



ASTROTOURISM
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

2019-2023

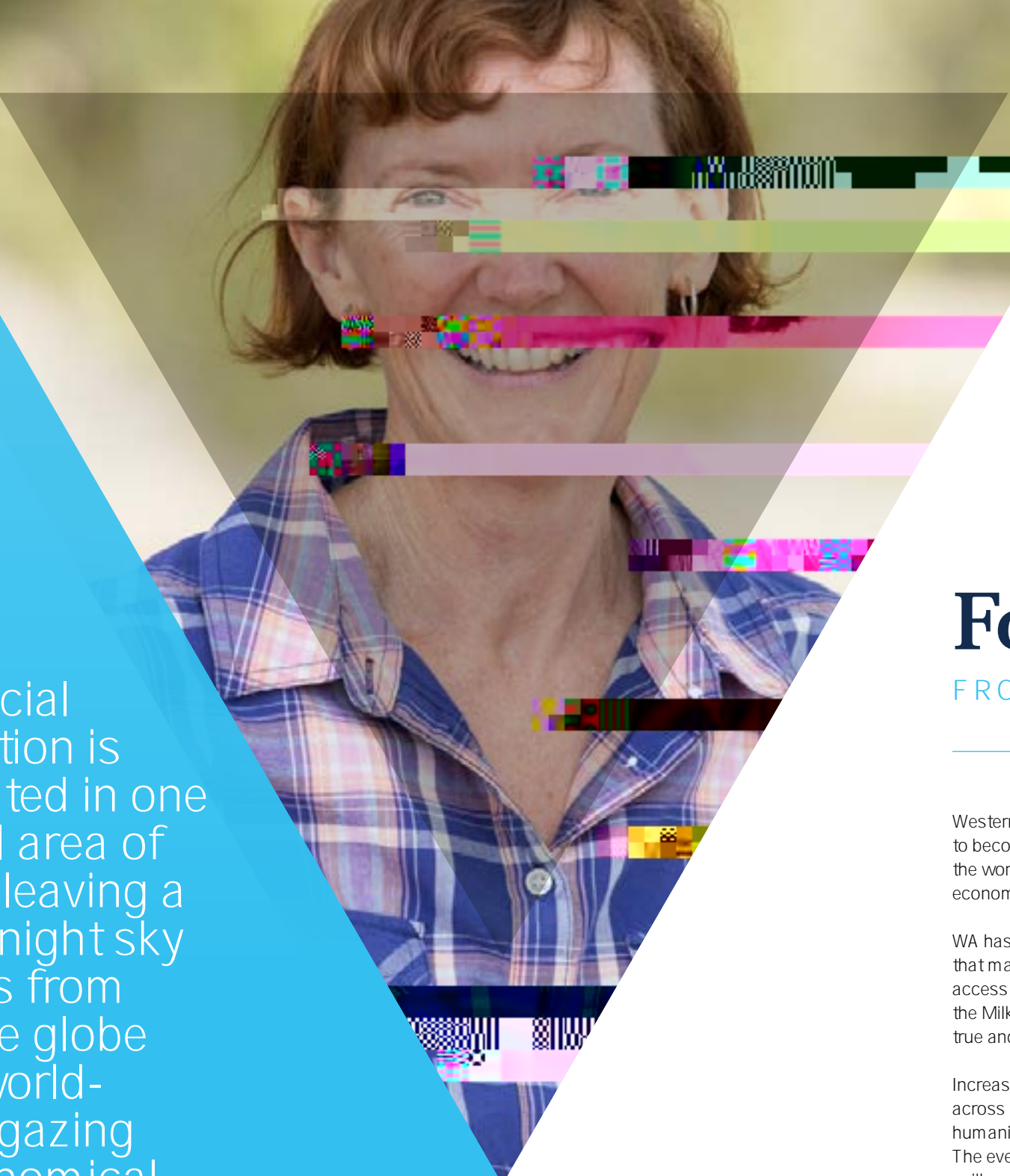
STRATEGIC



Hi there, welcome to Astrotourism Western Australia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	TABLE OF CONTENTS
5	FOREWORD
6	WHY WESTERN AUSTRALIA?
8	ECONOMIC BENEFIT
10	VISION
12	OBJECTIVE
13	PARTNERS
14	CORE VALUES
15	OUTCOMES
16	STRATEGIC FOCUS
19	REFERENCES/DEFINITIONS



WA's artificial light pollution is concentrated in one very small area of the State, leaving a vast dark night sky for visitors from all over the globe to enjoy world-class stargazing and astronomical activities.

All we have to do is keep it dark!

