
<th>Interstate</th>
<th>Total Domestic</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holiday</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>117,000</td>
<td>151,000</td>
<td>114,000</td>
<td>265,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFR</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>17,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>78,000</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>144,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Visitors</td>
<td>121,000</td>
<td>241,000</td>
<td>362,000</td>
<td>122,000</td>
<td>484,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Nights</td>
<td>308,000</td>
<td>1,497,000</td>
<td>1,775,000</td>
<td>590,000</td>
<td>2,365,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALOS(^{29}) (nights)</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$344M</td>
<td>$77M</td>
<td>$421M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where do visitors come from?

Queensland (22%), South Australia (22%) and Victoria/Tasmania (31%) are the main sources of the region’s interstate visitors. Visitors from NSW/ACT and Western Australia comprise 18% and 7% of interstate visitors respectively. Queensland and WA visitors stay the longest (9.1 and 8.4 nights respectively) while NSW/ACT and Victoria/Tasmania visitors stay 5.5 and 5.6 nights. South Australian visitors stay fewer nights – an average of 3.5 nights.

Around three-quarters of the region’s international visitors come from North America and Europe. In the year ending June 2017 19.7% of international visitors to the region were from the USA, 16% from the UK, 15.5% from Germany and 27% from other European countries (France, Scandinavia, Switzerland, Italy, Netherlands).

How do they get there?

Aircraft or private/rental cars are the main transport to and around the region for intra-Territory and interstate visitors. International visitors mainly use aircraft and coach transport (see Figure 1). While motorhomes or campervans are used by only a small percentage of visitors, 7% of international visitors use this method of transport.

\(^{29}\) Average Length of Stay
Where do visitors go?

Visitation is concentrated in Alice Springs and West MacDonnell Ranges areas. It is estimated that 91% of visitors go to Alice Springs with its concentration of popular attractions such as the Alice Springs Telegraph Station and Alice Springs Desert Park. Accommodation in Alice Springs had an average occupancy rate of 72% in 2016-17.

Around 10% of the region’s visitors visit the Sandover-Plenty statistical area, which includes the East MacDonnell-Plenty area.

Visitor profiles

Interstate and international visitors to the region tend to travel alone or as adult couples.

- In the year ending June 2017 26% of interstate visitors travelled alone, 34% as part of an adult couple, 11% as part of a family group and 17% with friends and relatives.

- A high proportion (44%) of international visitors travelled alone, 34% were part of an adult couple, 9% were with a family group and 12% with friends and relatives.

The majority (78%) of interstate visitors are aged over 40 years, over half being aged over 55 years (see Figure 2). Around a third (31%) of international visitors aged between 15 and 29 years, while around a half are aged over 40 years.
Visitation by Age, Alice Springs-MacDonnell Region, year ending June 2017

Visitation by Age - year ending June 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>Intra-Territory</th>
<th>Interstate</th>
<th>International</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-29</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-54</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of Total Visitors
Appendix C – Visitor Experience Case Studies & Examples

Camping with Custodians, WA

Camping with Custodians in northern Western Australia (WA) is the first scheme of its kind in Australia. It provides visitors with the opportunities to camp on Aboriginal lands in a campground operated by the local Aboriginal community and to meet with and learn from Traditional Custodians. The fees charged at the campgrounds provide economic opportunity for the local community.

The Camping with Custodians initiative was commenced by Tourism WA in 2013 when tourism research revealed that, while visitor interest in Aboriginal tourism experiences was high in WA (78%), participation in such activities was low (21%) primarily due to a lack of accessible experiences. Investigation of the scheme’s potential began in the remote Kimberley Region, where 12 sites were identified by both Aboriginal communities and Tourism WA. After significant planning and consultation, the Imintji Campground opened in 2016, followed by the Jarlarloo Riwi Mimbi Campground in 2017. The project also moved across to the Pilbara where new experience opened at Peedamulla in 2018. Development of a third Kimberley experience is in process at Violet Valley situated 30 km from Warmun.

The sites and communities chosen for this project needed to meet key criteria including:

- location of the campground near a popular tourism route
- resolution of land tenure issues
- a supportive community situated close to the site and strongly engaged in the project
- demonstration of a sound business case (Business Plans are prepared by each participating community).

Criteria for selection of sites are as follows:

- situation on land owned or controlled by Aboriginal people. It is possible for Camping with Custodians sites to be on the conservation estate but in that case the Aboriginal stakeholder(s) are required to have a leasehold or other form of tenure that places decision-making for the camping ground in their hands
- the experience involves camping or linked activities where there is obvious interaction between Aboriginal people and campers, enabling the visitor to learn about lifestyle, history, heritage and culture of WA Aboriginal people. The experience could be an immersion in life on a cattle station, learning about remote area community living, or an appreciation of traditional and/or contemporary Aboriginal ties to land and the environment
- campgrounds must be fully compliant with all the requirements of the State’s caravan and camping regulations. The operating community must will strive to provide facilities and comfort at a level that makes those standards an attraction in themselves (such as flushing toilets, hot showers and potable water).
A diversity of Camping for Custodians experiences is being developed depending on a community’s situation and preferences. Some communities wanted to provide accommodation, whereas others were keen to offer services such as tour guiding, shops, cafes, equipment hire and firewood sales. Appreciating the need for flexibility and adaptability, communities have been able to determine work arrangements for community members that support cultural obligations and commitments to country and culture.

In May 2017 **Imintji community** and Tourism WA won a Planning Institute Australia national planning award for community engagement and consultation, for the Camping with Custodians that community’s campground. Imintji was the pilot campground, initially starting with 20 campsites including toilets, hot showers, grassed picnic area and BBQs. Due to the success of this site since 2016, an additional 30 sites are in planning. The campground is managed on a rotating roster by two community members who service the area every day. A safari camp (leased by the community to APT) has been constructed and local community members manage both the nearby roadhouse and art gallery. Imintji has been able to tap into existing experiences like the Gibb River Bike Challenge, by providing accommodation for up to 400 riders and their support crew in 2017. The website [www.imintji.com.au](http://www.imintji.com.au) recommends advanced bookings which can either be done by phone or email.

The **Mimbi Campground** has been able to benefit from an existing tourism experience in the area, the Mimbi Caves ([www.mimbicaves.com.au](http://www.mimbicaves.com.au)). Guided tours are offered at the caves and several tour operators include the attraction on their itineraries. Opening the campground provided additional benefits, encouraging visitors travelling through the region to stop and stay, while also injecting further economic support into the area. At present the campground offers 15 sites and the Mimbi Community is working towards doubling the campground capacity, while also offering sites specifically for tour operators. Bookings are made on arrival via the Fitzroy Crossing or Halls Creek Visitor Centres.

The **Peedamulla Station Campground** commenced operating in April 2018. The Campground is situated on an 220,000 hectare, Aboriginal owned and operated pastoral station. The station also has heritage-listed buildings, one of which was restored and is now used as the campground office and store. The site is classified as a ‘nature-based campground’ and offers powered and unpowered sites, toilets and showers and gas BBQs, while also giving visitors an understanding of traditional Aboriginal culture intertwined with pastoral life. The campground website ([http://peedamulla.com.au/](http://peedamulla.com.au/)) provides a live ‘book now’ function showing all availability.

The campgrounds are the first step towards developing linked regional visitor experiences and tourism product packages. So far, new complementary experiences have included local area tours, night time dance and corroboree performances, and onsite shops selling both local art and craft, souvenirs and supplies.

