

Media Release

Tuesday, 9 February 2016

NT TOURISM A SHINING BEACON FOR ECONOMY IN FACE OF MINING DOWNTURN

The Tourism & Transport Forum Australia (TTF) is calling for an additional \$5 million funding boost to Tourism NT on top of last year's budget and the development of new visitor experiences to grow the Territory's visitor economy ahead of the expected downturn in the mining industry.

The recommendations to the NT Government to strengthen the Territory's tourism sector are part of the TTF's Submission to the Northern Territory 2016-17 Budget.

"It is a race against the clock for the Northern Territory with the massive investments in new mining projects reaching the end of their job-generating construction phases," said Margy Osmond, TTF CEO.

"We know that the current wave of mining investment will leave a significant jobs void. For example, INPEX's Ichthys project will fall from 8,000 construction jobs to just 300 operational jobs by early 2017 – that doesn't leave the Top End a lot of time to transition its economy to future job-generating industries, such as tourism.

"However, if we can secure the strong backing of the NT Government with an economic development strategy focused on growing the visitor economy, then the Territory's tourism industry is well placed to help take up some of this jobs and economic slack.

"The NT currently supports 15,200 tourism jobs and generates nearly \$2 billion in tourism economic activity– there is tremendous potential to grow this even further with smart investments from the NT Government in the upcoming budget in both visitor demand and supply.

"A further \$5 million investment in Tourism NT and its marketing strategy is just what the doctor ordered. Tourism marketing is estimated to generate \$15 for every \$1 invested – that's a bargain in any investor's book.

"Research has clearly shown that international visitors to Australia place a premium on experiencing our country's natural wonders and beauty – these are assets that the Northern Territory has in abundance and can be leveraged in a coordinated economic strategy for the Territory.

"Uluru and Kakadu are synonymous around the world with the imagery of Australia as a destination of culture, heritage adventure and excitement. Investing in enabling infrastructure that allows private tourism operators to develop new experiences is a smart way of boosting visitor numbers, and therefore tourism jobs, for the Territory."