



Aboriginal Tourism Development
in Northern Territory

Parks and Reserves Grant Program

Round 2





Acknowledgement of Country

Tourism and Events NT respectfully acknowledges and honours the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory (NT) and recognises the continuation of culture, connection to lands, water, and country. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

Wangi Falls, Litchfield National Park

Cover: Charles Darwin National Park

Program overview

The Northern Territory Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020 - 2030 (Strategy) is focussed on ensuring that Aboriginal people of the NT, in sharing their cultures through the tourism industry, are respectfully supported to benefit economically, socially and culturally.

The Aboriginal Tourism Development in NT Parks and Reserves Grant Program (Grant Program) will help NT majority-owned Aboriginal businesses and organisations to develop tourism product in NT Parks and Reserves to enable Aboriginal cultural experiences and tourism product for park visitors.

The program also supports the NT Parks Masterplan 2023-2053's target: ***By 2032 there is a 15 per cent increase in Aboriginal owned and operated tourism businesses in parks and reserves.***

Tourism and Events NT is providing grant funding to support development of Aboriginal cultural experiences and tourism product in NT Parks with priority given to offerings related to:

- Adventure tourism
- Business event delegate experiences
- Cruise tourism
- Cultural tourism
- Dark skies experiences
- Domestic education tourism
- Fishing
- Food and drink
- Major event attendee experiences
- Military tourism
- Night-time offerings

NT Parks

As at 2025, 83 terrestrial parks and reserves and 2 marine parks are contained within the parks estate and managed by the NT Parks and Wildlife Commission (NT Parks and Reserves).

Go to www.nt.gov.au/parks/find-a-park to find a park or reserve.

Funding available

A total of \$300,000 (excluding GST) is available to develop Aboriginal cultural experiences and tourism product in NT Parks and Reserves.

Applications can be submitted for –

- A minimum funding value of \$10,000 (excluding GST).
- Up to a maximum funding value of \$50,000 (excluding GST).

Other funding sources

If this program is not applicable to your project, alternative funding programs may be suitable. For further information on available programs refer to:

- **Grants NT:** www.grantsnt.nt.gov.au
- **Tourism and Events:** www.tourismandeventsnnt.com.au/tourism-industry/grant-funding



Victoria River Escarpment, Judbarra National Park

Eligible applicants

The Grant Program is specifically designed for Northern Territory majority-owned Aboriginal businesses and organisations to support the development of new and existing Aboriginal cultural experiences and tourism products within NT Parks and Reserves.

Eligible applicants must:

- Be greater than 50% Aboriginal owned
- Be a business or organisation located and operating in the NT
- Aboriginal Corporations and Associations to provide confirmation of intent to lodge a Grant Program application. Evidence could be:
 - ▶ written advice from minimum of two directors involved in discussions or approvals; or
 - ▶ minutes of a duly constituted meeting
- Be legally constituted
- Be Australian registered with an ABN or ACN

Aboriginal individuals may be required to provide a letter of confirmation of Aboriginal heritage or certificate from the relevant (locality) incorporated Aboriginal association or land council. It must be stamped with the association's common seal. An Aboriginal individual is defined as someone who:

- is of Australian Aboriginal descent
- has previously and consistently in day to day life been known to be and/or identified as an Australian Aboriginal
- is accepted as an Aboriginal in the community in which they live or have lived.

- Provide evidence of incorporation e.g. through the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporation (ORIC)
- Have no outstanding grant acquittals or unmet funding agreement obligations from any previous funding from the Department of Tourism and Hospitality's Tourism and Events NT.

If the applicants are an active trading Aboriginal tourism business, applicants must:

- Have a current Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) listing or have applied for one at the time of application (if appropriate)
- Be a member of a peak tourism body such as Hospitality NT, Tourism Central Australia or Tourism Top End or have applied for membership at the time of application (if appropriate)
- Employ Northern Territory residents.