The Camping with Custodians ‘more than a campground’ brand has been developed and is in use by the three current campgrounds. In the future this will be able to provide collaborative marketing and awareness of this unique experience.
Home Valley Station, Kimberley Region Western Australia

Situated in the Kimberley Region, Home Valley Station was developed from the former Durack River and Kuranjie Stations. Kuranjie was purchased by the Indigenous Land Corporation on behalf of the Balanggarra people (Home Valley Station) and the Nyaliga people (Kuranjie and Durack River Stations) of who are the Traditional Land Owners of the area. This combined land area covers 3.5 million acres and was purchased with the vision of continuing the pastoral property, introducing tourism and developing an Indigenous training centre, all of which would provide sustainable employment and commercial opportunities for the local Aboriginal people. The training centre provides learning opportunities in tourism, hospitality and pastoralism to Aboriginal people.  

Situated 120km from Kununurra along the iconic four wheel drive Gibb River Road, Home Valley Station has been well positioned to tap into tourism opportunities associated with the Road. At 650 km long, the Gibb River Road connects Derby, Wyndham and Kununurra and was named as the ‘Ultimate Road Trip’ by Lonely Planet in 2014. The Road receives an average of 20,000 travellers annually. Use of the Road is increasing and there has been recent investment in road access improvements and the development of visitor attractions along the route. In addition to road access, Home Valley Station has an airstrip which is available for guest use.

Home Valley Station provides a range of accommodation options - luxury ‘Grass Castles rooms’, guesthouse rooms, eco-tents and a campground for self-catering visitors. There is an on-site bar and restaurant serving fresh local cuisine. Guests have a range of activity options including hiking on marked trails, helicopter flights, fishing in the Pentecost River, and station tours. Facilities are also provided for events and conferences. The Station website (https://www.hvstation.com.au) provides for online booking.

Garma Festival

The acclaimed Garma Festival in Arnhem Land, now in its 20th year, is coordinated and programmed by the Yothu Yindi Foundation (YYF). The festival attracts more than 2,500 Indigenous and non-Indigenous attendees, including political and business leaders from across the globe, over a 4 day period. Garma is an opportunity for different cultures and leaders to come together learn, understand, connect and advocate for issues faced by Indigenous Australians. It also provides opportunities to share visual art, ancient storytelling, dance and music, and education and training programs relevant to cultural tourism, craft, governance and youth leadership. Workshops include traditional activities, language, understanding kinship and showcasing caring for country work done by local ranger groups.

Garma aims to:

- provide contemporary environments and programs for the practice, preservation, maintenance and presentation of traditional knowledge systems and cultural traditions and practices, especially bunggul (traditional dance), Manikay (song), Miny’ tjî (art) and ceremony
- share knowledge and culture, thereby fostering greater understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians
- develop economic opportunities for Yolngu.

All money raised through participant registration fees goes back into YYF to support projects in Arnhem Land. YYF also invites online donations and receives corporate, Federal and Territory Government sponsorships. Revenue is reinvested in the festival experience - $5 million was recently invested in improved campground facilities and ablutions blocks, a permanent performance stage, a forum auditorium, water tanks, classrooms for training and workshops, an office and media centre, a café and a library for all published works relevant to the festival.

Festival participation grew by 6% from 2016 to 2017. YYF has a dedicated festival website that provides event programs and online bookings. It also operates a Facebook page. From a promotional perspective, the 2017 festival generated more than 100 media stories.

In 2017 the festival had 2,650 attendees, several of whom were local Aboriginal families, stall holders or festival presenters. A total of 959 tickets were sold, the majority to attendees from the NT (13.6%) and NSW (13.5%). In 2018 adult tickets are priced at $2503.60 and include access for the entirety of the 4-day event, airport shuttles, basic tea and coffee facilities, all meals, camping accommodation (assembled tent, sleeping bag and air mattress). Packages are also offered for students and corporate groups. Additional revenue is generated through sales of artworks, and sales at other stalls and the café.

31 www.yyf.com.au
The Savannah Way

The Savannah Way is described as Australia’s ‘Adventure Drive’ and promoted as one of the top 10 touring routes in Australia by Australian Traveller. The Savannah Way extends 3,700 kms from Cairns in Queensland to Broome in Western Australia, passing through the diverse environments of the tropical savannahs, the Top End and the Kimberley Region and traversing 15 national parks and 5 World Heritage areas. A minimum of 14 days is recommended to complete the journey. The journey incorporates both sealed highways and off-road travel, allowing visitors to choose their own adventure and undertake segments of the route depending on their vehicle type, interests and accommodation needs (camping or motel).

Development of the Savannah Way grew out of a 1988 initiative by rural businesses operating between Cairns and Darwin to develop tourism opportunities. An affiliated body, Savannah Guides Limited, was established to train businesses and staff in tourism practices and guiding. Today Savannah Guides is a membership based not-for-profit organisation offering on-country training schools, accreditation programs and business support for visitor experiences development.

The Savannah Way was officially opened as a drive route in May 2004. A not-for-profit organisation, Savannah Way Limited, was established to collaboratively market and promote business, attractions, events and activities along the route and to support local communities and economies. Savannah Way Limited is a member-based organisation with a Board of Directors (with representation from WA, NT and Queensland) and as a part-time manager. Membership consists of tourism and local businesses, government agencies and community organisations who work together to promote the driving route. There are currently 52 members who can choose the level of membership pending on their size and preferred promotional representation and marketing activities.

The Savannah Way provides opportunities both for on-ground business in the region and for tour operators. Several tour companies specialise in the Savannah Way and several vehicle rental companies (such as Britz, Australian 4WD Rentals and Thrifty) promote the touring route and offer 4WD vehicle packages and vehicle drop-off points along the way. In addition, the Savannahlander, Gulflander and Queensland Rail offer rail journeys alongside the touring route.

The Savannah Way website provides suggested itineraries for components of the touring route, a downloadable visitor guide, safety tips and maps. Brochures for the route are distributed via travel hubs and at relevant trade shows. The Savannah Way is also promoted by Tourism Australia, Tourism NT, Queensland Regional Tourism and affiliated local visitor centres along the touring route.

Through the Savannah Way Green Trail brand Savannah Way Limited recognises and endorses businesses committed to environmental sustainability and green energy along the touring route and provides information on the ecosystems and ecosystem management along the route.

33 www.savannah-guides.com.au

34 www.savannahway.com.au

Driving through Roper Bar Crossing (NT) on the Savannah Way
Daly Waters is located just over 600 km south of Darwin and has long been a popular stopover for travellers, historically by cattle drovers and other travellers attracted by the permanent water sources, and later by drivers on the Stuart Highway. The area was named by John McDouall Stuart in 1861 and formed part of the Overland Telegraph line in 1872. The first pub was constructed in 1893 and the current pub (built in 1930) still retains some of the original walls, making it the oldest building in the Northern Territory. The pub features quirky memorabilia left by visitors on its walls.

Tourism NT reports that the Katherine/Daly region attracts an average of 224,000 visitors annually who spend around $114 million annually. Most of the region’s visitors are self-drive travellers who stay in hotels, motels or commercial campgrounds. The Daly Waters Pub is a popular centre for travellers who include backpackers, tour groups and grey nomads. It offers meals and a range of accommodation including cabins, motel rooms and caravan and camping facilities. During the peak season (May to September) there are live performances every night in the family-friendly beer garden. Due to its popularity, the Pub advises that bookings for accommodation and meals should be made in advance. Visitors can book online via www.dalywaterspub.com.

