



Cruise tourism

opportunities for Aboriginal cultural tourism



Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge and honour the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory and recognise the continuation of culture, connection to lands, water and country. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

About this guide

Cruise tourism involves visitors travelling to different places and countries on cruise ships. The ships can be large vessels with over 3,000 passengers or smaller vessels with less than 70 passengers.

When the cruises dock in port, visitors are looking for things to do, see and buy so they can learn about the culture, people and places they are visiting.

This guide shares the opportunities for Aboriginal people to develop products for the cruise tourism sector. Learn about the different types of cruises and the passengers they carry, the types of experiences they are interested in and the right partners to work with to promote and sell your cruise tourism products.

More information

For more information and access to other Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Framework resources visit

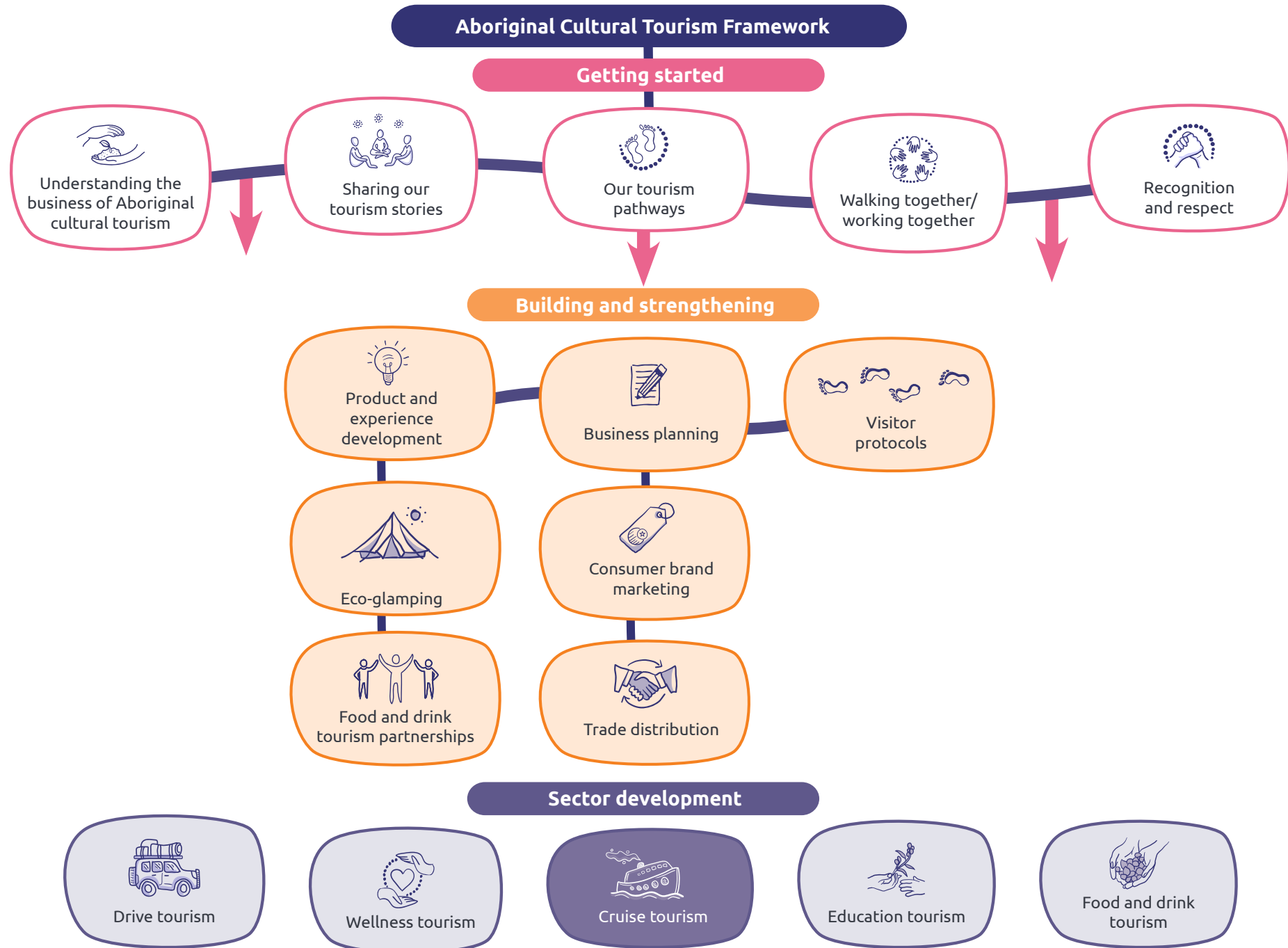
www.tourismandeventsnt.com.au

or contact Tourism and Events NT's Aboriginal tourism team today.

PH: 08 8999 7420 E: Aboriginal.tourismeventsnt@nt.gov.au



Tools to help you



What is cruise tourism?

Cruise tourism is about visitors travelling on a cruise ship, sometimes a small luxury ship with no more than 70 guests or a large mega ship with more than 3,000 guests! Cruise ships will stop in Darwin as part of bigger Australian or international journeys, but there are many opportunities for Aboriginal tourism businesses throughout the Northern Territory to connect with cruise ship guests.

Types of cruise ships



Expedition cruises

Small vessels which usually accommodate less than 300 guests and can travel into more remote and exclusive places. Will usually travel along Northern Australia from Broome, Darwin to Cairns.



Small luxury ships

Carrying up to 1,000 passengers, these cruises offer premium comfort, with unique activities and itineraries. As a bigger ship, these cruises may travel further and for longer including travel from overseas destinations.



Mid to large ships

These ships can carry up to 3,000 passengers and offer a mix of short and longer itineraries to many different Australian and international destinations. There are different packages, room types and activities included to suit many different guest types and budgets.



Large to mega ships

These massive vessels bring in thousands of visitors at once and typically stay in major ports like Darwin. There will be many different types of visitors all looking for different tours, shopping and activities during their short onshore stay.

