



The Territory's visitor economy in 2025



The visitor economy is a major contributor to the Territory's economy, identity and way of life.

In the year ending December 2025, visitors made around **1.3 million** trips to and within the Territory across international, interstate and local travel. Together, they spent around **\$2.3 billion**, supporting businesses, regional economies and communities across the NT.

More than **17,000 Territorians** are employed in tourism related industries, including hospitality, transport, retail, arts, recreation and nature based activities.

Visitor spending equates to nearly **\$7,000 per resident**, highlighting the significant contribution the visitor economy makes to local prosperity and lifestyle.

Tourism spending reaches well beyond front line visitor businesses, flowing through suppliers, producers and service industries and extending benefits across the wider economy.

New national methodology

In January 2025, Tourism Research Australia (TRA) introduced a new way of measuring domestic travel, called Domestic Tourism Statistics (DoTS), replacing the National Visitor Survey (NVS). DoTS combines survey results with movement data to provide a more modern and flexible approach, with the ability to include new data sources over time. Because of this change, the data cannot be directly compared with results from before 2025.

The Territory's accommodation supply includes around 110 hotel-style properties making 9.5k available rooms across the Territory that equate to 3.4 million room nights in 2025. The average annual occupancy is 60% peaking in dry season with July at 80%.



¹ STR: NT Destination report 2025

² Tourism Research Australia, State Tourism Satellite Account, year ending June 2024

³ ABS, National, State and Territory Population, December 2024

⁴ Cirium Schedule of travel for Northern Territory between January - December 2025



Adelaide River Inn, Adelaide River

A visitor economy to drive future growth for the Territory, providing jobs and regional opportunity.

In 2023–24, visitors to the Northern Territory spent approximately \$3.7 billion across accommodation, food services, transport, retail and recreational activities, as measured by total tourism consumption.

This activity is estimated to support around \$3.0 billion in Gross State Product (GSP) once flow-on effects through supply chains and household spending are taken into account.

Overall, tourism is estimated to support around 9.1% of the Territory’s economy, highlighting its broad role in driving economic activity across multiple sectors⁵.

Businesses that power the visitor economy

More than 2,500 Territory businesses support visitor experiences, representing around 21% of all businesses and contributing to economic activity, community liveability and the Territory’s identity.

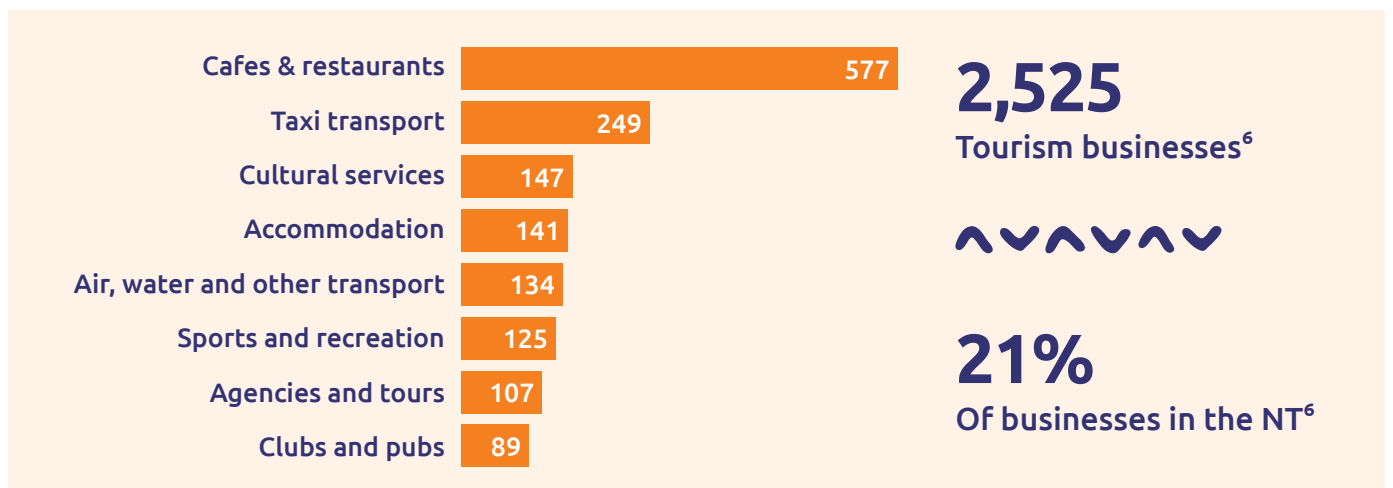
Visitation by region

In the year ending December 2025, the Top End recorded 900,000 visitor trips and \$1.5 billion in visitor spend. The Centre recorded 400,000 trips and \$700 million in visitor spend¹.