Visitors to Daly Waters can also visit the Stuart Tree (which has a blaze assumed to be the mark of John McDouall Stuart), an old police station and gaol, and the airstrip which has historical significance as Australia’s first international airstrip and features an old Qantas hanger and memorabilia. Constructed initially for an airmail run in the 1930s, the airstrip was later acquired by the RAAF for use during World War II.

Pudakul Aboriginal Cultural Tours

Pudakul is an Aboriginal owned and operated family business located an hour’s drive east of Darwin near Kakadu National Park. A public 2-hour tour (maximum of 30 participants) operates daily from May to October and offers a bush tucker and medicine guided walk, damper and billy tea, and demonstrations and hands-on experiences with traditional clapsticks, didgeridoo, ochre and painting, pandanus leaf basket weaving, and spear throwing. Exclusive 2-hour activities are also offered for larger groups including tour companies, school groups, special charters and corporate groups. A relaxed traditional painting workshop is also offered each afternoon for up to 200 participants.

Tour packages can include pick-up and drop-off in Darwin and an additional cruise on either the Adelaide River or Corroboree Wetlands (a maximum of 13 participants on each). Tour packages range from $20 to $165 per person. Live availability and online booking is offered on the their website www.pudukal.com.au. Pudakul has also timed their sessions to complement other regional visitor activities such as the Jumping Crocodile Cruise or the Corroboree Billabong cruise.

Pudakul is operated by the owners Graham and Lynette who work together with their children and extended family members to deliver the cultural experiences. Having received mentoring under the former Indigenous Business Champions Program, the business now provides support to other Indigenous businesses. It is a member of the Australian Tourism Export Council and actively participates in regional promotion at interstate and international trade shows. The business is promoted by Tourism Australia and also hosts an annual ‘open day’ aimed at Darwin locals and the visiting friends and relatives market.
Visitor Interpretation Planning Concepts

NZ FIRST WORLD WAR HERITAGE TRAILS CONCEPT & BUSINESS CASE

Locals and TRC recently completed the Concept and Business Case for The New Zealand First World War Heritage Trails in Gallipoli and The Western Front.

This project is a major initiative by the New Zealand WW100 Programme Office to create a heritage trail for visitors across significant New Zealand battlefields and locations relating to the First World War.

The concept involved a major research project with New Zealand military and social historians to establish a driving/walking trail through Europe and Turkey. The process included a rapid prototype of mobile web, phone and tablet apps with sample content that future visitors might be interested in.

The output was a comprehensive plan that describes in detail the storylines, media types and locations for heritage trail across four countries. It also included a detailed costing and project plan for design and delivery, so the client can scope and manage the remaining phases of the project.
THE WAIKATO WAR

The Waikato War experience is a multimedia heritage trail through the Waikato. Commissioned by NZHPT and developed in conjunction with Ngā Moka, the local hapu, and with Tourism Hamilton Waikato – Locales developed suite of storytelling devices to tell accounts of the Waikato War 1863-64 at key battle sites and locations from Auckland to Piopio.

The experience begins at www.thewaikatoexperience.co.nz, a website integrated within Tourism Hamilton Waikato’s marketing site. Visitors can download The Waikato Driving Tour, an audio/GPS tour for Apple and Android devices. The app is complemented with a map-brochure and a downloadable Education Resource Kit for schoolteachers.

On each of the key battle-sites, beautiful signage orients visitors to each location using 3D reconstructions and illustrated visualisations of the key moments in each battle. These signs are also talking stops for the audio tour. At Rangiriri, a Tohu Maumahara was constructed to provide a symbolic gateway to one of the most significant battle sites in New Zealand’s history.

The project involved extensive prototyping and testing, liaison with complex and broad stakeholder groups over two years, and the concurrent development of designs and content across multiple media and technology.
Example of Site Master Planning

For future development of visitor attractions such as Newcastle Waters, Battery Hill, Nyinkka Nyunyu and the Stuart Highway.

6.3 The Ship That Never Was – Strahan Tasmania

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<td>Planning context</td>
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Living Life Dioramas

The Action Man scale model is remarkably good at communicating social life, as the figures and scenes can be detailed to a very high level and can even convey emotion. This technique is suitable for showing scenes of working environments, home and social environments where no photograph exists in the historical record. The level of detail creates a fascinating experience that draws visitors into the scene, exploring nuances and hidden detail.

The example is from a scene in Belgium for Nga Tapuwae NZ First World War Trails and shows everyday life underground in the Catacombs in Ploegsteert, near Messines.

Process Models

The 1:32 Scale can be used to show a broader context of mining process and shows how things work in the context of other processes, and also makes key building forms recognizable. This approach is critical as it enables visitors to make the connection with what they see in the landscape and how things work.

The image shown here is from the Waihi Gold Discovery Centre and are interactive models that show the process of extracting ore from drives (powered by a Cornish Pumphouse) through to the crushing, smelting, pouring and transport of gold bullion.
Appendix D – Project Control Group

John Gaynor | Central Desert Regional Council (Chair)
Glendle Schrader | Central Desert Regional Council (Project Manager)
Stuart Ord | Dept Tourism and Culture
John di Maria | Dept Tourism and Culture
Peter Donohoe | Central Land Council
Stephen Schwer | Tourism Central Australia
Chris Day | Parks and Wildlife
Kate McMaster | Gemtree
Audrey Inkamala | Central Land council
Barbara Petrick | Atitjere
Wayne Kraft | Heritage Council
COMMUNITY TOURISM ACTION PLANS
COMMUNITY TOURISM ACTION PLAN FOR ENGAWALA

East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experience Master Plan
October 2018

Prepared by:

Community Tourism Action Plan for Engawala
Introduction

The Draft Community Tourism Action Plan for Engawala is intended to support the identified vision and opportunities for improving the visitor experience and creating new tourism initiatives from the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experiences Plan.

The vision for the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experiences Plan project and for the project area is as follows:

**Increased exposure of the East MacDonnell Ranges and Plenty Highway with growth in visitor numbers, dispersal and yield creating a range of social and economic outcomes for communities and businesses.**

As the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway covers such a large area, individualised Community Tourism Action Plans will provide the local community with the focus points and mechanisms to be able to engage in tourism (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and enable social and economic benefits for not only their own community members, but the wider East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region as well. One of the goals of the Community Tourism Action Plan will be to assist communities in moving forward from the idea of tourism to actual enterprises and employment.

Community Tourism Action Plans are intended to be guides for long term tourism development in a community or group covering the tourism vision, short and long-term tourism options, and identification of capacity development needs and strategies.
The location

The wider project area for the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experiences Plan covers Eastern Arrernte and Anmatjere country to the east and north-east of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. It extends from north of the Plenty Highway to the Ross Highway and associated visitor destinations in the south. It is bounded in the west by the North Stuart Highway and in the east by the Queensland border.

The area is within the boundaries of the Central Desert Regional Council, the local government authority for an area of 283,000 square kilometres extending between the Queensland and Western Australian borders north of Alice Springs.

Engawala is located 180 km north-east of Alice Springs (approximately 3 hour drive). Access to the community is nearly 30 km off the Plenty Highway, situated on Alcoota Station which is Aboriginal freehold land. The population is approximately 154 people.

**Figure 1. Location of Engawala**

![Map of the location of Engawala](image-url)
The opportunity

Implementation of the Community Tourism Action Plan will enable community-level tourism planning and practical capacity building of administrators and tourism operators, ideally through new tourism developments.

The region has some existing visitor attractions including pastoral tourism & simple accommodation, aboriginal cultural areas of significance, historical pioneering sites, gemstone fossicking, 4WD adventures and a range of nature tourism attractions. There is potential through the continued sealing of The Outback Way and extending the Dinosaur Trail from Queensland by connecting the experience with the Alcoota Mega Fauna fossil display in Alice Springs and Alcoota dig site at Engawala.

