NTTC adopts 9-point plan

By TONY NELSON

Urgent action was being taken to ensure Territory tourism would suffer minimal disadvantage from the closure of interstate NT Tourist Commission bureaus, the interim commission chairman, Mr Jeffery Weigh, said yesterday.

Mr Weigh, who heads the “implementation team” carrying out restructuring of the commission, said a nine-point plan was under way to tackle the problem.

Tour operators have expressed concern that interstate bureaus, which sell a large percentage of Territory holiday bookings and packages, were being closed in the middle of the peak season.

This follows the recommendation of the Kennedy review that the bureaus be replaced by centres in Sydney, Melbourne and Cairns to service the tourism trade.

Sales to the public would be handled by travel agents.

Mr Weigh said the concerns were being addressed with the greatest urgency.

He said the communications network proposed for Alice Springs had proceeded quickly down the pipeline in the three days since Cabinet accepted the Kennedy recommendations.

A 008 number manned by a core group should be in use by the middle of next week to take bookings and inquiries, Mr Weigh said.

This would use the Atlas software system, which at present drives NT bureaus.

A 008 toll-free hotline was also being established for NT operators to get straight through to the commission with any queries or problems.

Expressions of interest would be called shortly for technology companies to bid for the establishment of a complete communications network.

Mr Weigh said he had contacted the national headquarters of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents and gained their co-operation and support.

He said a marketing program using media and direct mail was being prepared.

Lists were also being compiled of agents classified from A through to D depending on the amount of business they had provided for the Territory.

These would be advised of proceedings through a series of bulletins.

Mr Weigh said a senior commission executive would go interstate and talk to the staff of existing bureaus to promote the agency support role.