



22 August, 2017

Dr John Carter
Inquiry Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Northern Australia
Department of the House of Representatives
Email: jscna@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Carter

Re: Northern RDA Alliance (NRDAA) Supplementary Submission to the JSCNA Inquiry into Opportunities and Methods for Stimulating the Tourism Industry in Northern Australia

As follow up to the Public Hearing in Townsville for the above Inquiry, and the request made to our representative Ms Glenys Schuntner to provide further advice about opportunities for collaboration to support growth of tourism in the north, I am pleased to make this supplementary submission.

The eight Regional Development Committees that work across Northern Australia have deliberated over the question posed, taking into account:

- the vast area of Northern Australia;
- the high costs associated with travel and registration fees for conferences to meet;
- the large variety of businesses in the tourism industry;
- the need for industry-led solutions; and
- the desire by stakeholders to have an outcomes focused plan of action.

We would like to recommend that the Australian Government host an invitation only Northern Australia Tourism Summit to focus on solutions for developing tourism in Northern Australia. Some of the arrangements could include:

1. a maximum of 20 representatives of the tourism and associated supporting organisations be invited to attend;
2. it be held alongside a Northern Australia Ministerial Forum;
3. Ministers for Tourism be invited to the associated Northern Australia Ministerial Forum;
4. the summit attendees be responsible for presenting a communique with recommendations to the joint ministerial meeting; and
5. the Australian, State and Territory Governments commit to a response and an action plan to address needs and opportunities.

We note that the Australian Tourism Awards will be held in Perth in early 2018 and this could provide an opportunity for Summit attendees to gather in the first quarter of 2018. While ideally a venue in Northern Australia would be best, we are also conscious of time and travel costs for participants. If they are to pay their own travel costs to attend the Summit, it would ideally link with another major industry event if possible.



In our earlier submission we recommended the formation of a *Northern Australian Tourism Advisory Group* (NATAG).

We suggest that the concept of a NATAG and its roles and membership would be a topic for the industry leaders to discuss at the summit as it is critical that such an Advisory Group be industry-led, industry focussed with buy-in on the focus and goals.

NATAG could focus on the development of tourism and its supporting infrastructure rather than tourism marketing which is the focus of Tourism Australia, State and Territory Tourism Organisations and Regional Tourism Organisations.

Our initial thoughts are that NATAG would have the role of:

- providing holistic advice on Northern Australia Tourism to Australian, State and Territory Government Ministers who have responsibilities for policy and program development that can enhance infrastructure and tourism development in the north;
- providing a communication network across statutory boundaries to seek engagement and input to policy and program development;
- encouraging and supporting the exploration of new business ideas and links between tourism and other industries and sectors (e.g. education, science, research, conservation); and
- providing advice for the expansion of tourism within the next iteration of the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia.

The NRDA would be pleased to consider facilitating and working with the Australian Government on the development of the proposed Summit and NATAG.

We will be pleased to engage further in discussions about this initiative.

Yours sincerely

Mike Reed

Chair, Northern RDA Alliance
Chair, RDA NT