There is also an opportunity for remote communities and other tourism operators to benefit from large infrastructure projects in the region.

The custodians of Engawala have a deep and enduring knowledge of and connection with this country, and as such are best placed to offer a selection of engaging tourism activities.

The Engawala community, situated on Alcoota Station (which is Aboriginal freehold land) about 30 km north of the Plenty Highway, will focus on developing tourism experiences which leverage off the anticipated increased number of visitors travelling on the Plenty Highway and Binns Track, the development of the Gemtree visitor hub and increased interest in the megafauna fossils at the nearby Alcoota Scientific Reserve. The community aims to improve its visitor infrastructure and products through:

- renovation of the ‘Old Store’ building to become an art gallery, museum and information and interpretation centre
- providing visitors services (potentially utilising community facilities) and camping facilities
- developing products such as art demonstrations and lessons, and guided on-country tours
- developing products offered by trained local aboriginal guides at the Alcoota fossil site under a partnership arrangement with the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (see section 4.5.6 on activation of the Alcoota site).
Visitor markets

- Self-drive market
- Retired visitors
- International visitors
- Adventure and soft-adventure enthusiasts
- Festival and event visitors
- Aboriginal cultural tourism visitors

Regional vision

The development of tourism is not a standalone concept but is part of the community’s wider aspirations and priorities for sustaining culture, country and communities and for improvements in education, health and socio-economic well-being.

The extent to which individuals, families or community leaders become engaged in tourism, and the way in which this occurs, will depend on interest, willingness, the development of the skills and the commitment to the needs of tourists.

Some initiatives may be more difficult than others, some will be short-term, some long-term and highly aspirational, but all the opportunities could be realised, and would be attractive to tourists, if Engawala wish to progress them.

The East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway tourism vision is:

‘Increased exposure of the East MacDonnell Ranges and Plenty Highway with growth in visitor numbers, dispersal and yield creating a range of social and economic outcomes for communities and businesses.’

Issues that will impact on tourism

- Weather / accessibility such as sealing roads to suit a broader range of visitor markets and not just adventure travellers. Ensuring that communities and tourism opportunities are accessible.
- Commitment of resources to increase the capacity of communities to deliver on their aspirations, including training, mentoring and business support.
- Strong positioning of the wider region to differentiate from West MacDonnell ranges and other parts of the Northern Territory, using distinctive characteristics of sense of remoteness, friendly communities and connections between pastoral and Aboriginal communities.
- Industry trends.
SWOT analysis

Identifying Engawala’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats allows stakeholders to focus on developing the strengths and best opportunities to boost the destination, and to find solutions and improvements to address any weaknesses and threats.

Strengths

- The community has existing Aboriginal land, cultural and other assets that can provide a basis for tourism development.
- Increasing popularity of road trips, touring and caravanning and camping in Australia, and proximity of community on already established touring route/s.
- Regional and state plans and strategies that may contribute to development of tourism in the community and recognise its potential.

Weaknesses

- Seasonality.
- Distance (approximately 30km) from the Plenty Highway.
- Lack of accessibility via air on scheduled services and heavy reliance on self-drive market.

Opportunities

- Develop the planned new museum, art gallery and interpretive/information centre based in the old store building.
- Construction of a basic campground and amenities for visitors to stay overnight.
- Offer art demonstrations/lessons.
- Alcoota – work with the NT museum to plan for a renewed experience at Alcoota that might include:
  - Improved access and gateway
  - Archaeological development of a site that will enable visitors to view layers of excavation
  - On site interpretation by Engawala community members to underpin guided tours via either tagalong arrangements or providing step-on guide/s. Tours include storytelling about the Alcoota story as well as Aboriginal history and values
  - Development of augmented reality resources to be used in face to face guided experiences to demonstrate how megafauna lived in the country
  - Investigation of opportunities for paid involvement by visitors in site palaeontology and the facilities necessary to support this – voluntourism.
- Work with Gemtree to offer guided experience such as a program of two-way cultural tours/connection to country tours that tell the story of both Aboriginal and European pastoral history and working together.
- Given the Barkly region will be at a similar stage of development for some businesses, cost efficiencies may be achieved through working together.
• Range of funding, business development, employment and training programs that may potentially be applied to assist tourism development in the community and wider region.

Threats

• Complexities in operating businesses while taking account of community decision-making structures and cultural obligations (such as sorry business), finding a balance between operating a business that is viable and culturally affirming.
• Challenge of developing sustainable tourism opportunities that both provide economic benefits and assisting in maintaining connection to country.
• Perceptions of visitors and poor awareness of Aboriginal tourism options.
• Improvements in infrastructure (roads etc), transport, accommodation, quality of services and products, destination management, are needed for tourism development which require funding (private or public).
• Not only reliant on strategic planning, successful tourism development requires interest and participation by the community and/or individual residents.

Action plan

This action plan aims to build on any initiatives already in place in Engawala, enhancing and building on any existing partnerships, initiatives and event calendars.

In addition, by considering the following identified “destination success factors” and how these can be applied to Engawala, actions and priority projects have been listed that;

- Will make a significant contribution to Objectives
- Are an enabler for implementing other actions in the Action Plan
- Upon implementation, will leverage resources or partnerships and collaboration that will help achieve Objectives
- Will meet the needs of target markets and add to overall destination appeal

The destination success factors are;

• Identity
• Quality products, experiences and infrastructure
• Service
• Industry leadership, synergy and partnerships
• Co-operative marketing
• Access
• Effective visitor engagement
• Strategic planning – local, regional and in cooperation with Boulia
• Resourcing.
The Action Plan has been separated into three themes to group relevant actions together – infrastructure, visitor experience and industry development and capacity building.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Plan Theme</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Potential Impact</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Infrastructure**| Renovate Old Store to become an Art Gallery, Museum & Interp/Info Centre | Increase Visitor Numbers  
Provide employment  
Provide a Sales Outlet for Art/Craft  
Improve retail sales at the store | NT Art Trails                    | Visitor Numbers  
Art Sales                             |
|                   | Alcoota Dig Site – develop a simple, unmanned interpretation centre on site that can be accessed only by suitably accredited guides who would use it as the focus of their tour in that area | Increase Visitor Numbers  
Provide employment | NT Museum who would then issue concession/s | Visitor numbers  |
|                   | Siting of a visitor campground with amenities.  
Requirement for a ‘dump point’? | Increased visitor numbers & employment opportunities.  
Revenue generation. | | Overnight stays  
Visitor numbers  
Revenue generation  |
|                   | Install Plenty Highway signage directing visitors to Engawala. | Increased visitors to Engawala.  
Increased employment, business and revenue generation opportunities | NTG                             | Visitor numbers  |
|                   | Seek grant funding through Aboriginal Benefits Account (ABA) funding or other for investment in infrastructure. | Implementation and realisation of community aspirations | | Successful applications.  |
| **Visitor Experience** | Develop the planned new museum and art gallery | As above | New Corporation? | Visitor numbers  |
|                   | Offer art demonstrations/ lessons | Educate visitors  
Stimulate sales | As above | Visitor Satisfaction  |
<p>|                   | Work with the NT museum to plan for a renewed experience at Alcoota | As above | NT Museum | Visitor Satisfaction  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Plan Theme</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Potential Impact</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with Gemtree to offer guided experience such as a program of two-way cultural tours/connection to country tours that tell the story of both aboriginal and pastoral &amp; mining settler history</td>
<td>Increase Visitor Numbers Provide employment</td>
<td>Joint Venture</td>
<td>Profitability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Engawala visitor products and services through Gemtree, Tourism Central Australia and relevant websites and venues.</td>
<td>Increased awareness of Engawala experience</td>
<td>TCA Gemtree</td>
<td>Visitor awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business skills &amp; IT Customer Service Guiding (incl specialised archaeological</td>
<td>Provide employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Alcoota Scientific Reserve*
COMMUNITY TOURISM ACTION PLAN FOR BONYA

East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experience Master Plan

October 2018

Prepared by:
Introduction

The Draft Community Tourism Action Plan for Bonya is intended to support the identified vision and opportunities for improving the visitor experience and creating new tourism initiatives from the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experiences Plan.