Why do visitors go on cruises?



Cultural connection

Learning about different cultures, traditions and stories of local people.



Adventure and remote access

Seeing remote and exclusive places with spectacular landscapes, wildlife or visitor safe cultural places.



Convenience

Everything has been organised – accommodation, meals and tours. Cruise visitors can get onboard, relax and enjoy their holiday.



Wellness and escape

Seeking stress-free travel with leisure, comfort and new experiences.

What opportunities does cruise tourism create for Aboriginal tourism?

Cruise tourism in the Northern Territory is an opportunity to offer visitors from around the world a glimpse of our unique culture and Country, encouraging them to come back and stay longer. Research shows that 71% of cruise visitors say a destination's cultural experiences strongly influences their decision to get off the ship to learn more.¹

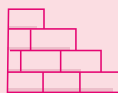
Sharing our unique culture and Country

- The Northern Territory's natural landscapes and Aboriginal culture are unlike anywhere else in the world.
- Each place has something different to offer and experience for visitors – different types of Country, languages, traditions and people.
- Research shows that a key reason for visitors coming to the Northern Territory is to engage with Aboriginal cultural experiences and 80% of visitors believe the Northern Territory is a place to connect with Aboriginal cultures. (Source: Autumn 23 Monthly Tracking Report, Tourism and Events NT).



Improving infrastructure and facilities

- Improving infrastructure and facilities for communities interested in welcoming cruise passengers, will open up opportunities for smaller expeditions cruises to visit remote Aboriginal communities.
- Passengers can engage in cultural experiences and explore art centres, creating jobs and financial wellbeing for the community.



Building Aboriginal tourism businesses

- Tourism and Events NT is committed to supporting the development of Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences and tourism product for the cruise sector.
- There are limited options of things to see and do for cruise passengers to the NT. New experiences means cruise companies can increase their NT itinerary, leading to more passengers, time and money spent in communities.



Partnerships and collaborations

- Aboriginal tourism businesses will be supported to develop partnerships with the cruise sector.
- Businesses can also package Aboriginal tourism products with flights, The Ghan and other tourism operators to encourage cruise visitors to continue exploring the NT.



¹ Cruise Lines International Association

Who are the Northern Territory's cruise visitors?