Eligible activities



- Proposed Aboriginal tourism product/ experiences must be intended to occur in an NT Park or Reserve
- Construction of new purpose-built facilities that are directly connected to a new product or experience (e.g. dark skies viewing deck, eco camp)
- New or the development of existing Aboriginal cultural experiences and tourism product
- Engaging a suitably qualified business consultant to develop a culturally focussed approach for feasibility and business planning including:
 - ▶ on the ground engagement to understand and establish the aspirations and vision
 - ▶ governance structure arrangements
 - ▶ land tenure considerations
 - ▶ building an Aboriginal tourism brand
 - ▶ Aboriginal cultural intellectual property considerations and visitor cultural protocols
 - ▶ tourism specific marketing and trade distribution strategy
 - ▶ product development (consultations, tour itineraries and operational plans)
 - ▶ financial management (pricing, budget, cash flow forecasting and funding sources) to establish commercial viability
 - ▶ human resourcing requirements including tourism skills capacity and development
 - ▶ staged implementation action plan (plan) and short term to long term resourcing to support implementing the plan
- Receiving business coaching for tourism product development
- Aboriginal tourism product familiarisations or exchanges in another jurisdiction to gain an insight into best practice tourism offerings and its key development learnings
- Assistance to prepare and lodge applications, lease agreements, operational agreements etc with NT Parks and Wildlife Commission and the relevant land council
- Upgrade improvements and/or new

infrastructure including interpretative signage for Aboriginal cultural tourism and tourism product to enhance the visitor experience

- Infrastructure to support sustainability and/or accessibility and inclusion objectives (eg. solar power generation, access ramps, improved pathway and audio tours).

Ineligible activities



- Requested application activities that have commenced before funding is approved
- Activities that do not clearly demonstrate that an Aboriginal cultural experience or tourism product are being developed or delivered
- Upgrading or developing facilities mostly for community use or where there is no clearly defined visitor benefit
- Regular repairs and maintenance
- Administrative or running costs that are normally the responsibility of a business (e.g. rent, insurances, audit and finance costs etc) state or territory administrative or local council fees
- The purchase or lease of mobile / portable assets including but not limited to, electronic office equipment, vehicles and boats. Portable and attractive assets that can be defined as items that are susceptible to theft or loss due to their size.
- Purchase or lease of real estate
- Marketing, advertising and product promotion activities
- Wages or salaries for an applicant's employees or professional services to support operational activities.
- Activities that have already received significant funding support from NT Government and are considered to not be competitive or sustainable
- Hospitality expenses excludes alcoholic beverages
- Individuals or group consultation sitting/ engagement fees.
- Take care to ensure ineligible activities are not included in the application, as this can preclude further consideration.
- Formal approvals for tourism product activation being secured is unknown or unclear.



Kings Canyon Rim Walk, Watarrka National Park

Tourism business development consultant credentials



The Grant Program funding may be for the engagement of suitably qualified consultants to undertake business feasibility, planning, support and coaching. To assist in selection of a suitably qualified consultant, please consider the following factors when making your enquiries.

The consultants should have:

- A comprehensive understanding of the NT's economic environment, the tourism industry and the global operating environment.
- An understanding of the strategic direction of Department of Tourism and Hospitality as described in:
 - ▶ NT Aboriginal Tourism Strategy 2020 –2030 including its guiding principles
 - ▶ NT Visitor Economy Strategy 2032
 - ▶ NT Parks and Wildlife Master Plan 2023- 2053
- Evidence of being a culturally competent organisation including its key team members that would be delivering the services
- Proven ability to develop and implement culturally appropriate consultative processes

- Experience in delivering innovative and creative assets and resources to effectively communicate information to Aboriginal Territorians
- Prior experience preparing strategies and business planning for tourism focused clients or Aboriginal economic development focused clients
- An understanding of the complexities working with protected area managers such as Parks and Wildlife, and the principals and aims of NT Parks
- Understanding of the NT development proposal on NT parks and reserves policy. Further information can be found at www.nt.gov.au/parks/permits-for-parks/apply-for-the-use-and-development-of-land
- An understanding of tourism product development, marketing and trade distribution
- Proven experience developing sustainable business principles and practices, including Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property considerations
- Proven application of strategy and business planning, from development to implementation
- Prior experience in setting realistic and measurable targets
- Proven capacity to deliver outcomes within timeframe and on budget
- Current public liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance

Consultants should provide details of key staff likely to work on the project and their relevant experience, and a schedule of rates including charges for travel.



Indicative dates

Open for applications

Tuesday 23 July 2026.

Closing date for applications

Friday 23 March 2027 or earlier if program funding is fully subscribed.

Consideration of projects

Applications will be considered in the order in which they are received.

Notification of successful recipients

Within four weeks of receipt of complete application.

First payment*

Successful recipients will have 14 days from notification to accept the funding offer, returning a signed funding agreement. The first half of the funding will then be paid on submission of the recipient's first supplier invoice.

Second (final) payment*

On acquittal.

Final date for projects to be completed

Friday 14 May 2027.

These dates are indicative and may be changed if necessary (for example, if a larger than anticipated volume of potential applications are received). Applications may be supported that have been identified through this or another process.

*The NT Government may vary the timetable of grant payments depending on the nature of the project funded.



