



Major and business event
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

Major and business events provide opportunities for Aboriginal people to share culture, stories, knowledge and skills with a wide range of audiences. From cultural performances, art, storytelling and workshops to catering, tours, keynote speaking, retail products and cultural experiences, events can create pathways for Aboriginal businesses and communities to share culture, build awareness and generate financial wellbeing. This guide looks at the different types of major and business events, the opportunities to be involved, and how to prepare, protect, promote and provide Aboriginal cultural experiences, products and services.

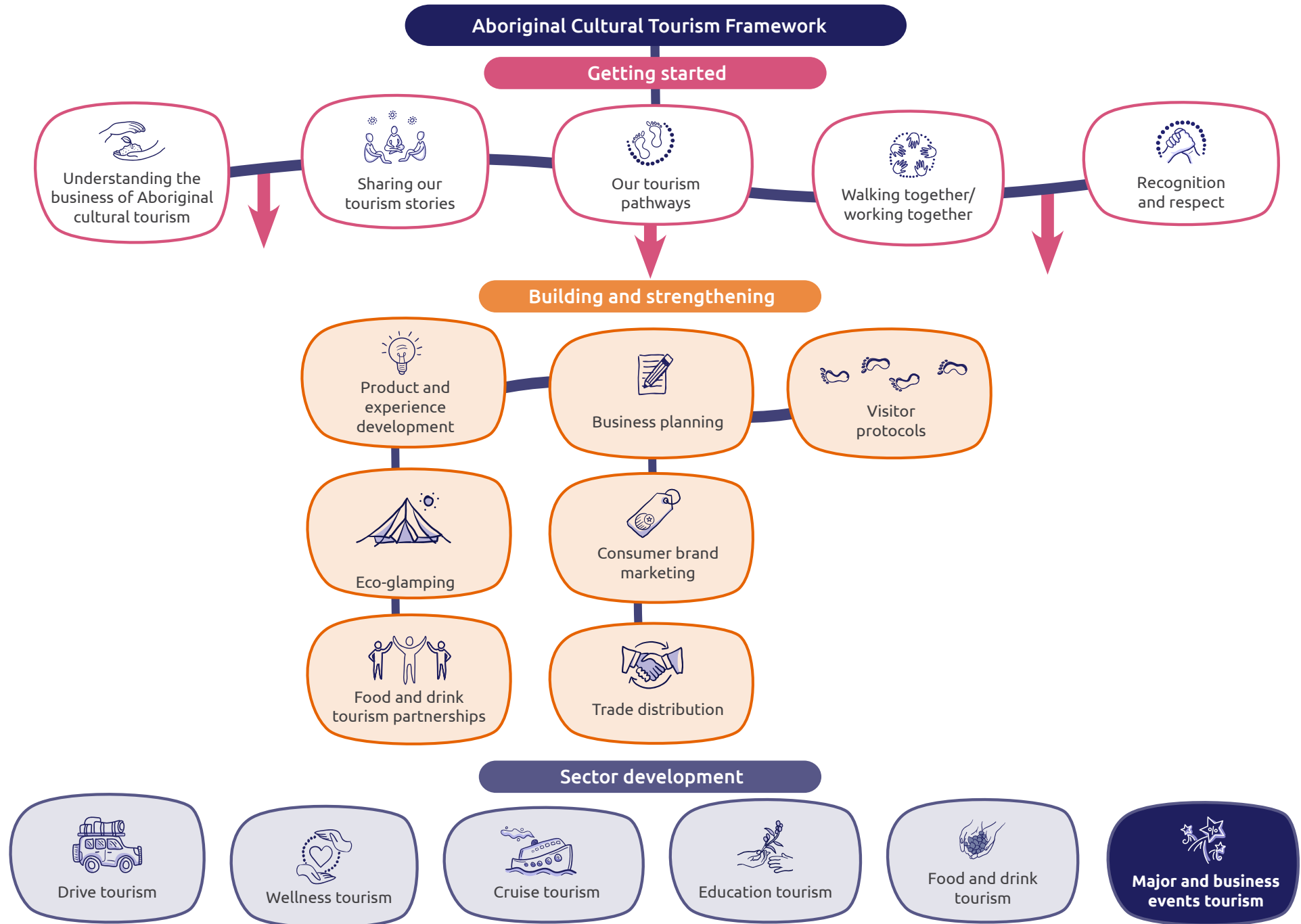
More information

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



