Sustainable solutions for your business

East Arnhem Land
Hero Experience Development Mentoring Program 2017
Tourism Operators Outcomes and Final Actions

Final Report
PROGRAM BACKGROUND & GOALS

East Arnhem Land is home to unique tourism experiences and helping local tourism operators enhance their capacity to better harness these opportunities will serve to build industry resilience and support the delivery of projects that contribute to Tourism NT’s Vision 2020 outcomes, Northern Territory’s Strategy for growth.

EarthCheck’s analysis of Tourism Research Australia’s data on the global tourism visitor market has uncovered new insights into traditional visitor motivations – what persuades a visitor to holiday in a particular destination is that destination’s ability to engage visitors in unforgettable and truly inspiring experience with stories that connect them with special places, people and cultures.

Developing East Arnhem Limited (DEAL) engaged EarthCheck to deliver its Hero Experience Development Mentoring Program. Fitting under the ‘umbrella’ of the East Arnhem Land Tourism Development Plan project, managed by DEAL, EarthCheck’s Hero Experience Mentoring Program specifically addresses immediate product development goals in the region to improve existing or new tourism products as well as the goals identified in the DEAL Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

The Hero Experience Development Mentoring Program mentored twelve businesses* to develop hero experiences based on the Yolngu culture of the Yolngu Traditional Owners in East Arnhem Land, by training local operators to engage with the following over a twelve week program:

• Building competitive digital capability
• Increasing supply of labour, skills and Indigenous participation
• Building industry resilience, productivity and quality
• Product packaging

DEAL identified and invited potential operators to the Hero Experience Development Mentoring Program workshops where they were introduced to EarthCheck mentors. EarthCheck worked with the selected mentees to provide ‘experience health-checks’, one-on-one mentoring services, development of unique selling points (USPs) and product famils, providing tailored business supporting focused on addressing need and demand for tourism development. EarthCheck provided regular updates to DEAL with the progression of the mentees through the Hero Experience Mentoring Program. A final workshop was held by DEAL with the mentors in attendance to conclude the Hero Experience Mentoring Program.

The Hero Experience Mentoring Program for East Arnhem Land educated, inspired and motivated tourism operators and community stakeholders to own the East Arnhem Land Hero Experience, delivered a program to deliver the experiences on a business level and assisted the industry to build capability leveraging the destination’s competitive advantages and more effectively drive demand in key markets.

*Two businesses pulled out once selected and four more were engaged however could not commit to the twelve week program
THE PARTICIPANTS

Arnhem Unlimited
Arnhem Unlimited is an Indigenous owned and operated tourism provider, offering unique Sea-Country experiences provided by local people sharing knowledge passed on through generations. Unique undiscovered locations available to the adventurer in stunning coastal land and sea scapes. These experiences include Sea and Coastal Stories, Taste and Texture Experiences, Knowledge Sharing, Skills and Crafts and Special Places.

Banubanu
Banubanu Wilderness Retreat was established in 2005 and promotes the experience of pristine beaches and beautiful sunsets. Banubanu is an eco-friendly retreat that has been built with materials that make it one with the landscape. The retreat runs on solar and wind power and pairs water management techniques with captured rain to ensure plentiful supply throughout the year.

Black Diamond Aviation
Black Diamond Aviation provides air charter services to individuals, businesses and corporate groups, and to local state and federal Government. Private and commercial hire is offered, including airfreight and remote logistics, aerial surveys, aerial photography and search and rescue services. Offering unique adventure flights to remote locations that few visitors see, Black Diamond Aviation takes the visitor deep into the cultural heart of East Arnhem Land, for a truly breathtaking and memorable experience.

East Arnhem Fishing Adventures
East Arnhem Land’s most thrilling fishing adventure. East Arnhem Fishing Adventures provide personalised fishing experiences which guarantee to thrill beginners and experienced fisherman. Small tours with local guides provide unique knowledge to guests. The business aims to provide the guest with a personalised remote experience in pristine untouched nature.

East Arnhem Real Estate
East Arnhem Real Estate is a boutique agency established in 2011. The business operates across East Arnhem Land including on aboriginal lands. East Arnhem Real Estate aim to provide short stay accommodation to clientele which include tourists, indigenous corporations, national companies and three tiers of Government. The mission is to add value to the community through reputation for best practice, reliability and results for all stakeholders. Core values of East Arnhem Real Estate include culture, communication, empathy and innovation.
**Gapuwiyak Culture & Arts Centre**
A not-for-profit organisation created to enhance the wellbeing on Yolngu people by supporting their cultural practice, values and intellectual property while providing opportunities for leadership, meaningful employment and professional development.

