TOURISM TAKES ECONOMIC HIT

The latest tourism statistics from the ABS indicate the global economic recession is biting into the Territory’s critical tourism market.

The room occupancy rate for hotels, motels and serviced apartments in the NT fell from 55.3% in March quarter last year to 49.7% this year. For the same period the bed occupancy rate fell from 31.3% to 28.4%.

The ABS statistics also show the number of tourists arriving at hotels, motels and serviced apartments fell from 289,000 to 251,000 and not surprisingly the number of nights people stayed fell from 559,000 to 515,000.

“At the beginning of the year I warned the Territory Government it needed to guard against the impacts of Global Financial Crisis on tourist numbers in the NT,” says Dave Tollner, Shadow Minister for Tourism.

“At that time the NT Government was too complacent about the likely impact of the global downturn and too reliant on the flop movie Australia to drag tourists to the NT.

“The $600,000 campaign built around the movie Australia can be judged against the figures released today.

“The only bright spot in today’s figures is that whilst the number of backpackers visiting the NT also dropped, they tended to stay longer and that resulted in an increase in the number of nights people stayed at hostels.

“The Henderson Government has to re-think its tourism marketing strategies to adapt to the changing market.

“According to the Bureau data, more than 1.39 million people visited the Territory during the 2007-08 financial year. Those tourists employed about 10% of the Territory’s workforce.
“With the US, European and Japanese economies still in the doldrums it is critical that we devise successful strategies to minimise the impact of the global downturn on the Territory.”

Further comment: David Tollner 0414 690 109