TOURISM MINISTER

MIXED RESULTS FOR TERRITORY TOURISM

September 12th, 2012

Tourism Minister Matt Conlan announced today that domestic visitor numbers to the Northern Territory have increased but international visitation has continued to struggle.

Mr Conlan said the latest research shows domestic visitor numbers in the Territory increased by 16% to 1.06 million in the year ending June 2012, the first growth in the Territory since June 2009.

"It's welcome news that our domestic visitor numbers are back over the million mark," Mr Conlan said.

"However, growth is not across the board and we need to revitalise our approach to stimulate further demand across the Territory."

The growth in domestic numbers was largely in the Top End, with visitors up 20% and nights up 19% – driven by more visitors travelling to each of the Darwin, Kakadu Arnhem and Katherine Daly regions.

In Central Australia, visitation remained soft with no change in visitor numbers or nights from 2010-11.

Fewer visits were recorded in both the Alice Springs and Lasseter regions, while the Barkly region experienced growth, with a stronger drive market contributing to the result.

Visitors to Alice Springs and Lasseter regions using air transport continued to decline, affected by the reduction of services to both Alice Springs and Yulara.

"These results illustrate why this Government has made tourism a pillar of our three-hub economy," Mr Conlan said.

"There is a lot more to be done to grow and disperse this domestic recovery and to arrest the decline in international tourism, particularly in Central Australia."

"The new Government is focussed on supporting the industry to do that through a revitalised tourism agency to be headquartered in Alice Springs and the establishment of a Tourism Commission."

International visitation during the same period was down 14% to 263,000 visitors, driven by a 14% decline in holiday-makers.

Visitation from most of the Territory’s key European markets and the UK declined into Australia, resulting in visitor numbers to the Top End declining by 12% and to Central Australia by 15%.

There was however encouraging growth from the USA – up 7% and North East Asia (including China) – up 9.1%. The USA is now the Territory’s equal largest source market with the UK.

Interstate visitor numbers increased by 13% to 620,000, or 59% of all domestic visitors to the NT – the highest year on year growth for any jurisdiction in Australia.

The increases in domestic visitation occurred across all purposes of visit, but particularly in business (up 17%), those visiting friends and relatives (up 29%) and those on holidays (up 10%).

The research was conducted by Tourism Research Australia.

Media Contact:
Camden Smith 0488 588 754
www.nt.gov.au
GPO Box 3146, Darwin NT 0801