GROWING THE TERRITORY’S TOURISM INDUSTRY

Tourism Minister Paul Henderson today encouraged tourism operators to provide comment on an independent report that will shape a plan to grow the Territory’s tourism industry over the next five years.

Mr Henderson said the current five-year strategic plan expires this year, and the report by business consultants AECgroup provided an assessment of the current state of the tourism industry and recommendations to take the industry forward.

“Following the after shocks of the terrorism attacks of 2001 and 2002, the threat of SARS and the collapse of Ansett, the Territory’s tourism industry needed to reinvigorate its image,” Mr Henderson said.

“By refocusing our marketing efforts around nature and culture-based experiences and targeting adventurous travellers seeking a different kind of holiday, we have rebuilt our tourism numbers with the Share our Story campaign at the centre.

“In 2006/07, 855,000 visitors holidayed in the Northern Territory, up 18.5% from 722,000 in 2002/03, but we can not afford to rest on our laurels.

“The AECgroup’s report will help shape the direction we take over the next five years to grow the Territory’s tourism industry.”

Challenges identified by the report include building visitor numbers outside the peak Dry season period, improving accessibility to tourism attractions, and engaging Indigenous Territorians more effectively in the tourism industry.

The report’s recommendations include further strengthening the Territory’s reputation as the destination of choice for nature and culture-based adventure; targeting emerging tourism markets such as China; and maximising the NT’s environmental credentials in the face of growing concern about climate change.

“Put simply, the Territory’s competitive edge lies in harnessing what makes the Northern Territory unique – a rich history of Indigenous culture, natural wonders, and Australia’s true outback,” said Mr Henderson.

“If the Territory’s tourism industry is to be less susceptible to the boom and bust of world events, it’s essential that Government and industry continually look at how we can do business better.

“I encourage all Territory tourism operators to have their say on the consultant’s report and be part of the development of the Northern Territory Tourism Strategic Plan 2008-2012.”

Submissions will close on October 19 and the final strategy will be released in December. The AECgroup’s report into the Territory’s tourism industry can be found at www.tourismnt.gov.au.

Contact: Rebecca Cass 0401 110 389