Understanding events – cultural way

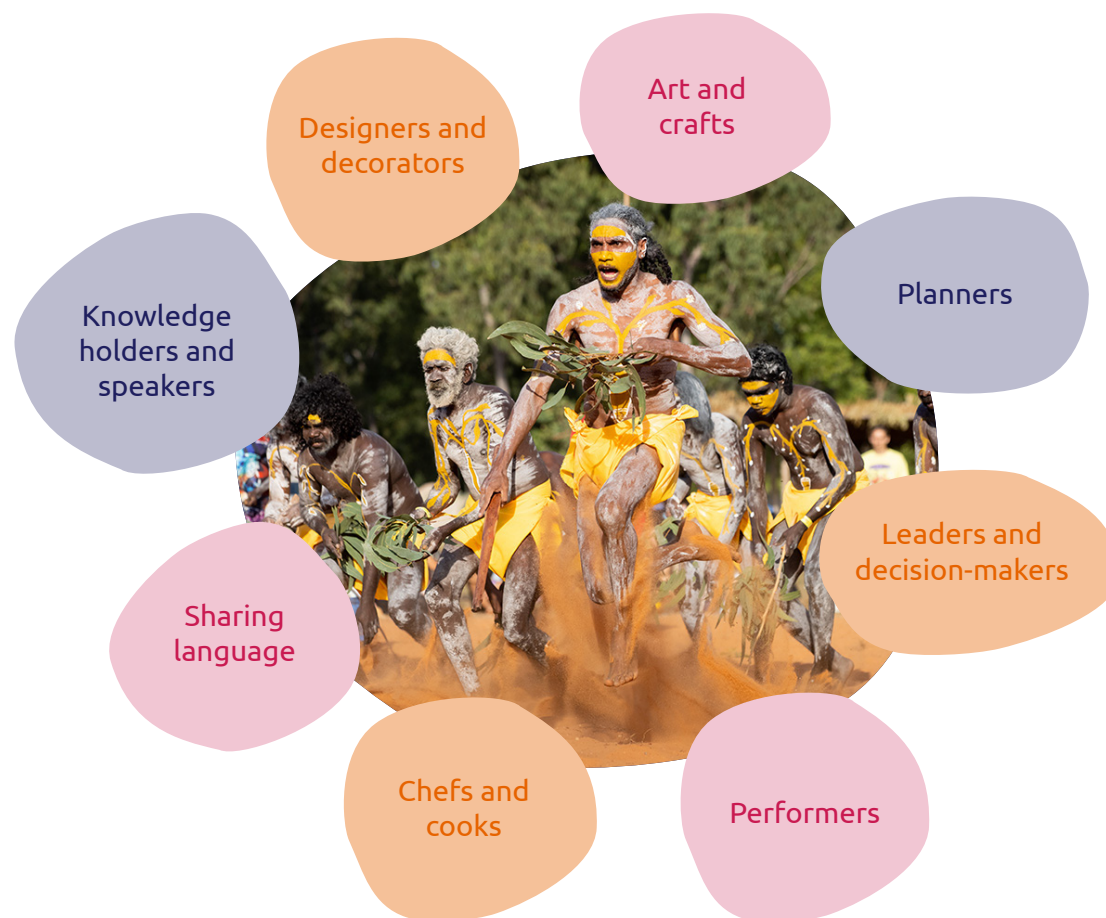
For Aboriginal people, events are a time when we come together – for ceremony, for celebration, to share culture, to remember the past and plan for our future.

Major and business events can also be an opportunity for us to come together to share culture, stories, knowledge and connections to Country with all different types of audiences. Through sharing art, performance, language, knowledge, stories, food and drink, cultural practices and experiences, events provide opportunities to educate visitors, keep culture strong and create financial wellbeing.

“ Festivals like Barunga play an important role in building understanding and respect and supporting First Nations cultures and languages so they are strong and flourishing.”



