On the eve of a predicted bumper season for the Territory tourism industry - with near record advance bookings for the drive market - the efforts of the Northern Territory tourism industry to cope with the challenges of late last year will be officially recognised.

Mr Henderson officially launched the 16th Annual Brolga Awards at the NT News today. The Awards ceremony will be held at the Alice Springs Convention Centre on November 23.

"The Brolga Awards recognise tourism excellence, and are the Territory’s premier tourism awards," Mr Henderson said.

"And this year, despite the obvious problems associated with the September terrorist attacks and the collapse of Ansett last year, tour operators are being encouraged to detail businesses practices used to overcome this adversity when making submissions to the awards."

The Brolga Awards are organised by the Tourism Council of the NT Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Mr Henderson said following wide consultation with tour operators, there had been a revamp of entry criteria this year.

He said: "This year, for the first time, criteria focuses on evidence of best practice of business operation including service delivery.

"A judging panel made up of 12 people and chaired by Keith Castle OAM – who has come to affectionately be known as the ‘father or Territory tourism’ – will determine the category winners."

Winners of the Brolga Awards automatically gain entry to the Australian Tourism Awards – which will be held in Adelaide in February next year. Last year five Brolga winners took out national awards for their categories.

This year’s awards have been sponsored by Channel 8, NT News, Qantas and the Northern Territory Tourist Commission.