**Lirrwi Tourism**
Established in 2010, Lirrwi Tourism was created to develop, support and promote Yolngu tourism in Arnhem Land. The main objective is to create a new economy for Yolngu people in Arnhem land through tourism by bringing people together to share the Yolngu culture, connecting Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. This helps build understanding between Yolngu and non-Yolngu people, assist Yolngu people to enter the tourism industry, support Yolngu tourism businesses and take ownership of tourism development in the region.

**Nhulunbuy Corporation Limited**
Nhulunbuy Corporation operates Gove Airport. The terminal offers amenities and airport facilities above the level experienced in other areas of Australia. It provides essential daily jet-services to Remote East Arnhem Land with connecting flights to and from Darwin and Cairns as well as smaller RPT aircraft between Darwin and Groote Eylandt. These services represent approximately 122,000 seats with passenger numbers between 50,000 and 60,000 annually in addition to transit-passengers.

**Walkabout Lodge**
Walkabout Lodge encourage their visitors to explore the unique landscape of East Arnhem Land and experience firsthand the traditional culture of the Yolngu. The lodge has a fully licenced restaurant, function facilities and a pool. Their aim was to upskill their staff in tourism industry knowledge in East Arnhem Land.

**Wildcard Luxury Cruises and Fishing Charters**
Wildcard Luxury Cruises and Fishing Charters provide multiple day adventures, exploring the ocean islands and blue water fishing or the guest can tailor their own experience. Wildcard Luxury Cruises and Fishing Charters are devoted to making each cruise a once in a lifetime experience, allowing their guests to feel connected with the crew and the land.
THE RESULTS

Each participant developed a product, package or experience during the initial workshop with DEAL and EarthCheck. This idea was then further developed throughout the course of the Hero Experiences Mentoring Program and fed into the development of a rate and fact sheets for visitors.

Below are the products, packages or experience that have been developed as part of the East Arnhem Land Hero Experience Mentoring Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentee</th>
<th>Hero Product / Package / Experience</th>
<th>Key Mentoring Program Outcomes</th>
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</table>
| Arnhem Unlimited        | • Personally tailored experiences promising a personal adventure from the unique perspective of the remote coastal waterways  
                           • Range of different cultural immersion experiences including taste and texture, cultural, arts and crafts, sea & coastal stories and special places and fishing expeditions. | • Marketing plan  
                           • Sales brochure  
                           • Rate and fact sheet  
                           • Imagery  
                           • Refined product and story  
                           • Assistance with business launch |
| Banubanu                | • Australia’s pioneer and premier eco island retreat in untouched exclusive wilderness surroundings.  
                           • Relish in the electrifying experiences that pristine nature has to offer, land and sea tour experiences available. | • Social media and marketing plan  
                           • Rename/ Re-brand away from “Banubanu wilderness retreat” to Bremer Island Banubanu Beach Retreat”  
                           • Rate and fact sheet |
| Black Diamond Aviation  | • An all access pass to Arnhem Land on board twin engine planes, that allows the visitor to view the stunning landscape in a perspective that view experience.  
                           • Feel, see, touch and smell the history of the Yolngu people on scheduled flights or go where you want. | • Social media and marketing plan  
                           • Change in branding  
                           • Established partnerships with local operators  
                           • Sales brochure |
| East Arnhem Fishing Adventures | • A personalised thrilling fishing adventure lead by local guides who provide unique knowledge to guests in untouched nature.  
                           • Half and full day tours available | • Social media and marketing plan  
                           • New imagery and Facebook  
                           • Sales flyer/Rate and fact sheet  
                           • Business plan and budget review  
                           • Assistance with business launch |
### THE RESULTS

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| **East Arnhem Real Estate**                      | • Short stay accommodation for families, groups and corporate stays so visitors can ‘live like a local’  
• Local insider tips sent to guests during their stay so they can experience East Arnhem Land like a true local. | • TripAdvisor accounts  
• Marketing strategy incorporating the product theme into client experience during their stay  
• Working with other local businesses  
• Upskilling and training of staff to connect with occupants |
| **Gapuwiyak Culture & Arts Centre**               | • A Non-commercial “backstage pass” to the Yolngu people.  
• An opportunity to ‘live like a local’                                                                 | • Case studies on product experiences and pricing  
• Development of suggested new product ideas and pricing to create a product and craft a brand message that differentiates the Gapuwiyak experience from similar/other operators in region  
• Rate and fact sheet |
| **Lirwi Tourism**                                | • Organised and run by Yolngu people – your tour is designed to give back to the community.  
• Immerse yourself in Yolngu culture and tradition.  
• Get a first hand experience of the way the Yolngu people lived 50,000 years ago | • Social media and marketing plan  
• Research into glamping hire prices  
• Rate and fact sheet developed for marketing. |
| **Nhulunbuy Corporation Limited**                | • The gateway to country for many of the regions visitors and locals.  
• The first and last impression of Nhulunbuy.                                                               | • Analysis of customer feedback survey results  
• Summary of survey results and findings in summary report  
• Development of short, medium and long term projects to deliver for best visitor experience  
• Research on costings to deliver some of the short term goals. |
| **Walkabout Lodge**                              | • Take a trip to a remote location and stay in luxury  
• Accommodation for all needs and budgets from luxury lodge rooms to powered camping sites.  
• Fully equip with restaurant and bar, all your needs in one place.  
• Take a tip from the staff and learn to live like a local.                                         | • Social media and marketing plan  
• Development of scripts for staff to use to promote activities in Nhulunbuy.  
• Rate and fact sheet |
| **Wildcard Luxury Cruises and Fishing Charters** | • Fully personalised fishing and adventure charters over multiple days, allowing visitors to choose their adventure and their catch. | • Digital and social media marketing plan  
• New itineraries  
• Update of website with season trips and prices  
• Product brochure |
A common challenge and opportunity identified through the program as the lack of frontline staff awareness of the products and experiences on offer. Parallel is the high turnover of staff in frontline roles and the need to offer incentives / rewards to increase staff retention.