NT cruise visitor profiles



Millennial and Gen X corporate couples travelling on remote expedition adventure cruises.



Self-funded retirees looking to travel to new and exciting places on a trip of a lifetime.



Groups of friends looking for fun, adventure and meeting new people.



Younger families looking for fun activities, opportunities to relax and see and learn about new places.

When do they visit?



October to April is the larger cruise ship season, aligning with the Australian summer and European/USA Winter.

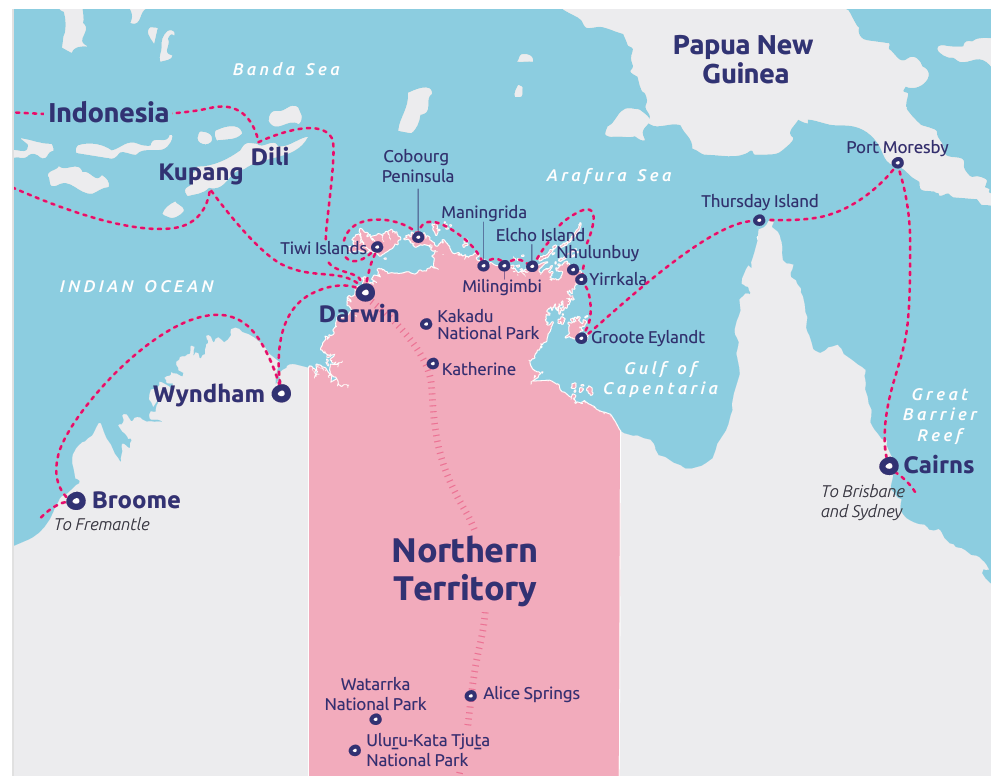


May to September is the smaller expedition cruise season, the same time as the NT's dry season.

What do cruise visitors need?

Need	How to deliver
 Good timing	All cruise ships will spend a different amount of time at each place they visit. Some may only be for 2-3 hours, others will be all day or overnight. • What you offer visitors should fit in with their cruise itineraries. • Ensure you are ready and waiting at an approved meeting or pick up location. • Have your cruise guests back to their ship on time so they don't 'miss the boat.'
 Right market	Know the different types of cruise ships and the visitor markets onboard. Your cruise tourism product needs to be appropriate for different visitor needs and interests. You may need to think about mobility, language barriers for international guests or fun and family friendly activities. Read the Understanding the business of Aboriginal cultural tourism guide to learn more about visitor markets.
 Group size	The larger cruise ships will look for tours and activities that can be offered to large groups. The smaller expedition ships will want more personal and exclusive activities for smaller groups. For larger groups you might need to think about splitting into smaller groups with more guides or working with other companies to offer a rotation of different activities. It is important to work out what you are capable of offering to ensure a safe, well-managed and enjoyable experience.
 Transport	If you want cruise visitors to come to your Country or to visit sites and attractions away from the cruise port, you will need to provide transport. This could be a tour bus for short day tours or partnerships with scenic flight companies to connect visitors to an experience on your Country.

