

Backpacker Roadshow kicks off in Melbourne

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Northern Territory tourism operators have hit the road in a bid to lure more backpackers to the NT for a holiday. Chief Minister Adam Giles said the Northern Territory Government's inaugural 'Backpack the Outback' Roadshow will kick off in Melbourne tonight and will visit backpacker hot spots in Sydney and Byron Bay over the next seven days.

"The 'Backpack the Outback' Roadshow will see local tourism operators and Tourism NT promote the Northern Territory as a must-do Australian holiday destination for backpackers currently on the East Coast and in Australia's major capital cities," he said. "We'll be targeting backpackers and saying to them: you haven't done Australia unless you've done the Northern Territory – Australia's real outback!

"The Northern Territory has so much to offer young travellers from overseas including natural icons like Kakadu and Uluru, ancient Aboriginal culture, amazing wildlife, epic road trips, colourful characters, vibrant nightlife and plenty of work opportunities. It's an adventure not to be missed. "We know the East Coast is experiencing strong growth in international visitors and backpackers and the Northern Territory wants a slice of the action."

The new roadshow is just one of several new initiatives and marketing campaigns planned for 2016 to help boost backpacker numbers to the Northern Territory. "It's all part of the Country Liberals Government's plan to drive the development of North Australia and build a \$2.2 billion visitor economy by 2020," Mr Giles said. As well as the marketing campaigns and new initiatives, Chief Minister Adam Giles has been lobbying hard on the issue of the Federal Government's impending 'backpacker tax.

"The 'backpacker tax' would hurt the Northern Territory's tourism industry and should be dumped altogether not just reviewed. "I have been lobbying hard on this issue for 12 months. With tourism in the Territory bouncing back after years of decline, we need to ensure we are competitive as possible in the backpacker market to help support the economic development of Northern Australia." In Melbourne, the backpacker promotion will coincide with the Northern Territory Outback Pub pop-up event to be held in Federation Square from 1-2 April.

Thirteen Northern Territory and national tourism operators will attend the roadshow, which kicks off tonight with a special trade event at the Outback Pub installation at Federation Square involving 60 travel agents in the youth/backpacker market. "This is a fantastic opportunity for these travel agents to meet one-on-one and network with NT backpacker and youth tourism operators," Mr Giles said. "We are also teaming up with Jetstar at the Federation Square event to offer attractive sale fares to Uluru and Darwin, which we know will appeal greatly to the backpacker market, who are always looking for a great value for money holiday."

Debbie Turner, owner of Chillis Backpackers and the Youth Shack in Darwin, said she was looking forward to the roadshow. "The roadshow will help us get more awareness for what we have on offer up here in Darwin. We'll be talking to people and making sure they know about all the work opportunities available in the Territory and what a great environment it is to work and play," she said. A skilled migration team from the Territory Government will be on hand to provide advice about working holiday-maker visas and work opportunities in the NT, particularly in the hospitality industry.

The inaugural 'Backpack the Outback' roadshow runs from 31 March – 8 April.