Application process

Applicants are encouraged to contact Tourism and Events NT's Aboriginal Tourism team on 08 8999 7420:

- To discuss ideas or applications before making a final submission
- If required, to receive assistance to complete an application.

The Grant Program is a merit based process.

The funding will be paid via the Grants NT portal only. Businesses can register online via www.grantsnt.nt.gov.au

Late applications will not be accepted and the business must allow time to ensure the application process is completed prior to closing time.

Further discussions with applicants may be required to confirm application details.

The NT Government may conduct credit checks and other due diligence processes as part of the assessment.

An email confirmation will be sent within one week of receipt of each application. Should confirmation not be received, applicants are encouraged to phone 08 8999 7420 to check progress of the application.



Arltunga Historical Reserve

Assessment criteria

Eligible applicants and activities will be assessed in the order which they are received and in accordance with the Grant Program criteria detailed on pages 4 and 5 including:

- The proposed activity must demonstrate positive Aboriginal employment opportunities
- The proposed tourism experience or product must be permissible within existing management plans, statements of management intent, Indigenous Land Use Agreements, lease agreements and Joint Management Plans
- The Aboriginal cultural tourism experience and tourism product is intended to be bookable by the public and able to be distributed through mainstream tourism distribution channels
- Formal approvals for tourism product activation being secured is unknown or unclear.
- The proposed infrastructure activity's relevant planning and authorising approvals have been obtained
- Approved Grant Program activities may include multiple items in the one application; however all components must meet the activities criteria and the total value cannot exceed \$50,000 (excluding GST)
- Not be dependent on other grant funding applications to enable completion of the project
- Project delivery plan and itemised budget to accompany the quote. Applications without an accompanying quote will not be considered
- A maximum of five quotes can accompany the application
- Approved Grant Program activities must be delivered in accordance with NT Government's Buy Local policy, except where it is impractical for technical reasons. Activities must use labour available within the NT and source services, supplies and materials from within the NT
- Quotes and invoices from family owned or other registered businesses aligned to the applicant may not be accepted
- Agree to pay any additional money owing outside of the maximum approved grant (excluding GST)
- Demonstrated commitment to activities being completed by the indicative dates detailed on page 7
- NT Government may conduct credit checks and other due diligence processes.



Cutta Cutta Caves Nature Park

Funding agreement

A legally binding funding agreement will be entered into between the NT Government and successful applicants. The terms and conditions of the agreement will be determined based on the nature of the activity proposed. The funding agreement will set out:

- The rights and obligations of the NT Government and the funding recipient
- Requirements with respect to “buy local” procurement provisions and cash co-contribution, noting if these conditions (where applicable) are not met during project acquittal, applicants will be required to repay funding to the Tourism and Events NT
- Agreed project plan and budget for the activities
- Half way progress report requirements
- Reporting and funding acquittal requirements
- Requirement for recognising NT Government support and promotional obligations arising from receipt of funding
- Professional indemnity insurance requirements.

Applicants should note details of successful funding recipients will be advised publicly and recorded in the Department of Tourism and Hospitality's annual report and Tourism and Events NT website.



Trephina Gorge Nature Park



Payment of funding*

Funding (up to a maximum of \$50,000 excluding GST) will be made in two payments:

First payment

Successful recipients will have 14 days from notification to accept the funding offer and return the signed funding agreement. The first half of the funding will then be paid on submission of the recipient's first supplier invoice.

Second payment

The remaining funding will be paid on receipt of accepted acquittal documentation including a final report (attaching photos and images of the approved completed activities), copies of invoices, permits and insurances.

*Note: The NT Government may vary the timetable of grant payments depending on the nature of the project funded.

The NT Government may include special conditions such as evidence of financial contribution, permits in place or project support from third parties (such as NT Parks and Wildlife Commission) which may be imposed as a condition of releasing any funding payments.

Request for variations

Once a funding agreement has been signed, successful recipients may find that the project or activities require some changes. Requests for variations to approved funding must be in writing.

The NT Government will consider minor variations to funding agreements such as minor:

- Variation to the project completion date
- Variation to materials used
- Total budget variations.

Requests for major grant agreement activities variations will not be considered.

Further information

For further information please contact Tourism and Events NT's Aboriginal Tourism team at Aboriginal.tourismeventsnt@nt.gov.au or telephone 08 8999 7420.

A copy of these guidelines is available at www.tourismandeventsnt.com.au/tourism-industry/grant-funding

Tourism and Events NT's corporate website www.tourismandeventsnt.com.au is a valuable resource for accessing information to support applications, including tourism research and strategies.