Tourism is everyone’s business

The Territory’s visitor economy is built through shared effort. From small businesses, local councils and regional tourism organisations to airports, ports, event venues and organisers, hospitality providers and community groups, tourism relies on a broad and connected network.

This collective effort helps ensure the benefits of visitation are felt across the Territory. Investment in tourism infrastructure strengthens liveability for residents, events and festivals bring communities together, parks support recreation and wellbeing, and visitor demand sustains local businesses and jobs.



⁵ Tourism Research Australia, State Tourism Satellite Accounts

⁶ Tourism Research Australia, Tourism Businesses, June 2025



A picture of the Territory's visitors⁷



Understanding our visitors: origin, purpose and travel patterns shaping future investment and sustainable growth.

Interstate visitor profile

Interstate travellers account for around half of visitors and spend in the Territory. International travellers represent around 20% of visitors and spend but deliver more than half of all visitor nights. Territorians are the second-largest group, contributing around one third of visitors and spend.

- Interstate visitors are the largest segment of the Territory's visitor market
- Most trips are for holidays (71%, driven by landscapes, culture and events)
- Around **1 in 5** visits are to see family and friends
- About **1 in 3** trips are for business or events

Role of Territorians

- Frequent short trips within the Territory
- Strong regional reach
- Ongoing support for local businesses, jobs and communities
- Helping provide consistent demand across the year

International visitor profile:

- Almost **75%** travel for holidays
- Represent about **half** of NT visitor nights, spending an average of **17 nights** in the Territory
- Stay **3 times longer** than interstate travellers







Visitor mix

 **617K** interstate trips

 **255K** international trips

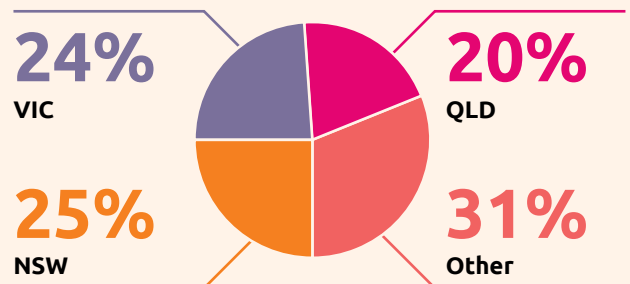
 **378K** trips by Territorians

Key international markets

	United States		United Kingdom
	Germany		New Zealand
	Singapore		China*

*China is the Territory's fastest growing international market, expanding at twice the average rate of all international markets and exceeding the growth of the United States.

