Tourism continues to experience ups and downs in the Territory, with more Australians visiting the NT last year but fewer international visitors travelling here.

Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Matt Conlan, said the latest figures from Tourism Research Australia (TRA) for the year ending December 2012 show a dramatic improvement in domestic visitation for the Territory, while international visitation continues to decline.

“Last year we had an 18 per cent increase in domestic holiday visitors to the Territory which is great news,” Mr Conlan said.

“These figures are now three months old but we are hearing that the domestic market is showing promising signs in 2013. For example, Qantas Holidays reported very strong activity in January with an 18 per cent increase on Territory product sold compared to the previous year.

“The increase in domestic visitors is significant as it has occurred on the back of two years of decline in this market and in the face of challenging conditions for domestic tourism.

“However, not all gains were evenly recorded across the Territory so our job now is to improve these markets, such as self-drive visitors which recorded a severe drop, while sustaining the overall domestic increase.

“While key regions such as Alice Springs and Central Australia recorded a decline in total domestic visitors for the year I am optimistic that next month’s introduction of low-cost flights to Alice Springs by Tiger Airways and to Ayers Rock by Jetstar will help reverse this trend.

“Alice did also record an 11 per cent increase in holiday visitors for last year so there are some encouraging signs for the Centre.”

Internationally, the latest TRA figures revealed a 10 per cent decrease in overseas holiday visitors to the Northern Territory.

“This continues 11 straight years of declines in this market under the former Labor Government,” Mr Conlan said.

“Unfortunately, it will take some time to reverse this trend and repair Labor’s damage, it won’t happen overnight.

“In saying that, this Government and Tourism NT have implemented a number of initiatives since August last year to address this decline.
"My recent mission to Europe, where I attended the world’s largest travel trade fair and conducted talks with several airlines about improving the Territory as gateway for international visitors into Australia, was one of these initiatives."

Other changes by Tourism NT as part of its new international strategy include investment into digital advertising in international markets where there was none previously, and a heavier focus on consumer campaigns with large trade partners to increase the reach of its marketing messages, together with an aggressive call to action to ‘book now’.

Tourism NT has also introduced a new a global social media program which will see communication and promotion of Territory product with potential visitors in their own language.

“Due to long lead booking times, the effect of these changes can take up to six months to flow into visitor statistics but we are hopeful they will make a difference,” Mr Conlan said.

“We are determined to see our tourism industry returned as a powerhouse contributor of the Northern Territory economy.

“We will not neglect this important industry and continue to throw everything we have at improving visitation to the Territory.”

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Note: Summary of the TRA statistics attached