



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

PG /111

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NEW ERA OF INDIGENOUS TOURISM AT KAKADU

An exciting new era of Indigenous tourism was celebrated at Kakadu National Park this morning, as Kakadu's *Shared Vision for Tourism* came to life.

Environment Minister Peter Garrett joined the festivities at Kakadu to mark the culmination of a three year journey which has seen traditional owners take control of their tourism future and develop an expanded range of Indigenous tours and activities.

A Shared Vision for Tourism in Kakadu was released in 2005 by Kakadu's Aboriginal-majority Board of Management. It has provided the blueprint for transforming the park so Aboriginal people have opportunities to create sustainable businesses sharing their culture with visitors.

"Today we celebrate a dramatic shift towards Indigenous tourism at Kakadu, with Aboriginal people and their culture now at the heart of the visitor experience," Mr Garrett said.

"With the Prime Minister's apology to Indigenous Australians still echoing around the world there is a groundswell of interest in Aboriginal culture, and Kakadu's transformation will help meet that need.

"Three years after the vision was unveiled Kakadu has an Indigenous tour to suit every taste, from safari-tents and stories around the campfire to weaving and bush tucker walks in the woodlands.

"With more Indigenous experiences in the works Kakadu will only get better from here, as the *Shared Vision for Tourism* continues to set the path for tourism development.

"This shift makes Kakadu a model for sustainable tourism around the world – it creates jobs for Aboriginal people and an unforgettable time for visitors, and helps Kakadu contribute tens of millions of dollars to the Territory economy each year.

"Support from the NT Government has been key in promoting Kakadu's new offerings – they have provided \$3 million over the last three years to market Kakadu to Australia and the world, investing in the future of the Territory economy."

A key part of the vision was developing a tourism master plan to guide future tourism development. This was released for public comment today. Other initiatives include:

- a new logo, look and feel for the park **(launched today)**
- an interactive travel website - www.kakadu.com.au **(launched today)**
- a new visitor guide to help people connect with culture **(launched today)**
- mentoring to support new Indigenous businesses
- a dedicated tourism team that has built strong partnerships with the tourism industry
- compulsory training for all tour guides.

The ongoing transformation has seen visitor numbers rise each year, hitting 226,000 in 2007 with numbers for this year looking very promising. Territorians now make up 12 per cent of Kakadu's visitors, up from 5 per cent when the Shared Tourism Vision was first set out.

For more information and copies of the Shared Vision for Tourism in Kakadu National Park visit www.environment.gov.au/parks/kakadu