The Northern Territory Government is helping Territorians develop the skills to enable them to benefit from our annual $67 million cruise ship industry.

With tour guides identified on the NT Skilled Occupation Priority List, the Department of Business and Tourism NT are co-hosting a cruise guide workshop to boost the skills of people interested in guiding for cruise passengers.

The opportunity has attracted 49 people, more than three times as many as expected.

The workshop is being conducted by Guides Australia, an organisation that coordinates tour guide services around the country for visiting cruise ships. It covers basic requirements for guiding specifically for the cruise market; hints and tips to ensure successful tours; insights from experienced cruise tour guides; information on guiding qualifications; and a ride-along on actual tours.

The objective of the workshop is to build a larger base of cruise tour guides who would be available to meet the requirements of increasing numbers of cruise passengers.

Training is an ongoing exercise, and trainees will have an opportunity next month to join real shore excursions being conducted for visiting passengers.

Minister for Business, Dave Tollner said cruise ships were big business and the Giles Government wanted to help create opportunities for greater local participation in delivering services to cruise ship passengers.

“Economic assessments of the impact of cruise ships on the Darwin economy have found the industry injects approximately $66.8 million directly into the NT economy, creating an estimated 237 jobs,” Mr Tollner said.

“Given we have a shortage of tour guides as it is, we believe we can further increase the employment opportunities created by cruise ships through providing this training,” he said.
Minister for Tourism, Matt Conlan, said Darwin received 38 cruise ships for the 12 months ending in June this year, most of which visited during the wet season, bringing approximately 60,000 passengers and crew to the Top End.

“Cruise ships visit Australia during the southern hemisphere summer, which is why the bulk of visits to Darwin occur in the wet season. It’s estimated the number of cruise ship visits will increase to 42 this financial year.

“On average, around 30 per cent of cruise ship passengers participate in organised, pre-booked shore excursions. The remaining 70 per cent of passengers prefer to make their own arrangements, taking independent tours, or shopping in local supermarkets, boutiques, souvenir shops, cafes and restaurants.

“The cruise guide workshop is just one way that the Northern Territory Government is working to address supply issues related to the tourism industry, ensuring a robust, sustainable tourism sector capable of helping grow the visitor economy in the Northern Territory to $2.2 billion by 2020,” Mr Conlan said.

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