Where do cruise visitors travel?



A map showing cruise journeys that connect with the Northern Territory

There are many different cruise itineraries visitors can choose from to connect with the Northern Territory. Some are on longer journeys from overseas, while others may be enjoying some of the more remote coastal places that can only be accessed by sea.

Darwin is currently the main port for cruise ships visiting the NT, however there are new places such as Arnhem Land coastal communities that may decide to slowly start welcoming smaller cruise ships in the future.

Other parts of the NT

You may think your Aboriginal tourism product isn't suited to the cruise market, but cruise lines often partner with other onshore tour operators, offering packages for visitors to book before or at the end of their cruise. Passengers finishing their cruise in Darwin may then join the Ghan rail experience, jump on a tour bus into Arnhem Land or catch a flight to Katherine or Yulara to experience a new destination. By connecting with the cruise sector, they can look at ways to include your tour product into bigger packaged itineraries.

You don't have to be based right at the port to provide an Aboriginal tourism experience. By connecting with transport options (bus, flight or boat), you can take cruise visitors to other places for a true experience of Country.

Some smaller expeditions cruises even have their own onboard helicopters meaning they can also fly with you to visit special parts of Country in the right way.



What can each region offer to cruise visitors?

Cruise passengers are looking for unique and different experiences in your destination that they can't see, do or feel anywhere else. Aboriginal cultural tourism provides a great opportunity to really connect visitors from around the world to our community, way of life, culture, history and Country. Below are some examples of Aboriginal cultural tourism products that best connect with cruise visitor markets.



Greater Darwin region

- Darwin and surrounding areas
- Welcome to Country and cultural performances
- Aboriginal art and craft workshops
- The Larrakia Cultural Centre experiences
- Larrakia cultural walking tours
- Fashion in the Top End – House of Darwin, King King and Aboriginal Bush Traders
- Darwin sightseeing tour
- Day tours beyond Darwin – Bus tours to Litchfield, Fogg Dam or Adelaide River.



Arnhem Land and East Arnhem

- Rock art and creation storytelling tours
- Bush medicine and bushtucker walks
- Artwork and workshops – such as the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Arts Centre in Yirrkala.
- WWII History – share the stories of the Yolngu People's involvement in World War II.



Tiwi Islands

- Tiwi art and culture tours
- Tiwi football and cultural experience



Groote Eylandt

- Anindilyakwa art and culture experience
- Wildlife and Aboriginal land management tours
- Luxury remote Aboriginal retreats



Onboard experiences

Onboard guiding, lectures and workshops – More suitable for the smaller expedition cruises that travel from Darwin to Nhulunbuy, Aboriginal people can participate as guest lecturers, lead cultural workshops and provide onshore guiding services.

How do I get involved in cruise tourism?

