Central Australia will be put on the world map of mountain biking this week with international mountain bike trail guru Joey Klein to visit Alice Springs.

The trip is being supported by the Northern Territory Government, which is working hard to position the Centre as a world-class mountain biking destination.

“Joey is an absolute celebrity in the mountain bike world and is the premier trails expert for the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) in the United States,” said Tourism Minister Matt Conlan.

“Known by some as the ‘Trail Jedi’, Joey’s opinions carry huge weight with the national and international mountain biking community and his week riding our trails in Alice Springs will provide invaluable word-of-mouth promotion for the Centre.

“Currently the Mt Buller trail network in Victoria is the only ‘International’ class system in Australia as endorsed by IMBA International/USA, so it would be fantastic to have the Alice Springs trails rated the same.

“The dramatic landscapes of Central Australia and beauty of the Red Centre offers the perfect backdrop for adventure mountain bike riders.

“The sky really is the limit with this niche tourism market and the Giles Government is determined to see Alice Springs become a mecca for mountain bikers around the globe to help boost visitor numbers and the local economy.”

Joey’s trip to the Northern Territory follows his keynote speech at the 2014 Australian Mountain Bike Summit in Victoria.

During the week, he will spend 2-3 days familiarising himself with the Alice Springs trail network and talking to a range of stakeholders before being the special guest on Thursday at a meeting of the Alice Springs Mountain Bike Action Group which comprises representatives from various NT government agencies, the Central Lands Council, Alice Springs Town Council, the business community and the local mountain biking club (Central Australia Rough Riders).
The forum will provide Joey with an opportunity to share his advice and world-class knowledge of trail development and best practice, land management, future trends, marketing and events.

“I’m looking forward to visiting Alice Springs, having heard many good things about the local mountain bike network and the work being done to establish it,” said Mr Klein.

In a joint initiative, Joey’s visit to Alice Springs is being supported by the Parks and Wildlife Commission of the NT, Tourism NT, Tourism Central Australia and Department of Business.

As part of its plan to grow mountain biking tourism in the Centre, the Northern Territory Government is also supporting two major Mountain Bike events in 2015; the Lasseters Easter in Alice Mountain Bike Muster which, for the first time, will be a round of the MTBA National Marathon Series and the Redback, formerly known as the Ingkerreke Commercial MTB Enduro, in August.

The Government is also supporting an ongoing $50,000 mountain bike marketing campaign called ‘Ride the Red Centre’ to help boost awareness of Central Australia as a mountain biking holiday destination.

Joey Klein was born in Canada but grew up in Colorado, a mountain biking paradise. He has traveled the globe with IMBA spreading since 1999, leading trail projects and assessments in 43 US states and 14 countries. Joey’s breadth of experience includes sharing the latest in trail design, construction, and management practices.

His expertise is in the creation of multi-use trail systems that accommodate a variety of trail users and skill levels.

Joey will be in Alice Springs from 8 -12 December.

The community forum on mountain biking will held on Thursday 11 December in Alice Springs at the Chifley Alice Springs Resort at 7:00pm. Members of the public interested in attending should register their names with Lucy Barlow (lucy.barlow@nt.gov.au).

**Photo attached: Joey Klein in Alice Springs**

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