One suggestion is the development of an East Arnhem staff rewards program based on familis. The longer you stay, the more rewards you can access. The rewards come in the form of familis which are offered when there is a spare seat or excess capacity to reduce the real cost on operators. A similar program was implemented in the Red Centre.

It is recommended that EALTA lead the program. Employers provide staff with the table of offers (see below), when a milestone is reached the staff choose their preferred product / famil and the manager emails the operator and the staff member and a suitable time is sorted out.

Operator buy-in is voluntary.

Suggested Staff Rewards Famil Program*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>THREE MONTHS</th>
<th>SIX MONTHS</th>
<th>12 MONTHS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lirrwi 3 hour tour</td>
<td>• East Arnhem Fishing Adventure (day trip)</td>
<td>• Black Diamond Aviation Tour (15 minutes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• East Arnhem Fishing Adventure (half-day trip)</td>
<td>• Banubanu Day trip</td>
<td>• East Arnhem Real Estate 30% discount for friends and family</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lirrwi Day Trip</td>
<td>• Wildcard Luxury Cruises 15% discount on 8-day luxury cruise.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Walkabout Lodge dinner for two</td>
<td>• Banubanu overnight accommodation (off-season)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Arnhem Unlimited Half-Day Tailored Marine Charter</td>
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*These are only suggestions and subject to agreement by operators.
Customers coming to Nhulunbuy for work or play need to get the message of the many experiences on offer in the East Arnhem. The current town map and top things to do is fantastic. It needs an update to include new experiences and more promotion around town and to visitors.

The airport is an ideal location to promote it both in the check-in area (a large panel for guests leaving to see if they have done the Top 10) and with accommodation providers to display the board in a prominent place in their venue, starting with the Walkabout Lodge. East Arnhem Real Estate can also play an important promotion role, sending the map to holiday rental clients.

Every EALTA business should be using them and promoting them and training their staff on how to use them to:

a) Promote experiences and
b) Use the #eastarnhemland hashtag

Current Town Map / Things to do

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WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?

➢ EALTA to work with its members to redo and reprint the maps
➢ Airport to install the panel in the arrivals hall (Cost: TBC)
➢ Walkabout and other accommodation to have the maps and install panels for guests (Cost: TBC)
➢ EALTA to work with Tourism NT to reprint the postcards. (Cost: TBC)
➢ Work with the airlines to promote it in the reworked arrivals announcement.

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Have you done the East Arnhem Top 10?

1. Want to see a local artist at work and hear the story of some authentic local art? Try Buku Larrnggay Mulka Art Centre at Yirrkala or stop into Gapuwiyak Culture & Arts on the drive to Darwin.
2. Connect with Yolngu culture and connection to country. Try a short tour with Lirrwi or another Yolngu guide.
3. Spot some of the unique bird life of the East Arnhem. Try the Lagoon Wetlands early or late in the day.
4. Get out on the water for a ‘sea country’ experience. Try one of our charter boats for a sunset cruise.
5. Seen the landscape from up high? Try a charter flight or visit the Roy (Malpi) Marika lookout on Mt Nhulun.
6. Take a quiet walk in the forest or the beach and spot some of our rare wildlife. Try exploring the Dhimurru recreation areas with a permit.
7. Stay on a remote island or beach to really soak up the peace and quiet. Try Banubanu on Bremer Island or a Homeland Stay with Lirrwi.
8. Go on a fishing charter with the ocean to yourselves and catch the fish of your life. Try one of the charter companies leaving daily from Nhulunbuy.
9. Learn a few Yolngu words that you can take home. Try the town art walk.
10. Watch sunset fall over the water from a quiet vantage spot. Try the Gove Boat Club for sunset.
GROUP ACTIONS - #3 PRICELESS MOMENTS CAMPAIGN

Reaching the ‘experience seeker’ market is difficult when you only have access to mainstream media and have a small budget.