Ways of sharing Aboriginal culture through events

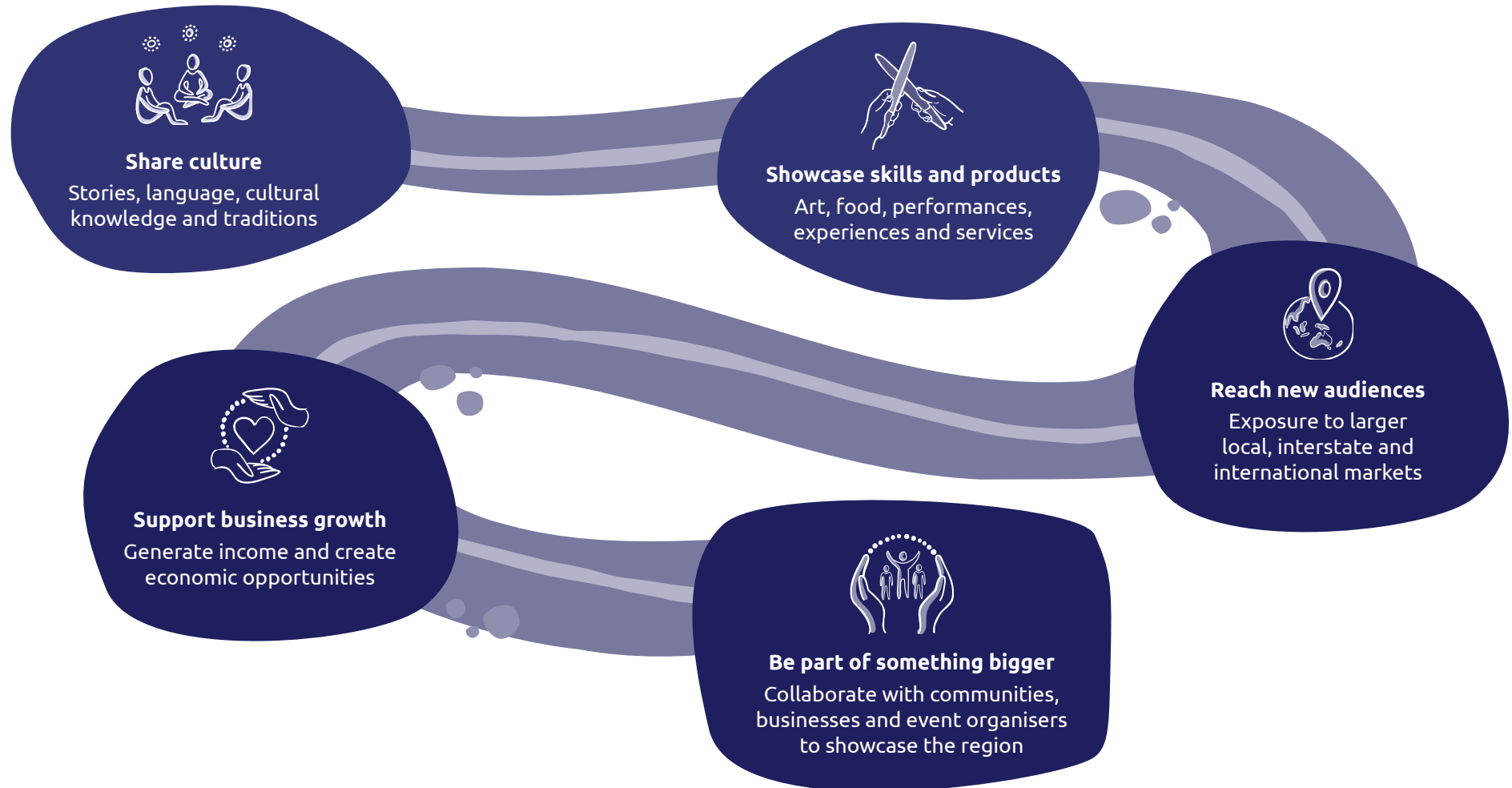


¹ [Barunga Festival returns celebrating First Nations culture, connection and community, 2026](#)

How we can benefit from major and business events

Many event organisers and event participants are interested in unique experiences that connect them with the places they visit. Events are an opportunity for them to see, learn, taste and experience this. For Aboriginal people, events can offer many benefits.