The vision for the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experiences Plan project and for the project area is as follows:

**Increased exposure of the East MacDonnell Ranges and Plenty Highway with growth in visitor numbers, dispersal and yield creating a range of social and economic outcomes for communities and businesses.**

As the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway covers such a large area, individualised Community Tourism Action Plans will provide the local community with the focus points and mechanisms to be able to engage in tourism (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and enable social and economic benefits for not only their own community members, but the wider East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region as well. One of the goals of the Community Tourism Action Plan will be to assist communities in moving forward from the idea of tourism to actual enterprises and employment.

Community Tourism Action Plans are intended to be guides for long term tourism development in a community or group covering the tourism vision, short and long-term tourism options, and identification of capacity development needs and strategies.
The location

The wider project area for the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experiences Plan covers Eastern Arrernte and Anmatjere country to the east and north-east of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. It extends from north of the Plenty Highway to the Ross Highway and associated visitor destinations in the south. It is bounded in the west by the North Stuart Highway and in the east by the Queensland border.

The area is within the boundaries of the Central Desert Regional Council, the local government authority for an area of 283,000 square kilometres extending between the Queensland and Western Australian borders north of Alice Springs.

Bonya is located 366 km drive north-east of Alice Springs along the Plenty Highway (roughly 4 hour drive). Part of this route is along unsealed roads. Bonya has a population of approximately 80 people.

Figure 1. Location of Bonya
The opportunity

Implementation of the Community Tourism Action Plan will enable community-level tourism planning and practical capacity building of administrators and tourism operators, ideally through new tourism developments.

The region has some existing visitor attractions including pastoral tourism & simple accommodation, Aboriginal cultural areas of significance, historical pioneering sites, gemstone fossicking, 4WD adventures and a range of nature tourism attractions. There is potential through the continued sealing of The Outback Way and extending the Dinosaur Trail from Queensland by connecting the experience with the Alcoota Mega Fauna fossil display in Alice Springs and Alcoota dig site at Engawala.

There is also an opportunity for remote communities and other tourism operators to benefit from large infrastructure projects in the region.

The custodians of Bonya have a deep and enduring knowledge of and connection with this country, and as such are best placed to offer a selection of engaging tourism activities.

Bonya is located just off the Plenty Highway about 22 km from Jervois and 360 km from Alice Springs. The community at Bonya is planning to develop services (such as freight transport, vehicle recovery and repair, and fuel sales, and improved retail offering at the community store) to support the potential local population increases associated with workers for the proposed nearby Jervois mine and for use by Plenty Highway visitors. In addition, it is proposed to develop a campground near the community and short tagalong tours showcasing local art sites, bush tucker and hunting. Due to Bonya’s off-highway location directional signage and promotion of its facilities and services will be necessary to attract visitors.

Visitor markets

- Self-drive market
- Retired visitors
- International visitors
- Adventure and soft-adventure enthusiasts
- Festival and event visitors
- Aboriginal cultural tourism visitors
Community vision

The development of tourism is not a standalone concept but is part of the community’s wider aspirations and priorities for sustaining culture, country and communities and for improvements in education, health and socio-economic well-being.

The extent to which individuals, families or community leaders become engaged in tourism, and the way in which this occurs, will depend on interest, willingness, the development of the skills and the commitment to the needs of tourists.

Some initiatives may be more difficult than others, some will be short-term, some long-term and highly aspirational, but all the opportunities could be realised, and would be attractive to tourists, if Bonya wish to progress them.

The community vision is:

“To transform our Community and Regional surrounds through investing in ourselves to better position our Roles in Governance, Stakeholder Engagement, Service Delivery, Business and Economic Development.”

In terms of tourism, one of the aspirations set out in the Arramwelke Aboriginal Corporation Bonya Community document is “exploit many cultural tourism opportunities available such as genuine bush tours, art sites and waterholes”.

Issues that will impact on tourism

- Weather / accessibility such as sealing roads to suit a broader range of visitor markets and not just adventure travellers. Ensuring that communities and tourism opportunities are accessible.
- Commitment of resources to increase the capacity of communities to deliver on their aspirations, including training, mentoring and business support.
- Strong positioning of the wider region to differentiate from West MacDonnell ranges and other parts of the Northern Territory, using distinctive characteristics of sense of remoteness, friendly communities and connections between pastoral and Aboriginal communities.
- Industry trends.
**SWOT analysis**

Identifying Bonya’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats allows stakeholders to focus on developing the strengths and best opportunities to boost the destination, and to find solutions and improvements to address any weaknesses and threats.

**Strengths**

- The community has existing Aboriginal land, cultural and other assets that can provide a basis for tourism development.
- Strong desire to further develop formal community plans, business plans to identify employment opportunities and business opportunities with the community and region, provide formal training, provide recreation activities and facilities.
- Have already identified strong leadership and good governance; respect the past and present tourism potential; strong engagement, collaboration and unification; pathways for future and sustainability are the Community’s key themes.
- Opportunity to grow as a service hub due to the location of Bonya in terms of distances to next available fuel stop in each direction, particularly if nearby Jervois ceases fuel sales.
- Action already taken to investigate potential economic development opportunities of a freight service, transport service, fuel outlet extension to store, art sales/outlet, vehicle recovery service and campground. Market ability of these services with roadside signage.
- Actively engaged with Jervois mine site and its owner/operator, Kentor Mining (NT) Pty Ltd which is a subsidiary of a listed company, KGC Resources Ltd.
- Increasing popularity of road trips, touring and caravanning and camping in Australia, and proximity of community on already established touring route/s.
- Regional and state plans and strategies that may contribute to development of tourism in the community and recognise its potential.

**Weaknesses**

- Seasonality.
- Distance off the Plenty Highway – possible upgrades required if selling fuel.
- Lack of accessibility via air on scheduled services and heavy reliance on self-drive market.

**Opportunities**

- Establish facilities for fuel sales (diesel & unleaded) and grow retail sales at shop (including new takeaway food offer).
- Establish and promote vehicle recovery service and temporary/minor repairs.
- Establish a Freight Service along the Plenty Highway to and from Alice Springs.
• Undertake site and business planning as a basis for construction and management of campsite on edge of community.
• Establish program of short tagalong tours close to the community (bush tucker, art sites, hunting).
• Given the Barkly Region will be at a similar stage of development for some businesses, cost efficiencies may be achieved through working together.
• Range of funding, business development, employment and training programs that may potentially be applied to assist tourism development in the community and wider region.

Threats
• Complexities in operating businesses while taking account of community decision-making structures and cultural obligations (such as sorry business), finding a balance between operating a business that is viable and culturally affirming.
• Challenge of developing sustainable tourism opportunities that both provide economic benefits and assisting in maintaining connection to country.
• Perceptions of visitors and poor awareness of Aboriginal tourism options.
• Improvements in infrastructure (roads etc), transport, accommodation, quality of services and products, destination management, are needed for tourism development which require funding (private or public).
• Not only reliant on strategic planning, successful tourism development requires interest and participation by the community and/or individual residents.
**Action plan**

This action plan aims to build on any initiatives already in place in Bonya, enhancing and building on any existing partnerships, initiatives and event calendars.