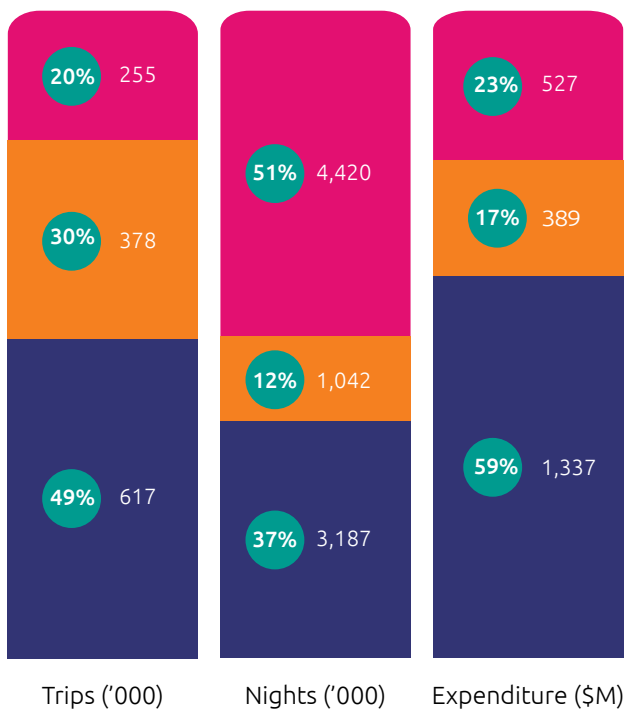
Top domestic markets



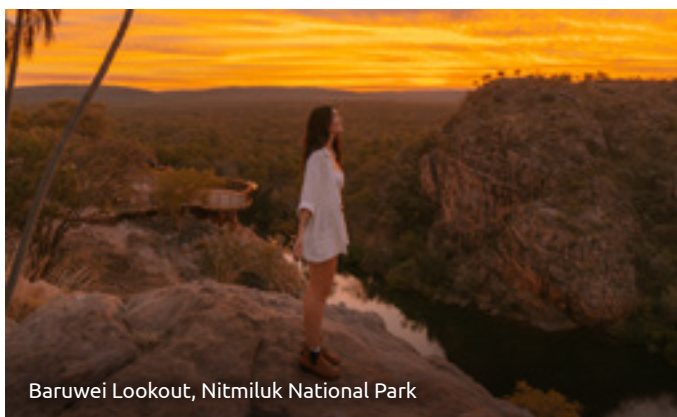
⁷ Tourism Research Australia Year Ending December 2025 reporting (DoTS, IVS)



Mix of visitors in the Northern Territory⁸



● International
 ● Intra-Territory
 ● Interstate
● Percentage share



Baruwei Lookout, Nitmiluk National Park

Reasons for Visitation⁹



⁸ Tourism Research Australia, Domestic Tourism Statistics and International Visitor Survey, year ending December 2025. Overnight visitors only.
⁹ Approximation per year based on Domestic Tourism Statistics and International Visitor Survey, year ending December 2025.



Trends are working in our favour



Travellers worldwide are increasingly seeking connection, authenticity and purpose, values at the heart of the Territory experience.

Immersive experiences

Travellers increasingly want more than sightseeing. They are looking to connect with the stories, people and places that define a destination. In the Northern Territory, culture, events, festivals and hands on experiences come together to create a strong sense of place.

Visitors are encouraged to slow down and take part. This may include learning from Traditional Owners, joining local festivals, enjoying distinctive food experiences and exploring landscapes rich in story and meaning.

Emotion strongly influences travel choices. Relaxation is the leading motivator, followed by the desire to escape everyday life, discover something new and reconnect with nature.¹⁰

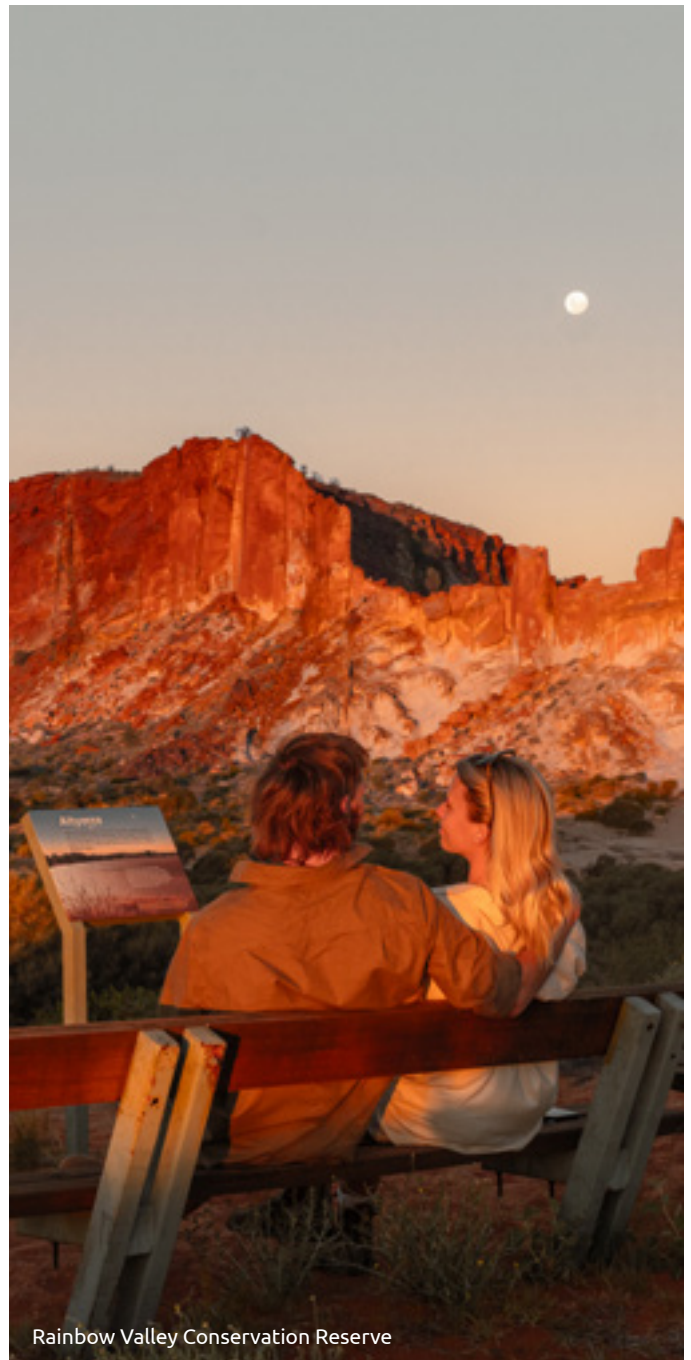
Interest in Aboriginal experiences continues to grow as visitors seek meaningful connections to Country, culture and stories. In 2023–24, around **3 million trips**¹¹ included First Nations activities, the highest annual number on record.