Foreword

FROM THE FOUNDER/CEO, CAROL REDFORD

Western Australia is perfectly placed to become the stargazing capital of the world and grow an Astrotourism economy across the State.

WA has many comparative advantages that make us an ideal destination to access a pristine dark night sky where the Milky Way Galaxy can be seen in its true and original form.

Increasing artificial light pollution across Earth has quickly reduced humanity's ability to see the stars. The ever increasing artificial light that spills up into the night sky, means we see less stars. More than 80% of the world's population live under a light-polluted sky and as a result, the Milky Way is hidden from more than one-third of humanity¹.

Aboriginal people experienced tens of thousands of years without any artificial light pollution to dull the view of the stars. Their connection to the dark night sky provides information on seasonality, food sources,

navigation and traditional lore. Here is a population of people who truly understand their environment and how it sustains life.

Western Australians are still fortunate to have a population that

is still fortunate to have

the same connection to the stars as our ancestors.

WHY WESTERN AUSTRALIA?

WA has many comparative

A Dark Night Sky

Perth is the most isolated capital city in the world. Almost 80% of WA's population live in just 0.25% of its land mass² leaving a low regional population spread out over hundreds of country towns with low levels of artificial light pollution.

WA's dark night sky stands out as a rare commodity in a world where artificial light pollution is increasing by 2% in brightness and 2% in area every year³. The New World Atlas of Artificial Sky Brightness has found that more than 80% of the world's population live under a light-polluted sky and the Milky Way is hidden from more than one-third of humanity¹.

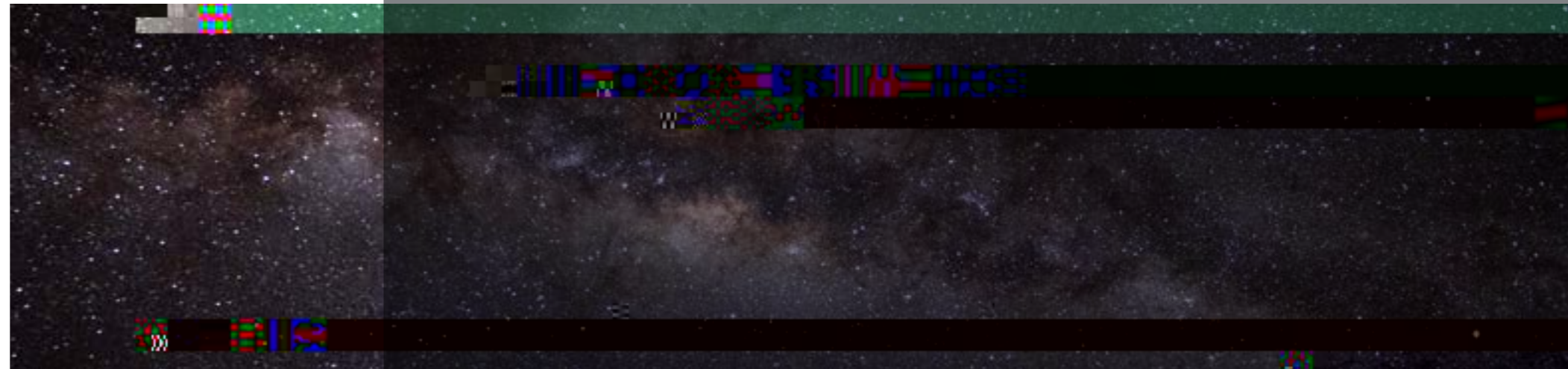
WA has naturally low levels of artificial light pollution paired with easy-to-access places for stargazing and astronomy related activities. You don't have to travel far from Perth city lights to find a pristine dark night sky for the best stargazing on the planet.

Best of all, the dark night sky doesn't require any maintenance or development and can be seen simply and freely with the naked-eye. The view of the stars also changes through the seasons and, occasionally, delights us with astronomical surprises such as eclipses, comets and meteor showers.

The Right Place

WA is located in the Southern Hemisphere where the best parts of the Milky Way can be seen. Only in the Southern Hemisphere can you look into the heart of the Milky Way Galaxy, see the Magellanic Clouds, the Southern Cross, the Jewel Box star cluster and much more. Many astronomers and

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stargazers in the Northern Hemisphere are envious of our location.

The Right Conditions

WA has the right conditions for optimal stargazing and astronomy. The many advantages we have include:

- Low artificial light pollution for a dark night sky;
- Low air pollution for a clean atmosphere to look through;
- Clear and dry weather for good access to the night sky. Perth is the sunniest State capital in Australia and has the highest daily average number of bright sunshine hours in Australia⁴;
- Wide open landscapes and space for a big dark night sky stretching from horizon to horizon;
- Low noise pollution for peaceful contemplation of the landscape and night sky; and
- Radio quietness for an ideal location to build the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) radio telescope mega science project.