In addition, by considering the following identified “destination success factors” and how these can be applied to Bonya, actions and priority projects have been listed that:

- Will make a significant contribution to Objectives
- Are an enabler for implementing other actions in the Action Plan
- Upon implementation, will leverage resources or partnerships and collaboration that will help achieve Objectives
- Will meet the needs of target markets and add to overall destination appeal.

The destination success factors are;

- Identity
- Quality products, experiences and infrastructure
- Service
- Industry leadership, synergy and partnerships
- Co-operative marketing
- Access
- Effective visitor engagement
- Strategic planning
- Resourcing.
The Action Plan has been separated into three themes to group relevant actions together – infrastructure, visitor experience and industry development and capacity building.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>Establish and promote vehicle recovery service and temporary/minor repairs</td>
<td>Improved employment, Improved turnover for store</td>
<td>Arramwelke AC</td>
<td>Revenue Growth, Employee utilisation and retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish facilities for fuel sales (Diesel &amp; Opal) and grow retail sales at shop</td>
<td>Improved employment, Improved turnover for store</td>
<td>Tyantentge AC (Store)</td>
<td>Revenue Growth, Employee utilisation, development and retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undertake site and business planning as a basis for construction and management of campsite on edge of community</td>
<td>Increase length of stay in the area, Provide potential customers for tagalong tours, Implementation of Community aspirations</td>
<td>Arramwelke AC</td>
<td>Visitor Nights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare submission for next round of Grant from the Aboriginal Benefit Account (ABA) Fund to raise some (or all) of capital required for the major investments</td>
<td></td>
<td>Arramwelke AC</td>
<td>Successful applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Install roadside promotional signage promoting available services and experiences at Bonya</td>
<td>Improved employment through growth in visitor numbers and revenue</td>
<td>NTG Arramwelke AC</td>
<td>Increased visitor numbers, Revenue growth, Employment opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visitor Experience</strong></td>
<td>Establish program of short tagalong tours close to the community (bush tucker, art sites, hunting)</td>
<td>Increase length of stay which may increase retail sales at store, Increased employment and business opportunities</td>
<td>Arramwelke AC</td>
<td>Pax numbers, Visitor satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Purchase suitable vehicle – not intended to be for carrying paying pax</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve retails sales at the store with varying product and even local art/craft</td>
<td>Improved employment, Increased revenue</td>
<td>Tyantentge AC (Store)</td>
<td>Improved revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote the facilities and services at Bonya through Gemtree, Tourism Central Australia, relevant websites, social media and venues</td>
<td>Growth in visitor numbers to the region</td>
<td>Arramwelke Tyantentge AC TCA Gemtree</td>
<td>Visitor numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry Development and Capacity Building</strong></td>
<td>Guides (SGL/EA?), Retail Service, Business Management, WH&amp;S (Automotive), Business Planning – eg DoB</td>
<td></td>
<td>NTG</td>
<td>Staff turnover, Safe Workplace, Business Profitability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

The Draft Community Tourism Action Plan for Atitjere is intended to support the identified vision and opportunities for improving the visitor experience and creating new tourism initiatives from the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experiences Plan.

The vision for the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experiences Plan project and for the project area is:

**Increased exposure of the East MacDonnell Ranges and Plenty Highway with growth in visitor numbers, dispersal and yield creating a range of social and economic outcomes for communities and businesses.**

As the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway covers such a large area, individualised Community Tourism Action Plans will provide the local community with the focus points and mechanisms to be able to engage in tourism (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and enable social and economic benefits for not only their own community members, but the wider East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region as well. One of the goals of the Community Tourism Action Plan will be to assist communities in moving forward from the idea of tourism to actual enterprises and employment.

Community Tourism Action Plans are intended to be guides for long term tourism development in a community or group covering the tourism vision, short and long-term tourism options, and identification of capacity development needs and strategies.
The location

The wider project area for the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experiences Plan covers Eastern Arrernte and Anmatjere country to the east and north-east of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. It extends from north of the Plenty Highway to the Ross Highway and associated visitor destinations in the south. It is bounded in the west by the Stuart Highway and in the east by the Queensland border.

The area is within the boundaries of the Central Desert Regional Council, the local government authority for an area of 283,000 square kilometres extending between the Queensland and Western Australian borders north of Alice Springs.

The Atitjere community is nestled at the base of the Harts Ranges and located 215 km north-east of Alice Springs along the Plenty Highway (approximately 2.5-hour drive) and has a population of approximately 224 people.

Figure 1. Location of Atitjere
The opportunity

Implementation of the Community Tourism Action Plan will enable community-level tourism planning and practical capacity building of administrators and tourism operators, ideally through new tourism developments.

The region has some existing visitor attractions including pastoral tourism and basic accommodation, Aboriginal cultural areas of significance, historic pioneering sites, gemstone fossicking, 4WD adventures and a range of nature tourism attractions. There is tourism growth potential in the area through the continued sealing of The Outback Way and extending the Dinosaur Trail from Queensland by connecting the experience with the Alcoota Mega Fauna fossil display in Alice Springs and Alcoota dig site at Engawala.

There is also an opportunity for remote communities and other tourism operators to benefit from large infrastructure projects in the region.

The custodians of Atitjere have a deep and enduring knowledge of and connection with this country, and as such are best placed to offer a selection of engaging tourism activities.

At present, the Atitjere community in the Harts Range is an established stopping-point offering basic supplies and fuel for travellers on the Plenty Highway and Binns Track. It is also close to the Harts Range gemstone fossicking area. The community aims to re-establish and improve management of the closed Spotted Tiger campground. As visitation to the region increases, the community will investigate developing tours to local sites such as fossicking areas, the old Harts Range police station and army camp, and natural attractions such as Dulcie Ranges National Park, Boxhill Crater and Mac and Rose Chalmers Conservation Reserve.

Visitor markets

- Self-drive market
- Retired visitors
- International visitors
- Adventure and soft-adventure enthusiasts
- Festival and event visitors
- Aboriginal cultural tourism visitors
Regional vision

The development of tourism is not a standalone concept but is part of the community’s wider aspirations and priorities for sustaining culture, country and communities and for improvements in education, health and socio-economic well-being.

The extent to which individuals, families or community leaders become engaged in tourism, and the way in which this occurs, will depend on interest, willingness, the development of the skills and the commitment to the needs of tourists.

Some initiatives may be more difficult than others, some will be short-term, some long-term and highly aspirational, but all the opportunities could be realised, and would be attractive to tourists, if Engawala wish to progress them.

The East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway tourism vision is:

'Increased exposure of the East MacDonnell Ranges and Plenty Highway with growth in visitor numbers, dispersal and yield creating a range of social and economic outcomes for communities and businesses.'

Issues that will impact on tourism

- Weather / accessibility such as sealing roads to suit a broader range of visitor markets and not just adventure travellers. Ensuring that communities and tourism opportunities are accessible.
- The increasing promotion and utilisation of the Outback Way by travellers moving between the two north eastern States and Central Australia.
- Commitment of resources to increase the capacity of communities to deliver on their aspirations, including training, mentoring and business support.
- Strong positioning of the wider region to differentiate from West MacDonnell ranges and other parts of the Northern Territory, using distinctive characteristics of sense of remoteness, friendly communities and connections between pastoral and Aboriginal communities.
- Industry trends.
SWOT analysis

Identifying Atitjere’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats allows stakeholders to focus on developing the strengths and best opportunities to boost the destination, and to find solutions and improvements to address any weaknesses and threats.