Why should I become involved in major and business events?



Major events



What are major events?

Major events are iconic experiences and festivals that strengthen the Territory's identity, drive visitation and support economic growth.² Major events bring people together around shared interests, experiences and stories. In the Northern Territory, major events are organised, promoted and supported through Tourism & Events NT.

Types of major events

Some examples of the types of major events Tourism & Events NT offer include:



Artistic and creative festivals

Celebrations of culture, art and creativity featuring storytelling, music, dance, art, workshops, cultural demonstrations, performances and presentations that attract visitors from across Australia and beyond.

Example: Parrtjima



Sporting and recreational events

Big sporting, racing, fishing and recreational events that attract many competitors, spectators and visitors from across Australia and internationally.

Example: Darwin Supercars



Live music and music festivals

Large music festivals and concerts featuring local, national and international artists, attracting big audiences through live performances, entertainment, food vendors and festival experiences.

Example: Bass in the Grass

² [Major Events, Events resources, Tourism and Events NT](#)

Examples of products and experiences for major events



Kungkas Can Cook

About: Aboriginal bushfood supplier and cultural tourism business

Location: Alice Springs, Northern Territory

Major events offer:

- Catering
- Food stalls
- Cooking demonstrations and tasting experiences
- Knowledge sharing about native foods, seasonal harvesting
- Pre and post event guided walking tours and presentations about native plants and foods.

www.kungkas.com



Drifting Clouds

About: A Yolŋu band led by singer and keyboardist Terry Guyula

Location: Gapuwiyak in North-East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Major events offer:

- Live entertainment
- Performances
- Traditional and modern music, language, songs and storytelling.

www.instagram.com/drifting_clouds



Yarrenyty Arlttere Artists

About: A Central Australian art centre and social enterprise

Location: Alice Springs, Northern Territory

Major events offer:

- Exhibitions
- Art workshops and demonstrations
- Art and craft sales at major events.

www.yarrenytyarlttereartists.com.au



Jannawi Dance Clan

About: Aboriginal dance company led by Dharug woman and Artistic Director Peta Strachan

Location: Western Sydney, New South Wales

Major events offer:

- Traditional and modern Aboriginal dance
- Music, language and storytelling
- Event activations and special performances.

www.artspace.org.au/52-actions/52-actions/jannawi-dance-clan



Corban Clause Williams

About: Martu artist and member of Martumili Artists

Location: Western Desert, Western Australia

Major events offer:

- Exhibitions
- Public art installations
- Digital projections
- Cultural designs on event decorations.

www.martumili.com.au/node/102



Electric Fields

About: Award winning Aboriginal music duo comprising Zaachariaha Fielding and Michael Ross

Location: Adelaide, South Australia

Major events offer:

- Traditional, electronic and soul music
- Language and storytelling
- Live performance featuring song and music.

www.electricfieldsmusic.com.au

Types of big events that are not major events

Big events also provide opportunities for local businesses and communities. Unlike major events organised through Tourism & Events NT, these events are organised independently by organisations or community groups and can range from festivals and concerts to sporting, cultural and community events. Below are some examples of big events:



Arts and creative festivals

Exhibitions, art and craft stalls, performances, workshops and demonstrations, presentations.

Example: Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair



Cultural festivals

Sharing local culture, traditions, language and knowledge, storytelling, heritage and identity, music, dance, art, workshops, performances, cultural activities, forums.

Example: Garma Festival



Live music and music festivals

Local and visiting musicians, concerts, performances, entertainment experiences.

Example: Bush Bands Bash, Alice Springs



Food and drink events

Local food and drink markets, seasonal produce, tastings, cooking demonstrations, dining experiences.

Example: Taste of Kakadu



Sporting and recreational events

Sporting participants and spectators, competitions, races, games and tournaments, fishing events, community recreation.

Example: Tiwi Island Football Grand Final



Film and multimedia festivals

Screening documentaries, short and feature films, digital media, emerging filmmakers, competitions, creative storytelling.