Purposeful travel

Travellers are increasingly motivated by meaning and connection – choosing destinations that enrich their understanding of people and place. The Territory speaks directly to this desire, offering experiences that inspire curiosity, reflection and personal growth.



1 in 4
Australians say they would be likely to 'intentionally travel' for an upcoming trip creating meaningful journeys.¹¹



Rainbow Valley Conservation Reserve

¹⁰ Territory Demand Tracker Q1 2025. Base: Interstate travellers n=1,000

¹¹ Austrade factsheet 2025



Open spaces and nature

As people look for balance, wellbeing and freedom after periods of travel restriction, destinations known for nature and space are seeing strong interest. The NT's vast landscapes, national parks and sense of discovery appeal to travellers seeking room to breathe and reconnect with the natural world.

In the Territory, space is part of the experience, from wide horizons and remote adventures to nights under some of the clearest, darkest skies in the world.



3 in 4

people feel the Territory offers what can't be found elsewhere and 35% strongly agree NT experiences are unique to the place.¹²



Nawurlandja Lookout, Kakadu National Park

¹² Tourism and Transport Forum, Media Travel report 2025



A growing trend: events are driving travel decisions¹³



Events are shaping where, when and how people travel.

Travel decisions are increasingly driven by ‘what’s on’ rather than just ‘where to go’. Events act as a powerful travel trigger by speeding up decisions, justifying travel costs and creating emotional experiences beyond sightseeing.

Destinations worldwide are using major cultural, sporting and business events as key drivers of visitation. Events now play a strategic role in shaping when and how people travel.

In Australia, a similar trend has emerged in interstate travel. Sports and cultural events are taking a central role at the beginning of the travel decision journey, influencing destination choice, timing and trip design.



The Territory through the consumer lens

Events are not optional extras. They are primary drivers of destination choice. Events are delivering for the Territory with NT performance mirroring this global consumer shift. Recent Territory Demand Tracker data confirms the strength of event-led intent among interstate travellers:

Interstate travellers

1 in 2

are likely to attend a **sports or cultural event** when they travel

2 in 3

travellers considering the NT are likely to attend sports or cultural events as part of their trip

#1

Sports & cultural events rank #1 among activities shaping destination choice



88%

of event-interested travellers choose their destination or plan around events before arriving

13%

choose a destination because of events

75%

plan events into their trip before arrival

¹³ NT Major Events Corporation research, 2025



Events-led travel in the NT

Events drive incremental visitation and deliver economic impact.

In the Territory, **52%** of major event visitors travelled to the host region or extended their stay to attend the event, with this impact still strong at **39%** across all events. For interstate and overseas visitors, this rises to three in four.

In 2025, this represented **77k event-motivated visitors** to host regions across the Territory.

