Tourism On Country

Tourism NT - Indigenous Development Unit Newsletter
September 2007

WEAVING A FUTURE TOGETHER

After five years of delivering highly successful weaving workshops, the Mapuru community in North Eastern Arnhem Land of the Northern Territory are planning to further develop their cultural tours in an exciting new business development.

Mid August, they took their vision closer to reality by completing a Stepping Stones for Tourism Workshop. “This is a really important step for everyone here” said Yingiya Guyula, a Yolngu bi-cultural consultant whose expertise assisted the Stepping Stones workshop. “The people at Mapuru already have years of experience in running tourism programs, but they want to go further, expand the programs and gain greater benefit from having tourists visit the community” said Yingiya.

Mapuru is a small close-knit community of 140 people. Over the last five years, three generations of Mapuru women have delivered teaching workshops for tourists interested in learning weaving techniques from Yolngu women. These workshops are the centrepiece for the tourism venture that will involve all the families at Mapuru. New programs will be added over time, including programs designed for men and families.

The Arnhem Weavers workshop programs are unique in Australia, offering an opportunity for Yolngu and non-Yolngu to sit together, talk, laugh and learn more about each other. Visitors to the community can sleep in traditional Arnhem Land raised wooden platforms, and informally participate in community activities.

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OPERATOR PROFILE

Kenbi Dance Group

The Kenbi Dance Group reformed in 2005 after a 15 year absence from professional work under the guidance of their mentor Steve Brown. The dance group is unique with the body painting, the rhythm and in the clothing they wear. The body painting designs are each dancer’s individual art work, some of which has been handed down from their fathers as well as their own artwork.

The Kenbi Dance Group won an award for their contribution to Indigenous Music and Dance at the Northern Territory Indigenous Music Awards held in Darwin on 25th August. *Continued page 7*

KENBI DANCE GROUP
Performances: Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday nights commencing at 7pm. May – September.
Mandorah Beach Hotel
Bookings available upon request
Ph. 08 8978 5044

DEET and Tourism NT funded and coordinated the workshop at Mapuru Homeland

Calendar of Events

September

14-23 September – Alice Desert Festival, Alice Springs

October

20-23 October - Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference, Broome

29 October – 2 November - Savannah Guides School, Cape York

November

14-15 November – Northern Territory Government 3rd Indigenous Economic Development Forum

19-23 November – National Ecotourism Conference, Melbourne and regional Victoria

December

9 December - Around the Bush Campfire: Identity and Belonging, NSW

Partnerships & Pathways Forum

The Northern Territory Government is hosting the Indigenous Economic Development Forum 2007, 'Partnerships and Pathways' through the Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development. The Forum will be held on 14 & 15 November 2007 in Darwin and will focus on ways to build, support and strengthen Indigenous business partnerships and develop the capacity for Indigenous communities to participate in sustainable economic activity. For more information about the Forum, visit www.nt.gov.au/iedforum

PARTNERSHIPS & PATHWAYS

Weaving a Future Together (continued)

Karen Young, Tourism NT, Marina Wangurra, Indigenous Tourism Business Hub, Yirrkala Dhanbul, John Greatorex, Charles Darwin University and Yingiya Guyula assisted Nicholas Hall to facilitate the workshop with 30 participants. Tourism NT and the NT Department of Employment, Education and Training funded the workshop (Flexible Response Funding) which enabled the Mapuru community to produce their plan. One of the Arnhem Weavers, Roslyn Malngumba said: "Our dreams of making a future for our children is coming true. This is the support we have been working towards".

"This is a premium cultural experience" said Nicholas Hall, facilitator of the Stepping Stones for Tourism Program. "There might not be a white towel on your bed, but this is as good as it gets if you want a complete Aboriginal cultural experience".

Families living at Mapuru are determined to make a healthy and economically viable lifestyle for themselves and future generations on their homeland and tourism is an important part of their future vision. The participants came together at the end of the workshop to make a statement about the plan they had written together:

"This plan is for the wellbeing and wealth of future generations. Creating jobs, education and keeping culture strong. We have already planted the seed. We are going to use this plan to make sure everybody is involved in helping our tourism business grow strong".

For more information about Mapuru visit: www.arnhemweavers.com.au

PILOT INDIGENOUS TOURISM HUB

Tourism NT, the Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and Yirrkala Dhanbul Community Association Inc. have worked in partnership to develop a pilot Indigenous Tourism Hub in North East Arnhem Land. The Hub is based on the idea that a central business operation can effectively support a range of Indigenous tourism experiences. The Hub will link a number of homeland and family groups interested in providing tourism experiences. Marina Wangurra is the newly appointed Coordinator of the Hub at Yirrkala. She assisted with the Stepping Stones workshop that was recently held at Mapuru including facilitating a lunch session to discuss Step 4 of the process "What do we want to share?".