Tourism Minister Malarndirri McCarthy today launched a $1.4 million domestic marketing campaign to promote the Red Centre over the next six weeks.

Minister McCarthy said that the intense promotion across TV, print and digital which begins today is aimed at Australia’s eastern seaboard, has Qantas a campaign partner, and features Alice Springs as a must see destination.

“The economic importance of tourism in Central Australia is the highest in the country at 24%,” Minister McCarthy said.

“Alice Springs rated in the Top 10 search keywords for the NT during the 2011 campaign, and searches on the keywords ‘Red Centre’ and ‘Uluru’ also increased.

“Tourism is such an important and integral part of the local economy, and that’s why the Territory Government is investing this kind of money in the campaign and why Alice Springs features even more prominently than last year.”

The campaign is based on last year’s successful campaign, during which Qantas Holidays saw an 8.5% increase in gross sales and - unusually for a domestic location - the Northern Territory was ranked in their top five booked destinations alongside Bali, Thailand, Fiji and the USA.

The next six weeks to 23 March are a period of particularly intense activity across TV, print and digital during the year-round exposure Tourism NT gives the Red Centre region.

Qantas is the campaign’s airline partner, offering enticing fares.

The Red Centre TV commercial will be shown in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne, reaching over four million people. It will also be shown in regional NSW reaching an additional two million people.

Print advertisements will appear in several lifestyle magazines and digital advertising will be seen on Fairfax, YouTube, National Geographic and the BBC.

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1 Tourism Research Australia April 2011: The Economic importance of Tourism in Australia’s Regions