Example: Darwin International Film Festival

Events are big business

- The Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair attracted 28,668 visitors and generated \$5.1 million in sales in 2025.³
- Garma Festival attracted 5,400 attendees, with 85% of attendees travelling from interstate, and supported 194 Yolngu businesses and people.⁴
- Barunga Festival attracted a record 5,000 attendees in 2026, the largest crowd in the festival's 41-year history.⁵

³ [DAAF 2025 Impact Report, 2025](#)

⁴ [Garma Report 2025](#)

⁵ [Thousands expected at Barunga Festival as event celebrates culture, sport and community, NIT, 2026](#)

Business events



What are business events?

Business events bring people together for business, professional and industry purposes. They can range from small meetings and corporate retreats to large-scale conferences, trade shows and industry gatherings.

Types of business events



Conferences

Large business events that bring together delegates, companies, associations or industries from different places to discuss professional topics. Conferences include:

- keynote speakers
- presentations
- workshops
- networking
- pre and post conference tours or visits.



Meetings

Smaller events and gatherings for businesses, governments, associations, boards, industry or community groups that include:

- planning and decision making
- training and knowledge sharing
- workshops and learning seminars.



Incentive programs and retreats

Incentive programs and retreats are when companies take staff on a trip to build skills, team work, training and learning and to reward hard work with fun activities. This can include cultural activities and experiences in nature.

Business event visitors typically spend more than average visitors on accommodation, food, services and experiences during their trip.⁶

⁶ [Business events data, Tourism Research Australia, 2025](#)

Examples of products and experiences for business events



Kakadu Kitchen

About: Aboriginal owned food and beverage business

Location: Kakadu, Northern Territory

Business events offer:

- Native ingredients
- Catering
- Dining presentations to learn about native foods and drinks
- Sales of non-alcoholic drink products for business events.

www.kakadukitchen.com.au



Aboriginal Bush Traders

About: Retail outlet and shop, Aboriginal owned social enterprise supporting Aboriginal artists, makers and businesses across the Northern Territory and Kimberley

Location: Darwin, Northern Territory

Business events offer:

- Products made by Aboriginal artists, makers and producers
- Product stalls at conferences for delegates to purchase foods, skincare, art, jewellery
- Gift packs for conference delegates, keynote speakers, clients, staff.

www.aboriginalbushtraders.com



Bunya Designs

About: Aboriginal artists specialising in contemporary Aboriginal art programs and activities

Location: Brisbane, Queensland

Business events offer:

- Interactive art workshops
- Team building activities where teams paint a business story mural together using traditional and modern art styles.

www.bunyadesigns.com.au



Levinge Events Meditation

About: Aboriginal cultural event specialists specialising in meditation, mindfulness and wellbeing experiences

Location: Gold Coast, Queensland

Business events offer:

- Guided meditation and wellbeing using traditional knowledge and practices at conferences, workshops, meetings and team retreats.

www.levingeevents.com.au

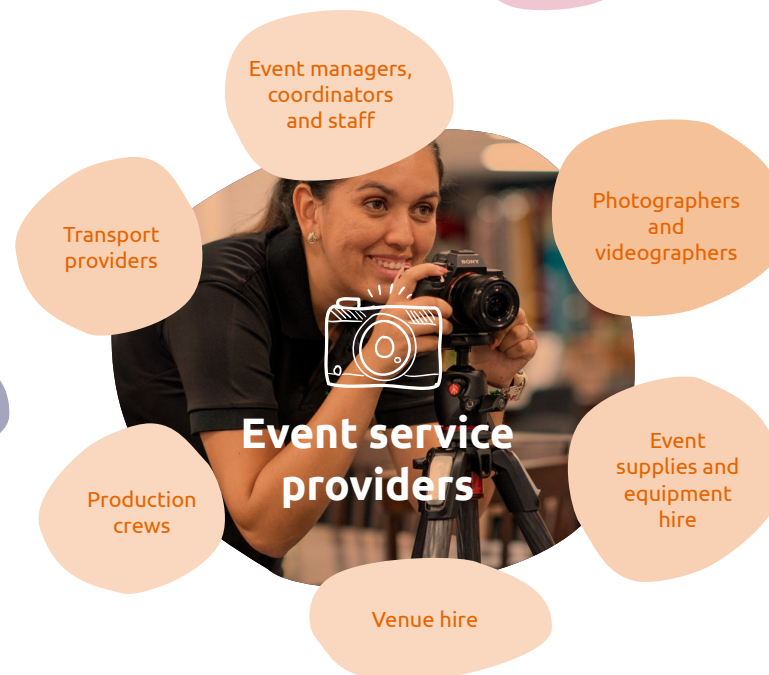
Building your product and experience for major and business events