An alternative approach are partnership campaigns that use electronic direct mail with exclusive and targeted offers to existing databases. One example is the MasterCard Priceless Cities program. MasterCard works with a local partner to create exclusive experiences for MasterCard customers who look to spend between $150-$1,500 per person on an exclusive experience. By exclusive, that means something you can’t already buy online. It is tailored for MasterCard clients and promoted to their top customers (Black and Platinum Cardholders).

EarthCheck is in contact with MasterCard about a similar campaign for destinations, starting with East Arnhem Land and is looking for six (6) exclusive products that are not already in the market.

An alternative to MasterCard could be Qantas and Air North who could offer similar packages / exclusive products to Frequent Flyers. EarthCheck will put together a pitch deck to promote this opportunity.

MasterCard ‘Priceless Cities’ Campaign in Mexico

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?

➢ All Mentees should join EALTA as soon as possible.
➢ EALTA members to share exclusive experiences / priceless moments they can create for EarthCheck to pitch.
➢ EarthCheck to prepare a pitch deck and promote the concept.
➢ All partners with connections to influence any of the above to promote the idea and try to gain traction.
➢ EALTA / DEAL to take a lead on promoting the offer to Tourism NT and Tourism Australia.

mexicobestkeptsecrets.com
Tourism has been identified as a strategic industry for economic growth and diversification for East Arnhem Land.

However the tourism sector in the region is in its nascent stage. This level of maturity of the sector must be taken into consideration, when determining further support required to get small and micro operators up and running.

The largest marketing gap for all mentees was a website with booking capacity. Websites are the most critical element for start-ups to drive revenue and commercial.

DEAL and Tourism NT to discuss potential funding to develop digital marketing strategies that include direct links from social media to websites for mentees. Additional complementary funding, to support modest capital investment requirements, that can have transformational impact for operator businesses, may also be considered. This will result in increased revenue and job creation within the area.

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?

➢ DEAL/EALTA to determine digital marketing needs of Mentees, to define ‘total website development workload’.

➢ DEAL & Tourism NT to discuss and identify potential resources to be used to develop websites for mentees which need the support.

➢ Websites to be developed as soon as possible.

➢ Once websites are up and running, update all links and information on EALTA and other marketing collateral.

Online Booking Software For Tour & Activity Providers

Rezdy is a fit for everyone and blends seamlessly into your website.

Source: https://www.rezdy.com/booking-software/
GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the outcomes of the Developing East Arnhem Experience Development Mentoring Program, it is recommended that future programs should take the following into consideration:

**Publicity Program is Essential**
- Externally based tourism operators engaging with the East Arnhem Land region, such as Intrepid Travel, Outback Spirit and Culture College, are actively promoting the destination to higher-end culturally curious and experience seekers. But much more is needed.
- EALTA to work with Tourism NT to secure funds for development of publicity content and communication/marketing campaigns and strategies.

**Operators Need Help to Become Domestic and International Ready**
- DEAL and DTBI to work with the NT BEC to offer a workshop on Domestic and International Ready
- EALTA and DEAL to provide support regarding understanding of tourism supply chain platforms (ITO/OTAs) and commercial clauses that protect the business.

**Operators Need Support to Build Bookable Websites & Social Media**
- Website development, online booking and platform upgrade support
- Ongoing social media support/training including TripAdvisor, Instagram and Facebook
- Support for image development (photography, video/drone footage) for various markets
- Information regarding all support mechanisms available to operators.

**Operators need to work together to create new packages / products**
- EALTA and DEAL to Tourism NT and Tourism Australia product pitch opportunity for the Conference and Incentive Market
- EALTA airport welcome and update the inflight update to be more clear about permits and potentially to incorporate a statement about tourism offerings in region or the visitor centre.
- EALTA could offer ATDW subscription with Membership
- EALTA to lead the process for periodic communication platform between operators so new ideas can be shared/discussed and new packages/products created.

**Preparing for growth**
- The introduction of the ATE-style pitch session so that that operators have an opportunity to practise their pitch to three very different audience styles – helping them to get more comfortable saying their pitch out loud, giving them some pointers for when they attend the ATE.
- It is recommended that the mentees in the current program be reviewed in the third quarter of 2017 to assist them in establishing rates for the 2018-19 period, which will also be due for contracting during that time. Given the nature of the tourism travel trade, contracting is conducted approximately 12 months in advance of travel and it is felt that continuing to sustain the momentum created with this Program will help to maintain and strengthen the product offering and credibility for East Arnhem Land.