Arnhem Land tourism businesses supported with NT Government grants

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Arnhem Land’s development as a tourism destination has received a major boost with the Northern Territory Government providing grants towards new accommodation options such as luxury eco tents, and a new camping ground on the beautiful Melville Bay.

Chief Minister and Tourism Minister Adam Giles said almost $300,000 was being provided for four Arnhem Land projects under the Country Liberals Government’s $4.75 million Tourism Infrastructure Development Fund.

“Arnhem Land is arguably the last ‘untouched’ area of Australia and as a tourism location, it is a largely undiscovered hidden gem,” he said.

“The Country Liberals Government is taking an active role helping Gove and East Arnhem communities embrace new opportunities in industries like tourism.

“We’re particularly keen to get more cruise ships to the region, which is why we’ve welcomed changes to federal shipping laws that will support the expansion of cruise services across the Arnhem coast.

“The grants we’ve announced today will assist Arnhem Land tourism operators expand and enhance the range of tourism experiences on offer, which means more money flowing through the local economy and more jobs for local people.”

The four Arnhem Land projects supported with tourism infrastructure grants include:

- Outback Spirit Tours – Build and install luxury safari tents and create a luxury restaurant at Murwangi station near Ramingining ($100,000)
- Gove Boat Club – Develop a new powered camping ground and a secure boat/yacht storage facility ($80,000)
- Dhipirri Barra and Sportfishing Arnhemland Pty Ltd – Increase the accommodation capacity at the fishing lodge near Millingimbi from four rooms to seven ($50,000)
- Banubanu Wilderness Retreat – Buy and install two new eco safari tents ($65,000)
Mr Giles said the funding for the Gove Boat Club camping ground and yacht storage facility would help showcase the picturesque Melville Bay area, draw more self-drive and adventure tourists to the region, and boost yachting events and recreational fishing.

“This will allow the business to broaden the accommodation options available to the increasing numbers of self-drive tourists to Arnhem Land, and deliver much needed long term vessel storage and maintenance facilities,” he said.

Mr Giles said Outback Spirit Tours had recently secured a twelve year lease at Murwangi station near Ramingining and would use their grant to build twelve luxury safari tents and renovate the existing homestead into a restaurant with state of the art kitchen facilities.

“This development will be an integral part of a new regional tour that will be offered by the business from May 2016 – the ‘12 Day Arnhem Land Wilderness Adventure’ with ongoing employment and training opportunities, and flow on economic opportunities for businesses created as a result,” he said.

Mr Giles said Dhipirri Barra and Sportfishing Arnhemland Pty Ltd was the only fishing charter company in the Millingimbi area and the tourism grant would allow them to increase accommodation capacity at their lodge from four rooms to seven.

“The business will also be offering a new birding experience which will explore the untouched mangrove areas near the major rivers and around the pristine Arafura Swamp with local Indigenous people to be trained as guides,” he said.

Mr Giles said Banubanu Wilderness Retreat will deliver three new high-end eco tents on the Bremer Island beachfront with funding from the Northern Territory Government and contributions from Developing East Arnhem Limited and Banubanu itself.

“This project will provide additional accommodation options and showcase the best that East Arnhem can offer in terms of, Indigenous culture, nature, recreational fishing and adventure tourism,” he said.

Mr Giles said the $4.75 million Tourism Infrastructure Development Fund was the largest Government tourism grant program in the Territory’s history.

“It’s all part of the Country Liberals Government’s plans to drive the development of North Australia and build a $2.2 billion visitor economy by 2020,” he said.

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