

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Ms J Carney

to Minister for Tourism

NTTC Market Presence

From a tourism industry perspective the profile of the NTTC has declined dramatically in the last three years since the withdrawal of its presence from the key domestic source markets.

1. What is Government's strategy to address this obvious lack of engagement with the travel distribution network and interaction with key strategic partners on a regular enough basis?

ANSWER

The global tourism sector has changed dramatically in recent years with major changes affecting the role of the distribution network. The consolidation of wholesalers, the rationalisation of retail networks, the vertical integration of travel businesses and the rise of the internet has impacted on the strategies the NT Tourist Commission now uses to engage and interact with the distribution network and strategic partners.

The Commission's strategies employed to engage the travel distribution network differ from those employed by the organisation a couple of years ago, all activity is geared to respond to market changes while retaining the strong presence and high impact of the Northern Territory in key domestic source markets. The Commission's efforts are strengthened and complemented by the presence of the Northern Territory Government's profitable tourism wholesaler in the domestic market, who specifically packages, distributes and sells Northern Territory tourism products through established retail networks.

Following are some of the strategies which are employed by the NT Tourist Commission to strengthen the destination's engagement with the distribution network (wholesalers and retailers) in the domestic market:

- Schedule of destination training targeting major wholesale and retail chains. This training is undertaken on a regular cycle, showcasing and providing detailed information about the Northern Territory's destinations, experiences and products.
- Schedule of education seminars that provide timely information about specific destination campaigns, ways to sell the Northern Territory and opportunities for joint activity such as cooperative advertising at the local regional level.
- A program of familiarisation and retailer educational tours aimed at bringing front line retail staff to the Northern Territory to better equip them to sell the "Northern Territory experience".
- Sponsorship of and attendance at retail chain national conferences (destination and product focus) where large numbers of retail agents are trained.
- Schedule of cooperative promotional activities undertaken on a state by state level with key retail networks and chains.
- A schedule of destination training provided to wholesaler and retailer call centre staff.

- Cooperative advertising funds focussed on increasing dedicated Northern Territory campaigns with all wholesale and retail partners, particular in support of retailer advertising programs.
- Annual NT MUSTER, which is a national 10 day training and education roadshow, attended by hundreds of wholesaler, retailer and inbound sales staff.
- Strategic marketing alliances with ground operators (eg GSR, AAT Kings, APT, Scenic Tours) and major accommodation and hotel chains (eg. Aurora, Intercontinental, Accor and Voyages) which includes tailored educational and destination training, familiarisations for front line sales staff and cooperative advertising campaign activities.

The NT Tourist Commission also works very closely with Territory Discoveries to enhance our collective effort in marketing and selling Northern Territory tourism products. Some of the specific strategies include:

- Schedule of state-based promotions with Territory Discoveries sales staff conducted in all capital cities and key regional centres, including tailored Northern Territory consumer travel expo events held with retail partners (eg RACQ, NRMA and Jetset), and the development of innovative marketing campaigns.
- Cooperative advertising campaigns undertaken in key national markets.
- Inclusion as preferred commercial partner in consumer direct promotions, such as a joint sponsorship of an indigenous art exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales which saw Territory Discoveries providing packages targeted at the Art Gallery's exclusive member database and paid exhibition visitors.
- Referral of business leads where the Trade and Consumer unit has had a request for a consumer destination presentation but sees an opportunity for Territory Discoveries to provide both a destination overview and a business pitch.