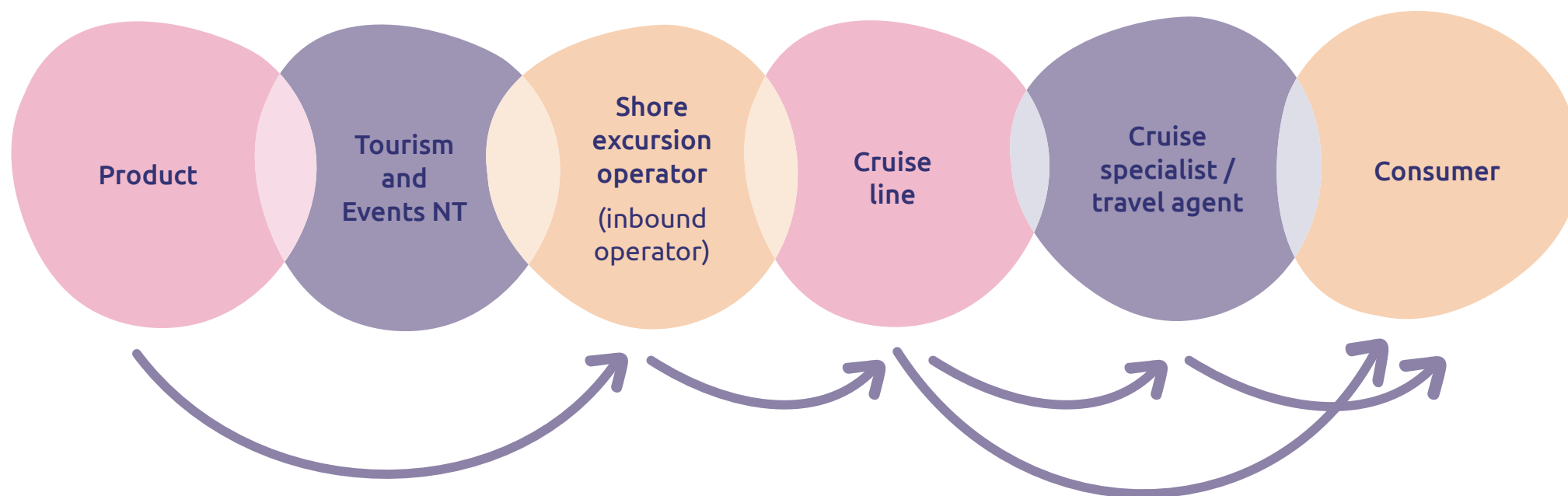
Aboriginal tourism businesses can sell their product through a number of ways to target cruise ship passengers:



To learn more about working with cruise and other trade partners who can help sell your products, see the [Trade distribution for Aboriginal cultural tourism guide](#).

How your tourism product can connect with cruise visitors

Your Aboriginal cultural tourism product travels on its own journey stopping at many 'ports' including marketing, promotions, sales and cruise ships before it finally 'docks' in front of your consumer.



If you aren't sure where to begin or the right pathway for your cruise tourism product, Tourism and Events NT has dedicated cruise tourism specialists who can help steer your 'ship' in the right direction.

Tourism and Events NT's Aboriginal tourism development team are there to provide the right advice and support during your Aboriginal tourism journey. Contact: Aboriginal.tourismeventsnt@nt.gov.au or phone: 08 8999 7420

Cruise tourism checklist for Aboriginal tourism operators

1. Understand the cruise market ☐

Know the different types of cruise ships (expedition, small luxury, mid-size, mega) and tailor your product to their passengers. Expedition ships prefer small, immersive experiences, while larger ships require experiences that can cater for larger groups or rotate from one group to the next quickly.

2. Make the right products ☐

Start small with a product that reflects your strengths, culture and capabilities. Think about what group sizes you are comfortable with, if transport or accessibility facilities are needed and how you can fit your product into cruise itineraries. Learn more about building products and experiences in the [Product and experience development for Aboriginal cultural tourism guide](#).

3. Know the ports and access points ☐

Most cruise ships dock in Darwin, with growing opportunities in places like the Tiwi Islands, East Arnhem Land and Groote Eylandt. Know the port rules for passenger pick up and drop offs, make it easy for guests to find you with welcome signs.

4. Sell your products ☐

Plan early to sell your cruise products as most cruise lines, ground handlers and online travel agents will be selling products and itineraries up to 18 months in advance. Work out your pricing, schedule and inclusions and decide if you want to sell your products directly or if you'd like to work with cruise and trade partners who can promote and sell your products even further. Learn more about working with sales and trade partners in the [Trade distribution for Aboriginal cultural tourism guide](#).

5. Be flexible and reliable ☐

Cruise schedules can change due to weather or delays. Always allow some buffer time for arrival delays. Working with cruise lines and ground handlers requires your product to meet strict standards in terms of being on time, safe, consistent quality and delivery.

6. Work with the cruise industry and Tourism and Events NT ☐

Stay up to date with the latest cruise industry news and research. Work with Tourism and Events NT and your Regional Tourism Organisation ([Tourism Top End](#) | [Tourism Central Australia](#)) to participate in marketing and industry networking opportunities. Visit www.tourismandeventsnnt.com.au for more information on the latest research, marketing, networking and event opportunities.







References

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Page 9 – Top right – Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre – Tourism and Events NT/Tourism Australia Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre

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