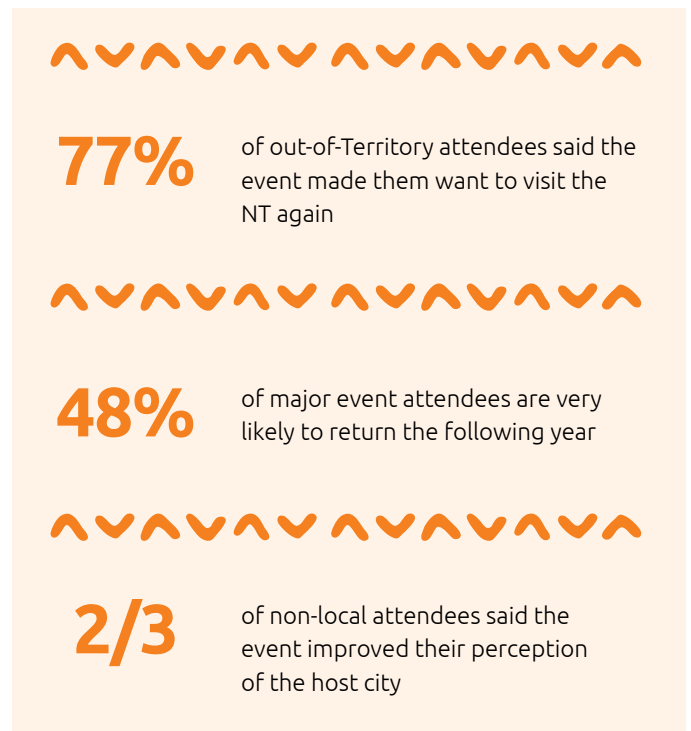
Events influence destination choice and support local economies, with over **\$116 million in visitor expenditure** generated across the NT.

Events strengthen perception and repeat visitation

Events influence how destinations are perceived and remembered, helping to build loyalty and support the demand shifts reshaping the visitor economy:

- expanding reasons to visit beyond leisure
- building year-round demand and shoulder season travel
- driving regional dispersal, length of stay, and yield
- converting first-time visitors into repeat travellers
- strengthening destination perception and advocacy

In a competitive global travel market where attention is limited and experiences drive choice, events are one of the Northern Territory's most powerful tools for generating demand. Nearly half of major event attendees say they are very likely to return the following year.



Source – Territory Demand Tracker, Events Deep Dive Report, 2025



A global shift: destination marketing – promotion to influence¹⁴



Globally, destination marketing has shifted from awareness-building to behaviour-shaping.

In a crowded and competitive travel market, strong destination brands help shape where people go, how long they stay, and how much they spend. Beyond price or attractions, destinations stand out through meaning, emotional connection and what makes them distinctive.

Consumer demand lens

Uniqueness drives consideration at scale

Research confirms that travellers first narrow their choices based on destinations that feel distinctive and different. Uniqueness is a core competitive strength and the foundation for building awareness at scale, highlighting the importance of the NT having a distinct brand in the marketplace.

The Northern Territory holds a clear competitive advantage



#1

of all Australian states and territories for being associated with 'unconventional and different' (39% rank NT #1)

for 'strong Aboriginal culture' (65% rank NT #1)

Strong advocacy is directly linked to this distinctiveness: Advocates for the Territory most frequently cite the destination being different, with the scenic beauty, nature and culture as the main reasons for recommending the NT to others.

Decisions are made earlier and emotionally

Ideas about destinations are formed over time, influenced by the images people see and the stories they hear. These impressions can shape travel choices months or even years in advance.

Destinations that are well known and memorable :

- Are more likely to make people's shortlists
- Command price premiums
- Recover more quickly following disruptions

A strong destination brand helps support a more resilient tourism economy over the long term.

Digital channels now play a much bigger role in how people choose where to travel

Travel decisions no longer follow a simple, linear path. Instead, ideas and opinions are shaped quickly and from many sources at once.

- Most travellers research extensively online before booking
- Photos, videos and reviews shared by other travellers strongly influence perceptions
- Short videos and trusted recommendations increasingly guide travel choices

This means destination marketing must integrate:

- Clear and consistent brand storytelling
- Ongoing digital marketing activity
- Strong use of data and market insights
- Partnerships that help extend reach and credibility

¹⁴ Territory Demand Tracker, 2025



Reputation drives repeat visitation and recommendations

A destination’s reputation plays a major role in whether visitors return and recommend it to others. Around the world, repeat travel and word of mouth recommendations are strongly influenced by:

- How genuine and authentic a place feels
- A strong and distinctive culture
- Care for the natural environment
- The quality of the overall visitor experience

A destination brand is not only about attracting first time visitors. It also supports repeat visits, higher value travel, and steady demand over time.

What this means for the Northern Territory

For the Northern Territory, brand and destination marketing go beyond promotion. They help shape how people see the Territory, influence travel decisions, and encourage people to choose the NT over other destinations.

In a highly competitive domestic and international market, a strong and distinctive Territory brand is essential to supporting growth in the visitor economy.

