Freedom Day Festival celebrates 50th Anniversary of Wave Hill Walk Off

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This year’s annual Freedom Day Festival from 19 - 21 August will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Wave Hill Walk Off, and the beginning of Aboriginal Land Rights.

Chief Minister Adam Giles said the Northern Territory Government is proud to support the Freedom Day Festival’s 50th Anniversary, with $100,000 committed to support the Festival and the Wave Hill Walk Off heritage trail.

“The Freedom Day Festival is a key highlight on the FestivalsNT calendar and an important part of the Territory Government’s plan to support opportunities for Indigenous cultural celebration and sharing of cultural knowledge,” Mr Giles said.

“The Freedom Day Festival is a key event for the Kalkaringi and Daguragu communities and recognises the contribution made by the Gurindji, Mudbara and Walpiri families to Australia’s history.”

The Freedom Day Festival celebrates the Gurindji Walk Off which was initiated by Gurindji/Malgnin leader, Vincent Lingiari, on 23 August 1966 and lasted till 1974, an event which lit the fire that became the national land rights movement.

It led to the first hand back of traditional lands to Aboriginal people by then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, captured in the iconic moment of Whitlam pouring sand through Lingiari’s hands.

In addition to the $50,000 funding through FestivalsNT, the Northern Territory Government has provided an additional $50,000 through the Tourism Infrastructure Development Fund to support the development of the Wave Hill Walk Off heritage trail infrastructure.

“The National Heritage Listed Wave Hill Walk Off trail will be launched under the national spotlight of the 50th Anniversary as a new NT tourism offering,” Mr Giles said.

“The Wave Hill Walk Off Route is a National Heritage listed trail with the potential to attract visitors to the NT, joining other Northern Territory icons such as Kakadu and Uluru.”

The project will see the creation of an interpretive walking trail along the route to create a new NT tourism experience, with high quality interpretive signage, markers and rest areas developed along the route to cater for both self-guided and guided tours.
Mr Giles said a thriving tourism industry would help to develop our regions, boost local businesses, create more jobs and grow the Territory economy.

"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," he said.

"It's all part of the Country Liberals Government's plan to drive the development of North Australia and build a $2.2 billion visitor economy by 2020.”

The Freedom Day Festival runs from 19 – 21 August 2016.


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