ECONOMIC BENEFIT



“Crucially, from an economic standpoint, the single most important thing about dark-sky tourism is that it necessitates one or more overnight stays⁶.”

Being a night time activity, Astrotourism increases overnight stays. Estimating the Potential Economic Value of the Night Skies Above the Colorado is an economic evaluation of Astrotourism and says,

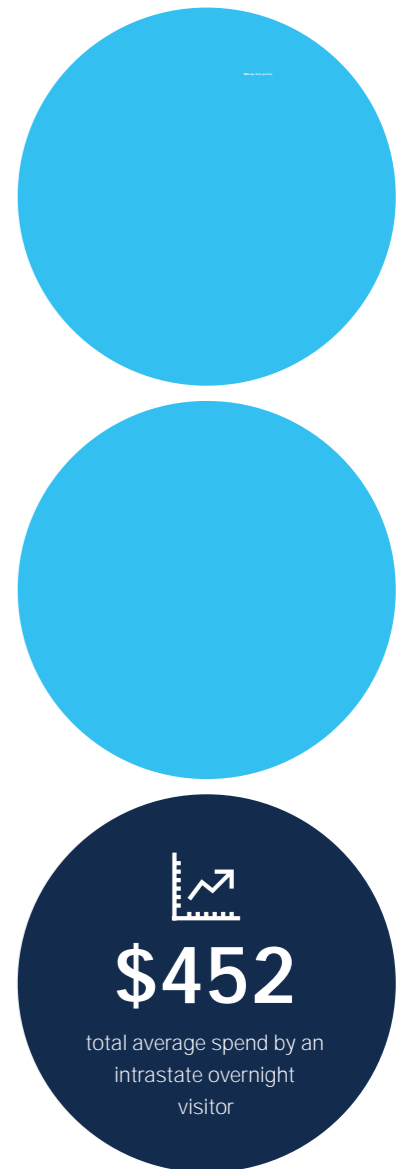
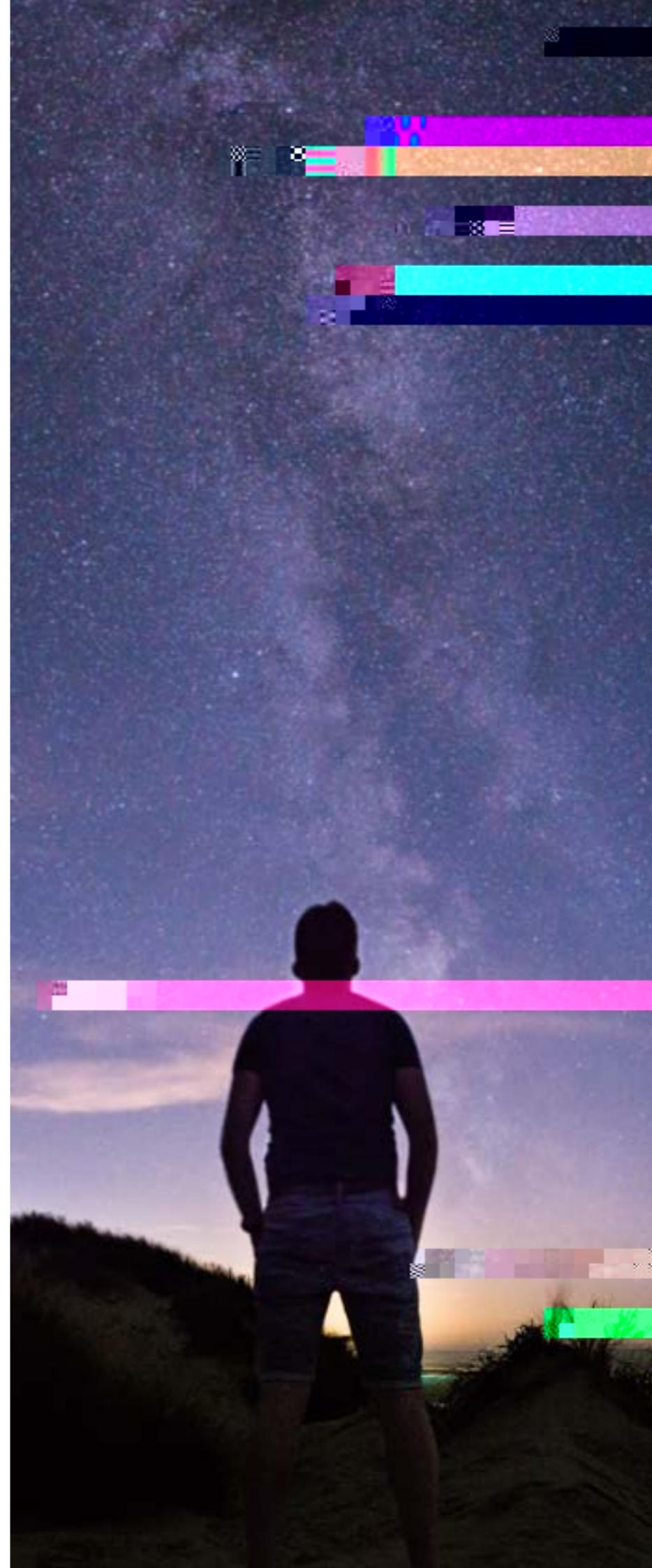
“Crucially, from an economic standpoint, the single most important thing about dark-sky tourism is that it necessitates one or more overnight stays⁶.”

