New app for iconic Territory road trip

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A Northern Territory business woman is set to create Australia’s longest audio tour with a new iPhone app for Territory road trips.

The project is the brainchild of entrepreneur Laurelle Halford, who runs DIY Tourguide, and is being supported by the Northern Territory Government.

“The Country Liberals Government is committed to growing the range of tourism products on offer to Territory visitors and this innovative new project will improve the great Northern Territory ‘road trip’ experience,” Tourism Minister Matt Conlan said.

“The new audio guide will help grow our all-important drive market further, which currently accounts for 290,000 visitors a year, and entice these visitors to spend longer in the NT and visit more of our regions.”

The new audio tour – believed to be Australia’s longest audio tour – will traverse about 1800km along the Stuart Highway from the SA/NT border to Darwin and in reverse. Available in a smartphone app format, it will include informative audio commentary and pre-loaded photos and videos, delivering a new experience for self-drive travellers along this iconic route.

DIY Tourguide will launch the new audio tour after successfully obtaining $35,000 in funding for the new app, as part of a $1.3 million pool of NT Government and Federal funding for tourism development and infrastructure. DIY Tourguide is also co-contributing to the new project.

“The new app will be extremely user friendly with video and photography tips for things to do and see along the drive such as the best times and locations to photograph Uluru,” said Mr Conlan.

“The GPS triggered smart phone app will be able to link directly to a user’s social media accounts and will also feature audio from characters of the Outback, promote national features, parks and reserves and other points of interest as well as practical information such as safety tips, fuel stops and driving distances.

“It is envisaged that the audio tour will eventually be translated into foreign languages and extended through to Port Augusta in South Australia to leverage this key gateway into the NT along the Explorer’s Way.
The new project aligns with the Government’s Tourism Vision 2020 strategy to increase visitor spending and economic development in regional and remote areas as it will help ‘slow visitors down’ during their drive so they can spend more time discovering our regional attractions.

“I’ve no doubt the new app will be a huge success with Laurelle already a national award winner – having taken out Gold at last year’s prestigious Qantas Australian Tourism Awards for her audio tours of the West MacDonnell Ranges and Alice Springs to Uluru.”

Laurelle launched DIY Tourguide in 2009, after four years as a professional tour guide where she noticed that self-drive tourists were not getting a full experience or appreciation of the region.

“Thousands of travellers traverse the Stuart Highway every year and I have wanted to create an audio guide for this route ever since I launched the business, and have had a lot of requests for it from existing customers,” she said.

“This funding from the Northern Territory Government has helped me realise that goal.

“I look forward to also promoting the lesser known experiences along the Stuart Highway and bringing the journey alive for our visitors.”

It is expected the new app and audio tour will be launched mid-next year.

The Government’s infrastructure development funding program is designed to develop Northern Australia and deliver a $2.2 billion visitor economy in the NT by 2020.

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