



The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for the Environment

Senator the Hon. Richard Colbeck
Minister for Tourism and International Education

MEDIA RELEASE

1 February 2016

Ecotourism opportunities in Christmas Island National Park

The unique national park on Christmas Island – home of the famous red crabs – has the potential to become an ecotourism treasure, adding to the growing market for nature based tourism in Australia.

Environment Minister Greg Hunt and Tourism Minister Richard Colbeck today announced the opportunity available for tourism operators to explore the potential for commercial tourism ventures within the Christmas Island National Park.

“Christmas Island National Park is the Galapagos of the Indian Ocean,” Minister Hunt said.

“The island has the world’s most abundant and diverse range of land crabs. Each year the island’s population of some 40 million red crabs come from the rainforest to the sea to breed in what Sir David Attenborough has listed as among his ten most memorable moments.”

“Surrounded by spectacular coral reefs, the park also boasts internationally significant wetlands, beautiful rainforests, and deserted, idyllic beaches, and is home to wildlife of global significance.”

Parks Australia’s call for expressions of interest today is the first time a commercial ecotourism opportunity has been offered within the Christmas Island National Park.

“This is a chance to partner with Parks Australia in developing a range of tourism opportunities that showcase this spectacular natural wonder,” Minister Hunt said.

“The unique and abundant species of Christmas Island National Park make it must see destination for bird watchers and wildlife enthusiasts.”

Minister Colbeck said that “the amazing destination of Christmas Island offers some of the most exciting accommodation, nature tour and scientific and educational tourism opportunities currently available. I’m keen to see the new and innovative ideas that come forward through this process.

Our tourism industry is thriving and the government is focused on encouraging visitors to explore beyond our cities into rural and remote areas – measures such as this will help achieve this goal.

“There is the potential to establish tourism experiences to see some of the biggest land crabs on the planet, dive world class sites rated in the top ten in the world and photograph majestic frigate birds, booby birds and bosuns in flight.”

“There’s also a rare opportunity to establish eco-accommodation within the Christmas Island National Park, which will lead to more people being able to enjoy the park and greater job opportunities for locals”

“Over five million international tourists undertook some form of nature-based activity in Australia in 2014, spending a total of \$29.4 billion during their visit.”

“Domestic nature-based tourism is also significant, with over 31 million overnight visits involving some form of related activity, worth a total of \$25 billion, and almost 40 million day trips worth \$3.4 billion.”

Christmas Island is in the Indian Ocean south of Indonesia – 2,600 kilometres from Perth and 2,800 kilometres from Darwin. Its National Park has featured in many wildlife documentaries and television productions including with Australian Geographic, Animal Planet and National Geographic.

For more information about the Christmas Island National Park expression of interest visit eoi-christmas.parksaustralia.gov.au or email ChristmasIslandEOI@environment.gov.au.

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