Overnight stays lead to increased visitor spending. According to Tourism WA research, the average spend by an intrastate daytrip visitor in WA is \$94. The average daily spend by an intrastate overnight visitor in WA increases to \$120, with a total average spend of \$452⁷.

There are also opportunities for new Astrotourism related businesses and Aboriginal Astrotourism activities in regional WA to increase visitor spending. New businesses like these will drive the tourism economy and increase the average spend by visitors.

Furthermore, Astrotourism is an all-year round activity that will increase visitor numbers at traditionally off-peak tourism times. Although peak seasons, such as wildflowers, will always see a spike in visitor numbers for regional WA, Astrotourism can generate a more regular flow of visitors throughout the year. As such, Astrotourism will provide a longer and more sustained period of tourism activity which consequentially will generate a more consistent cash flow for regional businesses and service providers

Another economic benefit yet to be explored includes local energy savings associated with the use, or rather non-use, of dark-sky friendly lighting infrastructure for astronomy related activities.



VISION

Western
Australians
value and
protect their
dark night
sky as an
international
icon for
world-class
stargazing and
astronomy
related
activities.



OBJECTIVE

Working alongside valued partners, our objective is to establish a vibrant and sustainable Astrotourism sector across regional WA that will 1) increase tourism visitation, 2) diversify our regional economy and 3) leverage natural astronomical assets and investment already made in space and tourism infrastructure

This will be realised through an innovative collaborative networking model that will grow business and community connections as well as build commitment to the vision. The Astrotourism WA vision will culminate at the rare 2023 Ningaloo Hybrid Solar Eclipse when WA will have an opportunity to claim its title as the stargazing capital of the world.



A vibrant and sustainable Astrotourism sector across regional WA...will be realised through an innovative collaborative networking model that will grow business and community connections as well as build commitment to the vision.

PARTNERS

The strategic focus of this plan will guide Astrotourism WA. Moreover, it will inform its key collaborative partners on the journey to make WA an international icon for world-class stargazing and astronomy related activities.

Current Local Government partners participating in the project include the City of Greater Geraldton and the Shires of Carnamah, Dandaragan, Mingenew, Moora, Morawa, Perenjori, Three Springs and Wongan-Ballidu.

This plan will also inform industry partners including:

- Astronomy WA
- International Dark-Sky Association

- Tourism WA
- Regional Tourism Organisations
- Forum Advocating Cultural & Eco-tourism Inc (FACET)
- Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC)
- Geoparks Western Australia Inc
- Regional Development Commissions; and
- Regional Development Australia (RDA)

Together we will achieve the objective to grow the tourism industry.



CORE VALUES

The core values central to Astrotourism WA's professionalism and engagement are to:

- Journey to a vision through collaboration
- Discover through fun and enjoyable engagement
- Maintain a sense of awe about the natural world at night



OUTCOMES

The anticipated SMART⁸ outcomes of developing an Astrotourism sector are:

01

Increased visitor numbers, overnight stays and expenditure in regional WA.

02

Increased jobs in WA's regional, labour-intensive Tourism Industry and industry sectors with associated services.

03

New SME⁹ business growth in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sectors.

04

Tourism Industry

05

Increased MICE¹⁰ activity astronomy and stargazing related events.



Astrotourism activities and the development of the sector will also:

1. **Grow community capacity** through learning about astronomical science;
2. **Protect WA's dark night sky**;
3. **Create cultural diversity** through understanding of Aboriginal Astronomy;
4. **Rejuvenate existing tourism product**;
5. **Connect local students to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)** study, work experience and career pathways; and
6. **Promote stargazing as a way to keep mentally healthy** through a community partnership with WA's Act-Belong-Commit campaign.

Facilitate the protection of Western Australia's dark night sky.

ACTIVITY	PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME



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