Boutique resort with crocodile views among Top End tourism grant recipients

31 January 2016

A boutique resort near the Finniss River in a moat shaped like Australia that will offer views of crocodiles is among six Top End projects to be supported by Northern Territory Government tourism grants.

Chief Minister and Tourism Minister Adam Giles said more than $420,000 was being provided for the Top End tourism projects under the Country Liberals Government’s $4.75 million Tourism Infrastructure Development Fund.

“When the Country Liberals came to office in 2012, we inherited a ‘one shot in the locker’ economy built around INPEX so we’ve been working hard since then to diversify the economy, in particular strengthening the tourism industry,” he said.

“We’re committed to expanding and enhancing the range of tourism experiences on offer in the Territory so we can create more jobs and drive economic development in our regional areas.

“This is the largest Government tourism grant program in the Territory’s history. It is a significant boost for the NT tourism industry that will help attract more visitors here and encourage them to stay longer.”

The six Top End projects supported with tourism infrastructure grants include:

- Outback Floatplane Adventures – Site preparation for a boutique resort ($100,000)
- Mary River Wilderness Retreat – Installing safari-style eco tents ($65,000)
- Crocodylus Park – Building a large cat enclosure and waterfall feature ($100,000)
- Wildlands Wetlands Safari – Constructing a pontoon in Corroboree Billabong ($75,000)
- Point Stuart Wilderness Lodge – Road, entrance and carpark upgrades ($54,000)
- Lords Kakadu and Arnhem Land Safaris – Upgrade four safari-style tents ($29,397)

Mr Giles said Outback Floatplane Adventures was proposing to build a boutique resort to complement their existing airboat, helicopter and floatplane tours near the Finniss River, 70 km southwest of Darwin.
“Outback Floatplane Adventures’ Ultimate Outback Tour has proven extremely successful and the new resort will help them diversify and grow their business, providing high-end destination accommodation showcasing the beautiful Finniss River region,” he said.

Site preparation is underway now ahead of construction in 2016/17. Twelve units will be built using materials native to the area with the accommodation to be elevated on stilts and situated along a moat dug out in the shape of Australia.

The units will include a kitchenette, a bathroom, a king size bed, air conditioning and modern furnishings and fittings.

Outback Floatplane Adventures also propose including durable, transparent bathroom walls that will reveal each unit’s very own 15-foot crocodile in a secure fenced area that ensures there is no interaction between the guests and the crocodile.

Mr Giles said the Northern Territory Government was also supporting tourism businesses operating in the Mary River region.

“With the help of a $75,000 Northern Territory Government’s tourism grant, Wildlands Wetlands Safaris will build a permanent pontoon in Corroboree Billabong which will be a unique location to provide food and drink, to entertain and to host functions,” he said.

“The Government will also provide a $54,000 grant to the Point Stuart Wilderness Lodge to upgrade the entrance and road way from Point Stuart Road to Lodge, improving visitor access, particularly in the wet season.

“The flow on effects will be significant as Point Stuart is an ideal base from which to explore Shady Camp Reserve, Mary River National Park, and Kakadu National Park, while coaches use the roads to access other facilities and services in the area.

“The funding we have announced today will also increase the accommodation options for visitors to this region with Lords Safaris to upgrade four of the tents at their camp and their main eating tent in Kakadu National Park, while the Mary River Wilderness Retreat will purchase and install safari-style eco tents with frontage on the Mary River.”

Mr Giles said Crocodylus Park would receive a tourism infrastructure grant towards building an exotic animal enclosure and an escarpment waterfall feature.

“Large cats are the most popular exhibits within zoos around the world, except for crocodiles in the Top End,” he said.

“The new tourism product will extend the amount of time visitors spend in the park and add diversity for visitors that are in Darwin for a short period, such as cruise ship tourists and airport transit passengers.

“It will also provide ongoing employment and training opportunities, with the owners contributing $100,000 to the development on top of the Government grant.”
Mr Giles said the Country Liberals Government was working hard to rebuild the tourism industry after years of decline, with the tourism infrastructure grants helping local businesses revitalise their product and the experiences on offer.

“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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Resort site preparation pic
Chief Minister Adam Giles and Outback Floatplane Adventure's Matt Wright inspecting resort site