Types of products and experiences for events

Major and business events create opportunities for a wide range of tourism operators, artists, performers, suppliers and service providers. Opportunities may occur before, during or after an event and can include experiences, products, entertainment, food and drink, retail and professional services.





What is a product and experience?

A product is what you sell to your customers. It can be an item, a tour, a service, entry to a special place or an activity.

An experience is what visitors remember about their visit. It includes the place, the people, the activities, the transport, the accommodation, the food and drinks.

Learn more about planning your product or experience in the [Product and experience development for Aboriginal cultural tourism guide](http://www.tourismandeventsnnt.com.au) – (www.tourismandeventsnnt.com.au)

How to get involved in major and business events

There are many ways Aboriginal businesses can participate in major and business events. Building connections, promoting your business and staying informed can help find opportunities.



Working with major and business event partners

There are many different partners to work with to bring your Aboriginal cultural tourism product or experience to event visitors.



Event organisers and event management companies



Business event organisers



Venues and event precincts



Tourism and industry organisations



Marketing and promotion partners

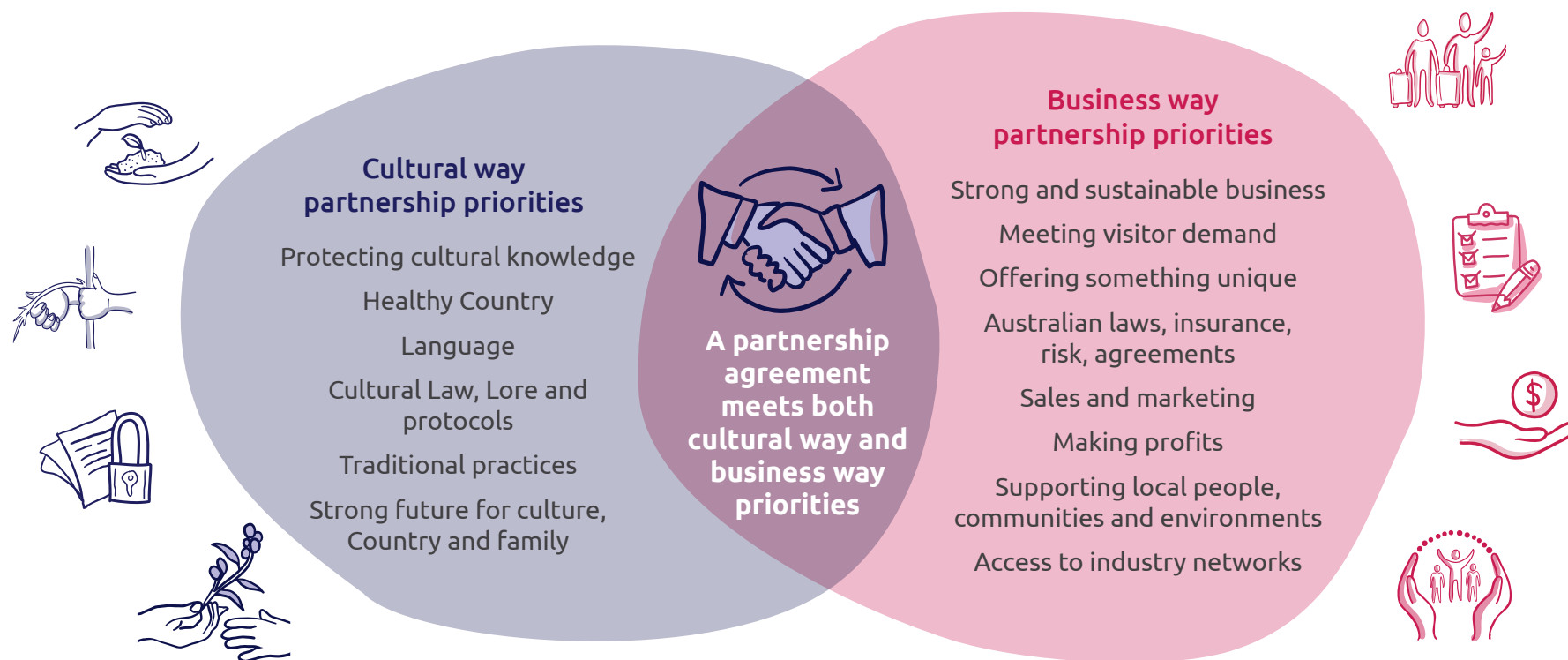


Tourism and experience operators

Building the right event tourism partnership⁹

In a partnership, you make an agreement – decide on the roles and responsibilities, the rules for working together, what the benefits will be, the unique value of what you offer, and the way you will work together as a team. There will be different cultural way and business way values and priorities for you and your business partner. It is important to discuss all of these before you make a legal agreement together to ensure a partnership is the right fit for both of you.

Balancing cultural way and business way values



⁹ Adapted from Aboriginal people, bush foods knowledge and products from Central Australia: Ethical guidelines for commercial bush food research, industry and enterprises

Ways of working together

Working together in an event tourism partnership requires all partners to be open, honest, share values and support one another to ensure partnership success and sustainability. It is important to have a formal arrangement, contract or a legal agreement that sets the rules for working together as every partnership is unique and will have its own way of working. For Aboriginal people, this is about balancing the cultural way values and priorities together with the business way values and priorities – both ways.⁸

Cultural way principles for respecting Aboriginal rights and interests in event tourism