Strengths

- The community has existing Aboriginal land, cultural and other assets that can provide a basis for tourism development.
- There is a functional community store with all basic supplies and fuel available.
- Increasing popularity of road trips, touring and caravanning and camping in Australia, and proximity of community on already established touring route/s.
- Regional and state plans and strategies that may contribute to development of tourism in the community and recognise its potential.

Weaknesses

- Lack of an agreed future direction for tourism in the immediate area.
- Seasonality.
- Lack of accessibility via air on scheduled services and heavy reliance on self-drive market.

Opportunities

- Re-establishment of facilities at the Spotted Tiger campsite to re-open for visitors including:
  - Reinstatement of water, facilities, bough shelters and fencing
  - Grading of road
  - Good quality directional signage
  - Simple booking and payment system including ability to book and pay online or in cash through a location in Atitjere
  - Sustainable approach to caretaking/day to day management such as campground hosts
  - Effective advance promotion of the site.
- Establish tagalong bush tours to the Dulcie Ranges, Boxhole Crater and Tower Hill.
- Supply point for travellers choosing to take the “Alternative Route” south along the Binns Track to Arltunga and onward to Alice Springs.
- Guided gemstone fossicking and tours to local sites such as Old Police Station and remains of army camp.
- Harts Range Races, provides an opportunity for promotional leverage and complementary experiences (tours, accommodation etc).
• Given the Barkly region will be at a similar stage of development for some businesses, cost efficiencies may be achieved through working together.

• Range of funding, business development, employment and training programs that may potentially be applied to assist tourism development in the community and wider region.

**Threats**

• Complexities in operating businesses while taking account of community decision-making structures and cultural obligations (such as sorry business), finding a balance between operating a business that is viable and culturally affirming.

• Challenge of developing sustainable tourism opportunities that both provide economic benefits and assisting in maintaining connection to country.

• Perceptions of visitors and poor awareness of Aboriginal tourism options.

• Improvements in infrastructure (roads etc), transport, accommodation, quality of services and products, destination management, are needed for tourism development which require funding (private or public).

• Not only reliant on strategic planning, successful tourism development requires interest and participation by the community and/or individual residents.

**Action plan**

This action plan aims to build on any initiatives already in place in Atitjere, enhancing and building on any existing partnerships, initiatives and event calendars.

In addition, by considering the following identified “destination success factors” and how these can be applied to Atitjere, actions and priority projects have been listed that:

- Will make a significant contribution to Objectives
- Are an enabler for implementing other actions in the Action Plan
- Upon implementation, will leverage resources or partnerships and collaboration that will help achieve Objectives
- Will meet the needs of target markets and add to overall destination appeal.

The destination success factors are;

- Identity
- Quality products, experiences and infrastructure
- Service
- Industry leadership, synergy and partnerships
- Co-operative marketing
- Access
- Effective visitor engagement
- Strategic planning - local, regional and in cooperation with Boulia
- Resourcing.
The Action Plan has been separated into three themes to group relevant actions together – infrastructure, visitor experience and industry development and capacity building.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Plan Theme</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Potential Impact</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td>Re-establishment of facilities at the Spotted Tiger campsite to re-open for visitors. Realignment of track to provide better privacy. Directional and interpretive signage.</td>
<td>Encourage visitors to stay in the area, gain awareness and respect for culture, travel safely and responsibly. Employment and revenue opportunities for local community.</td>
<td>Barbara Petrick – and family?</td>
<td>Growth in Visitor Nights and Revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek grant funding through Aboriginal Benefits Account (ABA) funding or other for investment in infrastructure.</td>
<td>Implementation of community aspirations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Visitor Experience</strong></td>
<td>Establishment of tagalong bush tours to the Dulcie Ranges, Boxhole Crater and Tower Hill.</td>
<td>Encourage visitors to stay in the area, gain awareness and respect for culture, travel safely and responsibly. Employment and revenue opportunities for local community.</td>
<td>TBA – Capital Investment required</td>
<td>Growth in Visitor Nights and revenue. Tour bookings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guided gemstone fossicking and tours to local sites such as old Police Station and remains of Army Camp.</td>
<td>Encourage visitors to stay in the area, gain awareness and respect for culture, travel safely and responsibly. Employment and revenue opportunities for local community.</td>
<td>TBA – Capital Investment required</td>
<td>Growth in Visitor Nights and revenue. Tour bookings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investigate and, if feasible, develop tagalong 4WD tours to bush locations such as Dulcie Ranges National Park, Boxhill Crater and Mac and Rose Chalmers Conservation Reserve. Purchase of vehicle (not for passenger carrying) as lead tagalong vehicle.</td>
<td>Encourage visitors to stay in the area, gain awareness and respect for culture, travel safely and responsibly. Employment and revenue opportunities for local community.</td>
<td>TBA – Capital investment required.</td>
<td>Visitor satisfaction Growth in visitor nights Tour bookings Increased revenue.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evening talks around the Campfire</strong></td>
<td>Encourage visitors to stay in the area, gain awareness and respect for culture, travel safely and responsibly. Employment and revenue opportunities for local community.</td>
<td>Barbara Petrick – and family?</td>
<td>Growth in Visitor Nights and revenue. Visitor Satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Booking and payment system for campground both online at a location in Atitjere.</strong></td>
<td>Growth in bookings at campground Increase in revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased bookings and visitor numbers. Growth in revenue from bookings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day-to-day campground management (could include camp hosts)</strong></td>
<td>Well managed and maintained site. Employment opportunities Greater awareness of Atitjere and Spotted Tiger Campground Increased revenue and employment</td>
<td>TCA Gemtree Atitjere</td>
<td>Visitor satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promote the Spotted Tiger campground through Gemtree, Tourism Central Australia, relevant websites and venues and the Harts Bush Sport Weekend.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Visitor growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business management Guiding (SGL?)</strong></td>
<td>Improve skills, job satisfaction and business/employment opportunities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff retention</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Customer Service Driving (upgrades)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Profitability</td>
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*4WDing in the Harts Range*
Introduction

The Draft Community Tourism Action Plan for Gem Tree is intended to support the identified vision and opportunities for improving the visitor experience and creating new tourism initiatives from the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experiences Plan.

The vision for the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experiences Plan project and for the project area is as follows:

**Increased exposure of the East MacDonnell Ranges and Plenty Highway with growth in visitor numbers, dispersal and yield creating a range of social and economic outcomes for communities and businesses.**

Individualised actions will provide the local community with the focus points and mechanisms to be able to engage in tourism (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and enable social and economic benefits for not only their own community members, but the wider East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway region as well. One of the goals of the Community Tourism Action Plan will be to assist communities in moving forward from the idea of tourism to actual enterprises and employment.

Community Tourism Action Plans are intended to be guides for long term tourism development in a community or group covering the tourism vision, short and long-term tourism options, and identification of capacity development needs and strategies.
The location

The wider project area for the East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway Regional Visitor Experiences Plan covers Easter Arrernte and Anmatjere country to the east and north-east of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. It extends from north of the Plenty Highway to the Ross Highway and associated visitor destinations in the south. It is bounded in the west by the North Stuart Highway and in the west by the Queensland border.

The area is within the boundaries of the Central Desert Regional Council, the local government authority for an area of 283,000 square kilometres extending between the Queensland and Western Australian borders north of Alice Springs.

