Chief Minister Adam Giles today announced that two businesses operating on one of the world’s most spectacular walking treks, the Larapinta Trail, will benefit with funds for tourism facility upgrades.

Trek Larapinta and Epicurious Travel provide boutique trekking adventures and specialised guided walking tours that highlight our spectacular Red Centre.

“The Larapinta Trail is one of the world’s most spectacular walking attractions and new camp infrastructure will make the trek even better for tourists in the Territory”, Mr Giles said.

“Adventure trekking is extremely popular along the Larapinta Trail and attracts a wide variety of travellers, from those who walk the trail as individuals to those who walk as part of a tour.”

Trek Larapinta received funding of $60,000 for a private campsite with semi-permanent, luxury, safari style canvas tents. The camp site infrastructure will also be upgraded with rotaloo toilets, water tanks, solar hot water heaters and the construction of a semi-permanent kitchen facility.

Trek Larapinta owner Richard Mayne said the level of help in the NT for tourism operators is better than Tasmania and South Australia where they also run walking treks.

“I’d like to thank the Country Liberals Government for making grants available and easy to apply for, without all the red tape and hassle,” Mr Mayne said.

“Tourism NT is a pro-active organisation that regularly asks us for our opinions and suggestions and are readily accessible to offer feedback and support.”

“Trek Larapinta’s visitor numbers have quadrupled since we took on the business five years ago, this grant will help us construct a new private eco camp to cope with this huge increase in our bookings. With our entire 2016 season virtually sold out, we are now taking bookings for the 2017 Larapinta Trail season.”

“The positive flow on effects to tourism through our infrastructure upgrades will also have definite economic benefits to other business operators through the region.”

Epicurious Travel received $80,000 to design and build a semi-permanent structure on the Larapinta Trail to house a kitchen, two showers, and a storage area for camping gear, food and other equipment. The installation of solar power and an efficient water storage system will also be included.

Jennifer Wilkinson founder of Epicurious Travel is delighted that by obtaining the funds she will now be able to extend the season by offering a three-day ‘softer’ version of the Larapinta Walk.

“Epicurious Travel plan to facilitate a new tourism product for the high-end market by developing a three-day Indigenous art and culture tour product,” Ms Wilkinson said.
“We consider ourselves incredibly fortunate to have received such a generous grant, allowing us to meet our ongoing objectives in providing a high-end, luxury product showcasing the heart of Australia.

“Our Larapinta tour is almost sold out already for 2016, which means there is a growing demand for bushwalking in the Red Centre.

“Enhancements carried out on our site will be in keeping with our philosophy of responsible tourism – being mindful of the Traditional Owners wishes and having as little impact as possible on the environment of the West MacDonnell Ranges.”

Larpapinta Trek and Epicurious Travel operate in the heart of Central Australia along the Larapinta Trail that extends over 223 kilometres along the backbone of the West Mac Donnell Ranges.

Today’s announcement follows $133,355 in funding for Trek Larapinta and World Expeditions to construct semi-permanent campsites on the Larapinta Trail in 2014-15 under a joint NT Government and Australian Government tourism infrastructure program.

Chief Minister Adam Giles said a growing tourism industry helps boost local business, create jobs and grow the Territory economy.

"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."

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