RECOGNITION
of Aboriginal knowledge, skills and practice



RESPECT
for Aboriginal Elders, workers and youth



ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES
chosen by Aboriginal people



RETURNS and BENEFITS
to Aboriginal custodians and knowledge holders



RESTORATION and CARE
for Aboriginal lands, ecosystems and plants



REPATRIATION
of knowledge and support for intergenerational knowledge transfer



Business way 5 principles of partnership



DIVERSITY
working together creates a point of difference to your experience and product



EQUITY
respecting the views and contributions of each other



MUTUAL BENEFIT
meeting the goals of both partners



OPENNESS
being transparent, no secrets or hidden agendas leads to trust



COURAGE
be brave you won't know if the partnership will work unless you try

⁸ Adapted from Aboriginal people, bush foods knowledge and products from Central Australia: Ethical guidelines for commercial bush food research, industry and enterprises Brokering Better Partnerships, 5 Key Partnering Principles, Partnership Brokers Association, 2019

Tools to help you

Major events

- Visit www.tourismandeventsnnt.com.au to learn about major event opportunities ☐
- Join the Major Events mailing list to receive newsletters, information and invitations to contribute to major events ☐
- Attend tourism industry networking events to meet major event organisers, venues and other businesses ☐

To learn more contact the Major Events Team at Tourism & Events NT

Email: events.tourismeventsnnt@nt.gov.au

Business events

- Contact Business Events NT to have your product, service or experience featured on www.ntbusinesssevents.com.au so that you are visible to business events planners ☐
- Engage with the Business Events NT team to learn more about the business events sector and opportunities to get into market through the annual cooperative trade and market prospectus ☐
- Engage with Business Events NT to understand how you can get involved with familiarisation programs and showcase your products and experiences to business events planners ☐
- Consider participating in the southern hemisphere's largest business events tradeshow – the Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) held in Melbourne annually connecting you to national and international business events planners www.aime.com.au ☐

To learn more contact the Business Events NT Team

Phone: 1800 656 209

Email: info@ntbusinesssevents.com.au



Event language

There are many 'event language' words that are used to explain the types of events, how they are run and the types of visitors.

Business meeting

A meeting where people come together to discuss work, projects, ideas or business opportunities.

Conference

A large event where people gather to learn, share ideas, hear speakers and discuss a particular topic or industry.

