Media Release

Adam Giles
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

**New tourism venture to grow East Arnhem**

31 July 2014

Visitors will soon be able to cruise from Darwin to Gove on board a working cargo ship as part of a unique new tourism venture being supported by the Giles Government.

“My Government is committed to growing the range of tourism products on offer to Territory visitors and this new cargo ship experience is a new and unique way to see our beautiful Top End coastline,” Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

Freight company, Sea Swift, has been given a $100,000 grant by the Territory Government to help start the cargo tours, as part of a $1.3 million pool of NT and Federal funding for tourism development and infrastructure.

“This is an example of the kind of projects the Territory Government is supporting to build sustainable economic activity in the East Arnhem region into the future,” Mr Giles said.

“We’re working hard with the East Arnhem community to identify new businesses that might be pursued and Tourism is definitely one of those industries.

The new Sea Swift Cargo tours are set to begin in October this year with a guide and passengers on board. It will stop off at Galiwinku on Elcho Island on the return leg back to Darwin from Nhulunbuy.

“This new venture opens the door to a totally new mode of tourist arrivals to Gove and I’m excited about the opportunities it presents for local businesses,” Mr Giles said.

“The weekly tours will encourage tourists to spend considerable more time on the ground exploring East Arnhem which will help increase local expenditure through visitor accommodation, food and beverage sales, tours, activities, and retail purchases.

“Sea Swift will also be directly working with Traditional Owners to share their stories on the tours as well as engaging local tour operators in Gove to promote their businesses to passengers including fishing trips, bush tours, art centres and retail stores.
“Expanding these new local tourism opportunities will help sustain the economy of Gove in the long-term and create jobs, once the Refinery has wound down.”

Sea Swift will use the $100,000 grant from the Government in addition to $200,000 of its own money to refit an existing cargo vessel, the ‘Malu Trader’ to accommodate passengers.

Mr Giles toured a similar vessel at the company’s dock in East Arm today, where the new cruise cargo vessel will be based.

The service will be modelled on Sea Swift’s popular Trinity Bay Passenger tour in Cairns, which has been operating successfully for more than 20 years.

“Passengers can take their cars on the ship, which will be fitted out with ensuite cabins, a central common room where meals will be served and an outdoor deck area where tourists can relax, lounge and fish if they wish to while steaming between destinations,” Mr Giles said.

General Manager of Sea Swift Chris Sheppard said he was confident the new cruise service would be a great success.

“We receive numerous requests monthly enquiring if we’ve got a similar cruise to our Queensland service in the Northern Territory,” he said.

“More than 22,000 travellers have been on a cruise with us in the 20 years we have been operating the tours in North Queensland and the vast majority love it. There is nothing of a similar nature in the market place and its uniqueness is what drives people to tick it off their ‘bucket list’.

“This is a long-term investment in the Northern Territory tourism industry and one we feel will greatly benefit the Gove community.”

Mr Giles said the Territory Government’s new tourism infrastructure and development grant program is a major investment in the local tourism industry and the development of Northern Australia.

“The latest statistics show we’ve stopped the visitor declines of the last decade, with a 2.3 per cent increase in international visitation and a 0.8 per cent increase in domestic visitation,” Mr Giles said.

“This investment in the industry is another step along the road to develop Northern Australia and deliver a $2.2 billion visitor economy in the NT by 2020.”

The new Sea Swift cruise service will operate between Darwin-Nhulunbuy-Galiwinku and run weekly year round. It’s expected once refitted to be able to hold from 10-20 passengers.

Possible options that can be built into the service include:

- Fly to Nhulunbuy or Galiwinku and cruise back (or vice-versa)
- Drive to Nhulunbuy and cruise back (or vice-versa)
- Cruise Nhulunbuy-Galiwinku-Darwin return on single voyage
- Cruise Darwin-Nhulunbuy-Galiwinku return on single voyage
- Cruise Darwin to Nhulunbuy or Galiwinku & stay a week (or more) returning on next voyage

To view a video on the Sea Swift concept currently operating in Queensland see link below or photos attached. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxC1VYrz0gQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxC1VYrz0gQ)

**Media Contact:** Danielle Parry 0413 081 801

Related files

- [Sea Swift 1.jpg](http://example.com) (jpg 229.2 kb)
- [Sea Swift 2.jpg](http://example.com) (jpg 173.9 kb)
- [Sea Swift 3.jpg](http://example.com) (jpg 22.6 kb)