Gem Tree is located 138km north east of Alice Springs (approximately 1.5 hours’ drive) along the Plenty Highway.

Figure 1. Map showing location of Gemtree
The opportunity

Implementation of the Community Tourism Action Plan will enable community-level tourism planning, ideally through new tourism developments.

The region has some existing visitor attractions including pastoral tourism & simple accommodation, aboriginal cultural areas of significance, historical pioneering sites, gemstone fossicking, 4WD adventures and a range of nature tourism attractions. There is potential through the continued sealing of The Outback Way and extending the Dinosaur Trail from Queensland with inclusion of Alcoota Mega Fauna fossil display in Alice Springs and Alcoota dig site at Engawala.

There is also an opportunity for remote communities and other tourism operators to benefit from large infrastructure projects in the region.

The owners of Gemtree have a deep and enduring knowledge of and connection with this country, and strong relationships with Traditional Owners.

The caravan park/hub at Gemtree offers a range of accommodation, visitor services, entertainment and products. Tours, information and displays of the Harts Range gem fields are provided and self-guided 4WD tours can be arranged on pastoral stations. The caravan park is also used as a stopping point by travellers on the Binns Track. The caravan park operators have existing relationships with the surrounding Aboriginal communities and pastoral stations.

Gemtree will continue to operate and be developed further as a primary visitor hub on the Plenty Highway to cater for increasing demand to meet the needs and expectations of the region’s visitor markets. This includes:

- expansion of the accommodation offering and associated services and products
- potentially acting as a hub providing information on, and assisting in organising tours showcasing the area’s Aboriginal culture, pastoral and mining history, including tours run by people from the Engawala and Atitjere communities.

Visitor markets

- Self-drive market
- Retired visitors
- International visitors
- Adventure and soft-adventure enthusiasts
- Festival and event visitors
- Aboriginal cultural tourism visitors
Regional vision

The development of tourism is not a standalone concept but is part of the community’s wider aspirations and priorities for sustaining culture, country and communities and for improvements in education, health and socio-economic well-being.

The extent to which individuals, families or community leaders become engaged in tourism, and the way in which this occurs, will depend on interest, willingness, the development of the skills and the commitment to the needs of tourists.

Some initiatives may be more difficult than others, some will be short-term, some long-term and highly aspirational, but all the opportunities could be realised, and would be attractive to tourists, if Engawala wish to progress them.

The East MacDonnell-Plenty Highway tourism vision is:

'Increased exposure of the East MacDonnell Ranges and Plenty Highway with growth in visitor numbers, dispersal and yield creating a range of social and economic outcomes for communities and businesses.'

Issues that will impact on tourism

- Weather / accessibility such as sealing roads to suit a broader range of visitor markets and not just adventure travellers. Ensuring that communities and tourism opportunities are accessible.
- Commitment of resources to increase the capacity of communities to deliver on their aspirations, including training, mentoring and business support.
- Strong positioning of the wider region to differentiate from West MacDonnell ranges and other parts of the Northern Territory, using distinctive characteristics of sense of remoteness, friendly communities and connections between pastoral and Aboriginal communities.
- Industry trends.
SWOT analysis

Identifying Gem Tree’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats allows stakeholders to focus on developing the strengths and best opportunities to boost the destination, and to find solutions and improvements to address any weaknesses and threats.

Strengths
- The family has existing property and assets that provide a strong basis for tourism development.
- Increasing popularity of road trips, touring and caravanning and camping in Australia, and proximity of community on already established touring route/s.
- Proximity to Alice Springs.
- Bitumen Highway right to the property.
- Proximity to Fossicking Area.
- Proximity to Binns Track connecting south to Arltunga and through to the Ross Highway.
- Regional and state plans and strategies that may contribute to development of tourism in the community and recognise its potential.

Weaknesses
- Seasonality.
- Lack of accessibility via air on scheduled services and heavy reliance on self-drive market.
- Difficulty in accessing investment capital.

Opportunities
- Continue to add to the accommodation offering as demand grows and cash flow allows.
- Working with aboriginal people along the highway to develop a program of two-way cultural tours/connection to country tours that tell the story of both aboriginal and settler pastoral & mining history and working together.
- Land of Plenty Tours.
- Become established as a hub for cultural tours with other communities (Engawala, Atitjere).
- Offer business support and mentoring for campsite enterprises on other communities.
- Indigenous guided horse/wagon experiences.
- Add to the on-site experience with local add-ons such as bush tucker/bush bath tubs.
- Given the Barkly region will be at a similar stage of development for some businesses, cost efficiencies may be achieved through working together.
- Range of funding, business development, employment and training programs that may potentially be applied to assist tourism development in the community and wider region.
**Threats**

- Complexities in operating businesses while taking account of community decision-making structures and cultural obligations of potential partners.
- Challenge of developing sustainable tourism opportunities that both provide adequate economic benefits to sustain the family as well as invest in the growth of the business.
- Improvements in infrastructure (roads etc), transport, accommodation, quality of services and products, destination management, are needed for tourism development which require funding (private or public).
- Not only reliant on strategic planning, successful tourism development requires interest and participation by the community and/or individual residents.

**Action plan**

This action plan aims to build on any initiatives already in place in Gem Tree, enhancing and building on any existing partnerships, initiatives and event calendars.

In addition, by considering the following identified “destination success factors” and how these can be applied to Gem Tree, actions and priority projects have been listed that;

- Will make a significant contribution to Objectives
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- Will meet the needs of target markets and add to overall destination appeal.

The destination success factors are;

- Identity
- Quality products, experiences and infrastructure
- Service
- Industry leadership, synergy and partnerships
- Co-operative marketing
- Access
- Effective visitor engagement
- Strategic planning
- Resourcing.
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<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Continue to add to the accommodation offering as demand grows and the capacity to invest increases</td>
<td>Increase visitor number and length of stay</td>
<td>Gemtree</td>
<td>Visitor Numbers Profitability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor Experience</td>
<td>Work with local communities and Aboriginal people along the highway to develop a program of two-way cultural tours/ connection to country tours that tell the story of both Aboriginal and settler pastoral history and working together</td>
<td>Provided employment, Increase visitor satisfaction, Increase local employment</td>
<td>Joint Venture</td>
<td>Visitor Satisfaction Increased employment Increased visitor numbers and revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extend Gemtree’s role as a visitor experience hub for the Plenty Highway by providing information and booking for visitor experience products offered by Aboriginal communities and other operators.</td>
<td>Increase visitor satisfaction and length of stay, Improve profitability</td>
<td>Gemtree TCA NTG</td>
<td>Increased bookings Growth in revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indigenous guided horse/wagon experiences</td>
<td>Increase visitor satisfaction</td>
<td>Joint Venture CLC NTG</td>
<td>Visitor satisfaction Bookings Revenue generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Add to the on-site experience with local add-ons such as bush tucker/bush bath tubs</td>
<td>Increase visitor satisfaction and length of stay</td>
<td>Gemtree / Joint Venture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Development and Capacity Building</td>
<td>Enable mobile telephony / WIFI for travellers (as per Red Gum store).</td>
<td>Increased visitor satisfaction, Increased/improved e-Word of Mouth visitor promotion</td>
<td>Gemtree NTG</td>
<td>Greater/increased e-Word of Mouth through visitor use of Wifi/telephony. Visitor satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Offer business support and mentoring for campsite enterprises on other communities</td>
<td>Improve viability</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explore possibilities for JV with one or more Aboriginal Corp in the area</td>
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