Convention

A large gathering of people with a shared job type, industry or interest, often including presentations, workshops and exhibitions.

Corporate retreat

An event where a business takes employees away from the workplace for team building, planning, learning and enjoyment.

Delegate

A person attending a conference, convention, seminar or business event.

Incentive program

A reward or recognition experience offered to employees, clients or partners, such as travel, events or special experiences.

Keynote speaker

The main speaker at an event, usually invited to share expertise, insights or inspire the audience.

Master of Ceremonies (MC)

The official host who runs a live event. They introduce speakers, guide the program, make announcements, and keep the audience engaged so everything runs on time.

Networking

Meeting and connecting with other people to build relationships, share knowledge and explore opportunities.

Pre-event or post-event

Activities, tours or experiences that visitors do before or after attending an event. This is usually offered as an option by event organisers to encourage event visitors to stay longer, extend their stay, explore more of the destination, and learn more about the people and places where events are being held.

Professional Conference Organiser (PCO)

A person or company that organises and manages conferences, conventions and other business events on behalf of a client.

Seminar

A smaller learning session focused on a specific topic, often involving presentations and discussion.

Trade fair/show

An event where businesses showcase their products and services, meet customers and make industry connections.

Workshop

A practical, hands-on session where participants learn new skills or knowledge.

Value add

An extra benefit, service or experience included to make an event, product or offer more attractive. For example, a guided cultural tour included as part of a conference program.

References

Photo credits

Front Cover – Parrtjima A Festival in Light – Tourism NT/James Horan

Page 1 – Bawaka East Arnhem Land – Tourism NT/Shanaa McNaught

Page 3 – Left – Garma Festival – Tourism NT/Shanaa McNaught

Page 3 – Right – Gumatj bunggul – Tourism NT/Teagan Glenane/Yothu Yindi Foundation

Page 5 – Parrtjima – Tourism NT/KWP!

Page 6 – Left – Parrtjima – Tourism NT/James Horan

Page 6 – Middle – Darwin Triple Crown Supercars – Tourism NT/NT Major Events Company

Page 6 – Right – Bass in the Grass – Tourism NT

Page 7 – Top Left – APY Art Centre Collective painting

Page 7 – Top Middle – Garma Festival – Tourism NT/Shanaa McNaught

Page 7 – Top Right – Bush Bands Bash

Page 7 – Bottom Left – Full Moon Dinner – Tourism NT

Page 7 – Bottom Middle – Tiwi Island – Celina Whan

Page 7 – Bottom Right – Program Launch – Paz Tassone

Page 8 – Left – Kungas Can Cook

Page 8 – Middle – Drifting Clouds Meredith Music Festival

Page 8 – Right – Yarrenyty Arltjere Artists creature workshop

Page 9 – Left – Jannawi Dance Clan

Page 9 – Middle – Corban Clause Williams

Page 9 – Right – Electric Fields, Eurovision

Page 10 – Conference Speaker

Page 11 – Left – Darwin Convention Centre Auditorium

Page 11 – Middle – Bush Balm workshop – Tourism NT/Oliver Eclipse

Page 11 – Right – Aboriginal Cultural Experience – Tourism NT/Tourism Australia

Page 12 – Left – Kakadu Dird Full Moon Dinner

Page 12 – Left Middle – Aboriginal Bush Traders

Page 12 – Right Middle – Bunya Designs Team Building Workshop

Page 12 – Right – Levinge Events Meditation

Page 13 – Garma Festival – Tourism NT/Shanaa McNaught

Page 14 – Top Left – Cultural Speaker

Page 14 – Top Right – Taste of Kakadu – Tourism NT

Page 14 – Bottom Left – Many Hands Art Centre Iltja Ntjarra

Page 14 – Bottom Right – Andrew_Gurruwiwi_Band

Page 15 – Top Left – Kungas Can Cook

Page 15 – Top Right – Larapinta_Culture_Tours

Page 15 – Bottom Left – Kungas Can Cook

Page 15 – Bottom Right – Woman at Jape – Tourism NT/Shanaa McNaught

Page 19 – Desert Song Festival - Tourism & Events NT/Fiona Harper

Back Cover – Bass in the Grass

